

# How PBS went Beyond Cost Explorer to use Vantage for Cost Reporting



## About PBS

PBS, with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 42 million adults on linear primetime television, more than 15 million users on PBS-owned streaming platforms, and 56 million people view PBS content on social media, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front-row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. More information about PBS is available at [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or through our [apps](#) for mobile and connected devices.

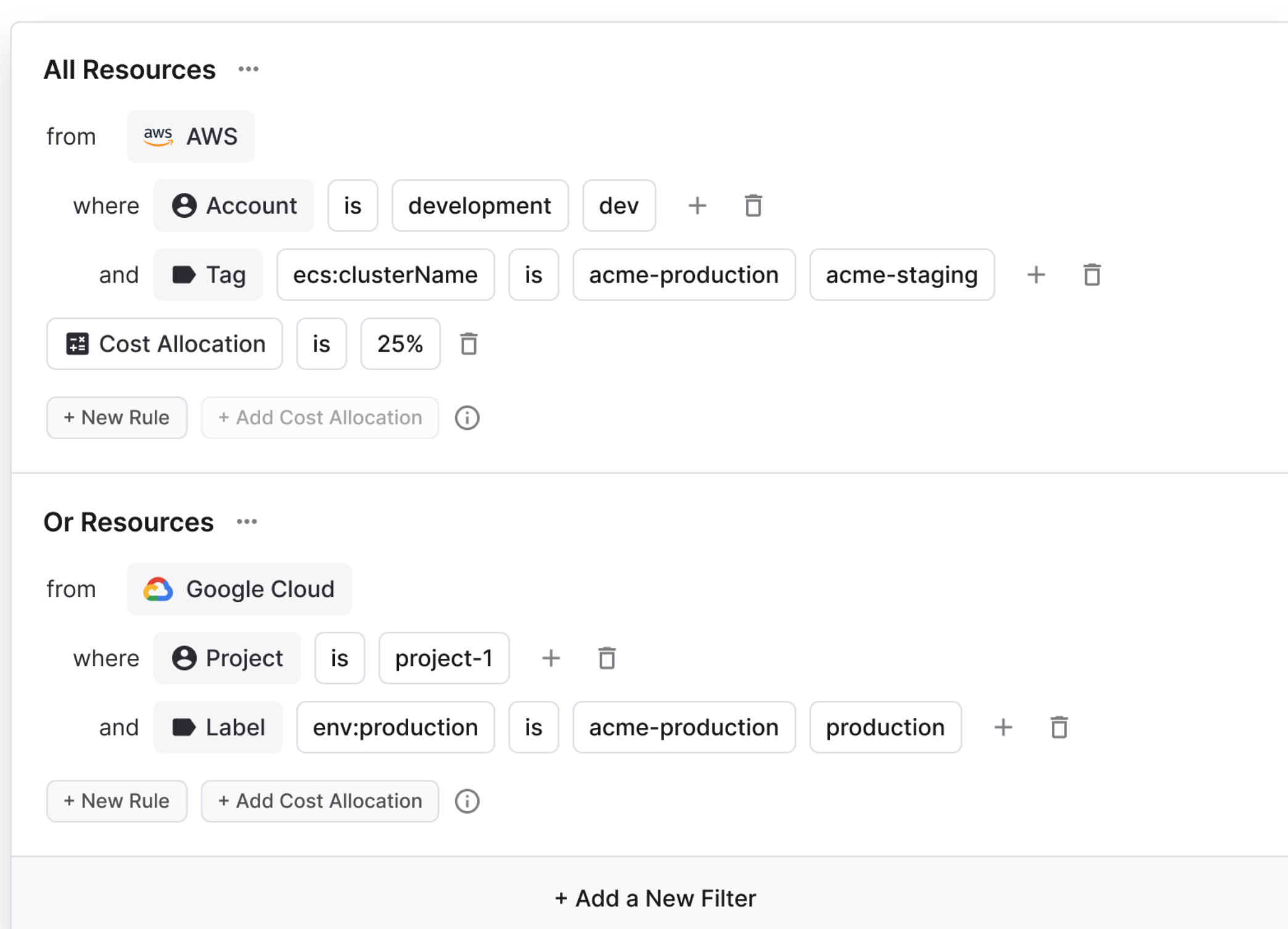
## The Challenge

Prior to Vantage, the finance team struggled to run complex queries on Cost Explorer to dive deep on their costs. This made it difficult to attribute actual costs back to the appropriate team without significant manual effort. Additionally, lack of built-in modeling for reservations prevented PBS from reserving full capacity to prevent overspend.

## The Solution

The PBS team used the deep reporting and filtering features in Vantage to properly allocate costs to all their teams and greatly simplify their monthly reporting. In the process, they were able to reduce their cloud costs because they had increased visibility into their spend. Showback support, reserved instance attribution, filters for taxes and marketplace fees, API access, multi-provider support with New Relic, and Savings Planner were key features that helped PBS achieve their goals.

## Percentage Based Cost Allocation



Allocating a percentage of costs in a Cost Report in Vantage

To start, PBS faced an issue where a single resource was used by multiple teams. In order to allocate costs properly among the teams, PBS utilized [Showback support](#) in Cost Report filters. This allowed them to allocate resources like databases and EC2 instances to the appropriate team based on a percentage of usage.

## Showing Actual Usage for Reserved Instances in Linked Accounts

Proper allocation becomes even trickier with a quirk of AWS where reserved instance purchases are only shown for the account that made the purchase instead of the member account where the reserved instance was consumed. For PBS, which has multiple AWS accounts used by multiple teams, this was a reporting nightmare.

Cost Reports in Vantage [show reserved instance usage attributed to the linked account](#) which solved this problem and enabled PBS to accurately attribute the discounts it was purchasing to the proper teams.

## Amortization and Filtering out Taxes and Marketplace Fees

Cost Explorer does not breakout “other” fees such as taxes or AWS Marketplace purchases. By default, it also does not amortize purchases and so they show up as large upfront cost spikes. [Cost Reports](#) in Vantage include simple settings for turning on and off [amortization](#), taxes, and marketplace fees so that PBS could zero in on only the relevant costs.

## API Access

Through the [Vantage API](#) PBS was able to programmatically access the complex filters and cost allocation they had set up in their Cost Reports and automate their monthly reporting.

