



CFO Strategies: 2025 CFO Report UK Deep Dive

Introduction:

FTI Consulting's Global CFO Report provides key insights into the strategic priorities that are shaping the future of the finance function. As enterprise transformation initiatives continue to accelerate, CFOs are often leading the charge, driving operational improvements, adopting technology and upskilling talent to seize opportunities and manage risks in 2025 and beyond. CFOs are playing a critical role in steering their organisations through uncertainty and transformation. The CFO's role has shifted beyond traditional financial stewardship, becoming more strategic in navigating technological advancements, economic challenges and evolving business models.

EMEA CFO HIGHLIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS:



Cost Improvements

- Lowering the cost of finance is an increasing trend in European countries as a result of the global concerns about inflationary pressures.
- This initiative is backed by an increasing desire to optimise costs (75%) in order to focus the finance teams' efforts on more value-add business partnering activities (76%).

Performance Initiatives and Control

- Optimising business decision making is a growing focus for European CFOs (81%) who are cost-consciously attempting to enhance the finance function, while maintaining control.
- Although not currently perceived as a major focus for European CFOs, 77% believe that maintaining or increasing time allocation in ESG reporting is necessary, indicating it could become a higher priority in the future.

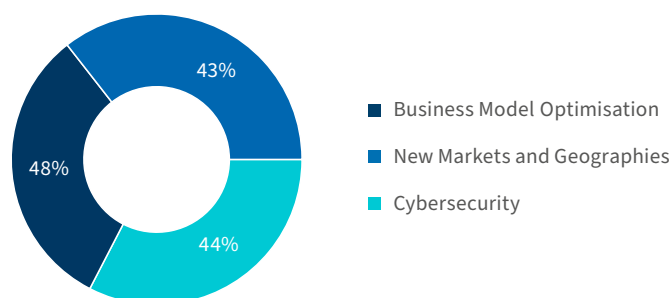
Optimising the Finance Team

- Productivity is one of Europe's top areas for changes in focus, with 46% of CFOs believing that a greater focus is needed in productivity, while 76% believe more focus is needed.
- However, CFOs are struggling to achieve higher productivity and efficiency as resistance to change has become a common trend across European countries (76%).

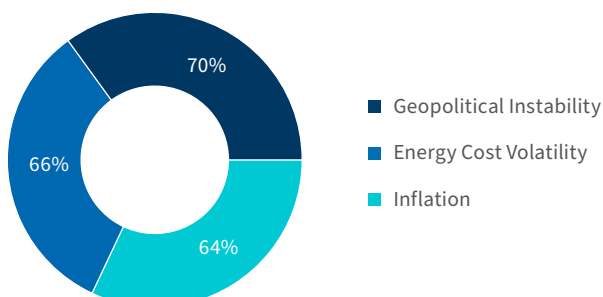
EMEA CFO PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES:



Top 3 CFO Strategic Priorities:



Top 3 CFO Challenges:



UK CFO HIGHLIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS:



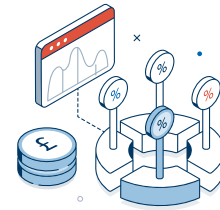
REVENUE GROWTH:

- Over the course of 2025, 73% of CFOs expect over 10% growth, with 47% expecting higher than 20%.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:

- 84% of CFOs believe that complex/manual processes are negatively impacting the finance team.
- 80% believe they have outdated technology and tools.
- 75% mentioned using ChatGPT in their current role.



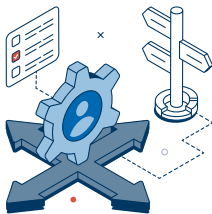
FINANCE FUNCTION IMPROVEMENT:

- 88% of CFOs in the UK believe they can benefit from finance technology and automation.
- 86% believe that the function can be improved with enhancements to forecasting accuracy.
- 90% believe the function can improve from business partnering.



FINANCE TALENT CHALLENGES:

- 84% of CFOs believe that access to finance talent has a negative impact on the finance team, however only 12% believe there is a shortage of finance talent, suggesting an underlying recruitment challenge, more than availability.
- Linked to digital transformation, 20% of CFOs believe that the technological skillset of finance talent poses a challenge in the UK.



