

Finance Operations Is good enough enough?

Some things are fundamental to a well-run business, and a solid finance operation is one of them. It's the pump behind the flow of financial information that feeds every activity in your organization. Getting it right means you'll have more time to focus on making better business decisions. Getting it wrong means you're in for a world of worry.

The case for investing

The kind of value derived from investing in finance operations depends on where a finance shop is along the maturity curve. Those lacking core fundamentals could see important improvements in financial misstatement mitigation and data integrity. Those who already have the fundamentals covered can focus on improving decision support capabilities and driving sustainable cost savings.

Unfortunately, issues in finance operations rarely hit the C-suite agenda until one of several things happens. A CFO wakes up worried about the risk of a reporting misstatement. A company discovers its finance cost structure is badly out of line. Or business leaders lack confidence in their financial information and conclude that they don't have the support they need to make smart, fast decisions. Otherwise, leadership tends to stick with what has been working, even if it means sacrificing the speed and accuracy they'd really like to have. Yet when something goes wrong, companies will move mountains to clean up their data, upgrade processes and build a clear line of sight back into and through their financial information.

For those with solid fundamentals in place, a key to improved performance lies in deconstructing processes into individual building blocks – policies, technology, talent, data – and then rebuilding them for more effective operations. While some finance teams have the time and talent and understanding to take on that challenge in-house, many do not.

No matter where you're starting from, it's important to have the end goal in mind, whether focusing on quality and reliability of your financial information or efficiency gains, and build a plan with the right skills and resources behind it to succeed.

How we can help

Deloitte is widely recognized for its strengths in finance operations – and with good reason. We have access to that rare combination of talent and experience needed to work across accounting, finance, tax and technology with a full-court view – to help organizations in their efforts to properly manage the details without losing sight of the big picture. But achieving lasting results from process improvements in finance isn't easy. It requires a unique blend of innovative thinking and disciplined follow-through. That's our strong suit and in the industry our capabilities are unparalleled. We have access to:

- Financial business process knowledge and experience
- Market leading audit and accounting capabilities
- Performance management and financial ERP depth
- Tax compliance, technology and process knowledge
- Financial valuation, actuarial and other specialized capabilities
- Time-tested methodologies and accelerators to help effect lasting change



Bottom-line benefits

Effective finance operations can help an organization in its efforts to:

- Improve information quality and data integrity for more reliable and accurate financial information
- Implement streamlined and more efficient and effective processes that are scalable and dynamic
- Have more time for decision-support activities such as financial analysis and strategic planning
- Build stronger business cases throughout the organization
- Have better visibility and support for the finance function's initiatives
- Reduce cost and time spent on compliance activities

Six ways to get more value now

When we look at the ways some of the world's leading companies improve their finance processes, several key lessons shine through. Here are six to consider that we believe are very important.

Think across borders. Without strong enterprise-wide direction, business units are unlikely to work together efficiently. Some individuals will even sit on the sidelines waiting for the whole thing to go away. Make sure everyone who needs to be involved is involved.

Make the case. Create the process improvement case for change – communicate it early and often. A strong business case can help the finance function drive progress – and provide a clear baseline for measuring results.

Accept the certainty of change. Develop processes that are scalable and adaptable to changing business requirements. Welcome innovative practices that reflect your improvement objectives.

Shift from execution to analysis. Design your policies and processes to take advantage of automation. Reduce manual, time-intensive processes. Eliminate inefficient processes and reports. Shift finance staff from data processing to analytical decision-making.

Align with business objectives. Process improvements should support the strategic plans of the finance function and the company as a whole.

Rationalize controls. Rationalizing and strengthening controls can help reduce the cost and time required to sustain ongoing compliance, thus freeing up more time for decision-support activities.

Case studies

- [Finance Transformation at an Internet Company](#)
- [Finance In Focus](#)
- [Finance In a Fix](#)

Related offerings

- [Finance Strategy](#)
- [Integrated Performance Management](#)
- [Finance Transformation-Oracle](#)
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Related insights

- [Globalizing Finance? Not So Fast](#)
- [Aligning Your Financial Close to the Transaction Close: Effectively Executing the Dreaded Partial Period Close](#)
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Contacts

Nnamdi Lowrie

Principal

Deloitte Consulting LLP

nlowrie@deloitte.com

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