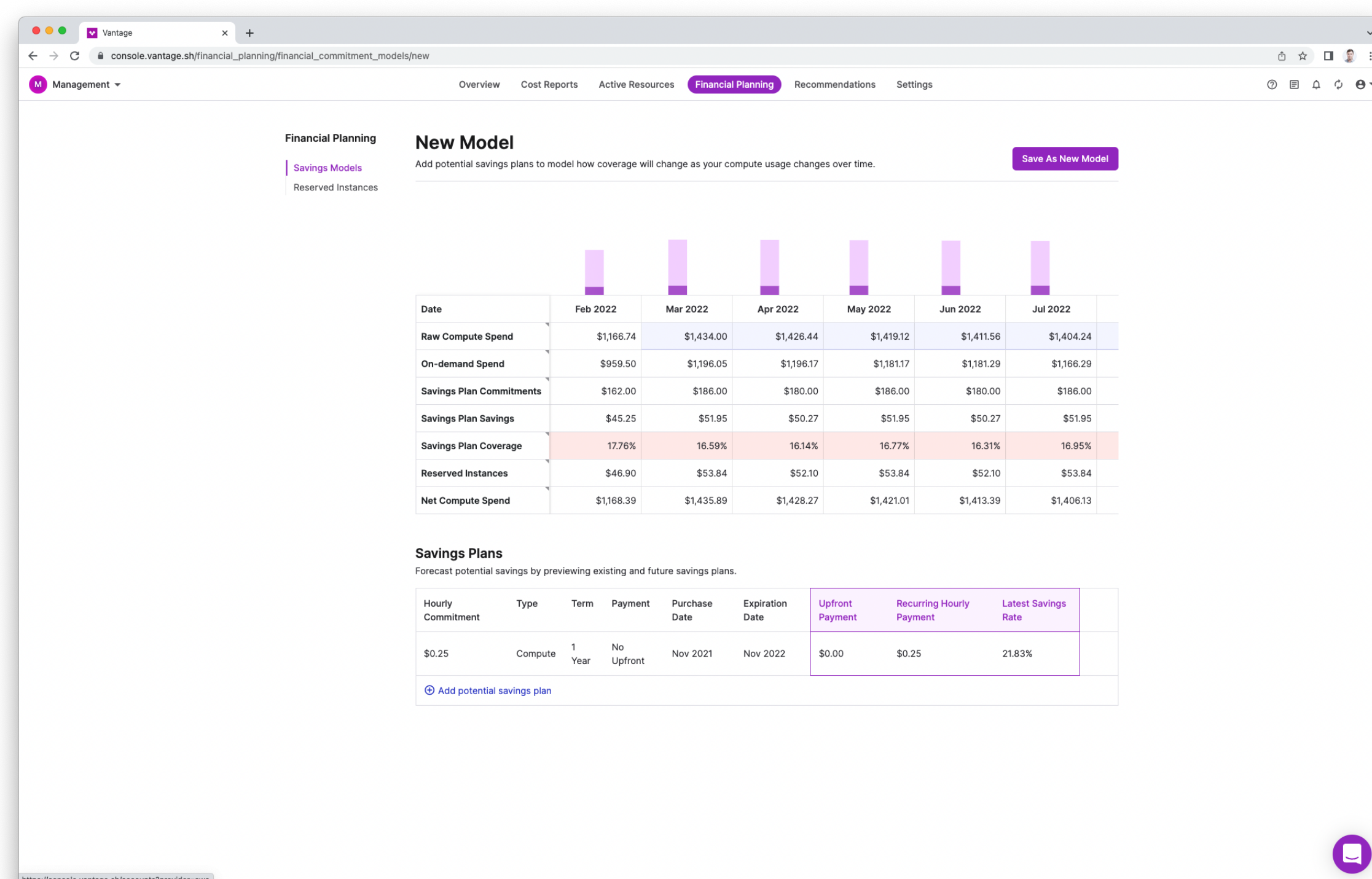
“I was able to use my modified script that talks to Vantage instead of Cost Explorer for our reporting this month. All the numbers I expected to be the same as from Cost Explorer were the same and some of our shared costs were more appropriately spread around to various teams because of the Vantage queries being more powerful than Cost Explorer! Not only did this work much better but it also saved 300+ lines of code.” – Michael Norton, VP, Cloud Services and Operations, PBS

Every Cost Report in Vantage can be accessed through our API which gives teams the ideal blend of visual inspection and filtering of their costs with API access to the results.

## Multi-Provider Cost Reporting with New Relic

PBS makes use of other usage-based cloud providers to maintain its infrastructure. With Vantage they were able to integrate [New Relic](#) and view their New Relic costs alongside their associated AWS costs. Native support for over 10 cloud providers is a key power of Vantage and helped PBS get a single pane of glass view of their cloud costs.

## Savings Planner



Modeling reserved instance and savings plan purchases in Vantage

[Savings Planner](#) is a forecasting and modeling tool in the Vantage console for making purchasing decisions on committed use discounts on AWS and Azure. PBS used Savings Planner to plan their reservations and ensure maximum coverage for their infrastructure, removing hours of tedious spreadsheet work and boosting their savings.

## Why PBS chose Vantage

With Vantage, the PBS infrastructure team was able to take ownership of the process and created Cost Reports for each project team. It became possible for them to detect changes in costs in real time and access these reports on a monthly basis so finance can charge the appropriate team for their actual usage. Numerous workflows were automated and reporting was simplified and consolidated. Now, managing cloud costs is less time consuming, more automated, and a more precise workflow for PBS.