OUTSOURCING:

- Transactional activities which have seen the highest levels of outsourcing include:
- Accounts Payable: 33%
 - Cash Management: 33%
 - General Accounting: 35%
 - 33% of CFOs also highlighted cost accounting as an outsourcing opportunity, the highest in Europe, tied with France.



CFO TENURE AND STAFF RETENTION

- 94% of CFOs say the average tenure is over 3 years, 63% mentioned 3 to 5 years and 31% mentioned over 5 years.
- Over 1 in 5 CFOs struggle to retain their finance talent.



EMEA CFO RECOMMENDATIONS:



Strengthen Financial Forecasting and Risk Management:

Enhancing forecasting capabilities is essential for navigating market volatility. CFOs should integrate more robust scenario planning and data analytics into their forecasting processes to anticipate market shifts and manage risks proactively. This will allow finance leaders to create more accurate financial models and respond quickly to economic uncertainties, ensuring that growth objectives are met while minimising potential disruptions.



Adopt Comprehensive Change Management Frameworks:

Effective digital transformation requires a well-defined change management strategy that fosters stakeholder buy-in and addresses potential resistance. CFOs should articulate a clear vision for transformation and provide the necessary resources and training to empower finance teams. Creating an inclusive culture that embraces innovation and actively solicits feedback will enhance adaptability and responsiveness throughout the transformation process.



Quantify Strategic Outsourcing Value:

CFOs should conduct a comprehensive assessment to understand the potential strategic and financial impact of outsourcing on their organisations, particularly in the areas of finance, procurement, technology and human resources. Organisations which have already successfully outsourced certain activities should assess the opportunity to expand or optimise that scope to enhance value.



Develop a Comprehensive Talent Strategy:

Organisations should design a tailored talent acquisition and retention strategy that reflects the specialised nature of the finance function. This involves targeting professionals with expertise in areas like FP&A, treasury, tax, and audit. To ensure a smooth transition into the organisation, robust onboarding processes should focus on role-specific training. Additionally, mentorship programmes should pair new hires with seasoned finance leaders to foster knowledge transfer and career growth. A transparent career progression framework should highlight pathways for advancement into leadership roles such as Finance Controller or CFO, addressing talent shortages and boosting employee loyalty.



Enhance Cross-Departmental Collaboration:

Establishing structured ways to collaborate between finance and operational teams is imperative. Regular cross-functional meetings should be instituted to align forecasting with operational realities, allowing finance to incorporate diverse perspectives that enrich predictive accuracy. Cultivating a collaborative culture will enhance communication regarding market dynamics and challenges, ensuring that forecasting models align with the organisation's overarching strategy.



Prioritise Advanced FP&A Technology Investments:

CFOs should invest in advanced FP&A tools (e.g., EPM, BI, AI, etc.) that integrate real-time data and predictive analytics and that additionally automate processes while facilitating sophisticated scenario modeling. These investments empower finance teams to produce accurate forecasts, swiftly adapt to market fluctuations and deliver actionable insights. Equally important is comprehensive training to ensure seamless integration and maximize the potential of these tools.



CONCLUSION

CFOs are positioned at the forefront of organisational transformation, driving strategic initiatives that will shape the future of their businesses. The evolving role of the CFO is a pivotal force in navigating economic uncertainty, fostering innovation and ensuring long-term growth.

Looking ahead, CFOs must continue to deliver value to their organisations by focusing on profitable revenue growth at optimised costs. CFOs will be instrumental in shaping their organisations' ability to thrive in a rapidly evolving economic environment. Leading CFOs will demonstrate that they have the visionary leadership to navigate the complexities of the future and can drive meaningful change in 2025 and beyond.

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

In July of 2024, FTI Consulting in conjunction with CFO Dive conducted a survey of senior finance executives in North America, Asia, Europe, Australia the Middle East and Africa. A total of 655 completed responses were collected from North America, EMEA and APAC.

To find out more visit the full report [here](#).

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