FinOps for engineers: how to cut cloud cost without cutting corners

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FinOps is the practice of making cloud spending visible and shared between engineering, finance and the business. For engineers, it means treating cost as a design property alongside performance and reliability.

TL;DR The short version

- FinOps makes cloud spending visible and shared, and treats cost as a design property alongside performance and reliability.
- Tag resources, report cost per team and product, right-size instances and switch off idle environments.
- Never save money by removing backups, redundancy or monitoring; review spend regularly with budgets and alerts.

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Visibility first

- Tag resources by team, service and environment.
- Report cost per team and per product, not one big bill.
- Show engineers the cost of what they run.

Common savings

- **Right-size** over-provisioned instances and databases.
- **Switch off** idle and non-production environments out of hours.
- **Commit** to steady usage through the provider’s discount schemes, only for load you are sure of.
- **Choose storage tiers** that match access patterns.
- **Delete** orphaned disks, snapshots and old data.

What not to cut

Cost cuts that remove backups, redundancy or monitoring save money until the day they matter. Weigh each saving against the risk it adds.

Make it a habit

1. Review spend regularly with the people who control it.

2. Set budgets and alerts.
3. Track unit cost, such as cost per customer or per request, not only the total.
4. Review commitments before they renew.

> Related credential: Cloud Architecture Practitioner. Explore the exam facts and syllabus.

Sources and further reading

1. FinOps Foundation. What is FinOps. finops.org/introduction/what-is-finops/.

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