

CFO Strategic Empowerment Series 2

How CFOs Achieve Structured Finance
Procedures and Start to Act Strategically

CFO Strategic Empowerment Series 2

How CFOs Achieve Structured Finance Procedures and Start to Act Strategically

The number one priority for CFOs and finance executives in 2015 is improvement in strategic planning, according to the FERF/Protiviti 2015 Finance Priorities Survey. It establishes that cash clarity is king, and that means there should be an emphasis on better analytical tools, real-time capabilities and a consistent drive toward more holistic, ERP-level and best-in-class solutions.

Capable Strategy is Founded on Functional Capacity

When you're spending your valuable time ensuring that the basic transactional pieces of your daily operations are performed correctly, there's little time left to leverage today's powerful metrics for strategic planning and business development. The first step to building a mature finance department capable of advanced strategic planning is to implement structured financial procedures, freeing up your team's time for higher-level analysis.

The Right Talent, with the Right Tools, Drives Change

As CFO of an adaptive corporation in 2015, sustainable growth should be a core motivator. To support that long-term, manageable growth, walk through the steps of Unit4's unique path to financial maturity. Focus on building a mature finance team that is capable not just of transactional excellence, but of engagement in higher-order analysis and strategic planning. Include the following basic components, each of which builds on its predecessor to improve your financial department's level of maturity:

1. Standardize for Ease of Operations

Structured finance procedures are the first, most critical step to improving your financial team's analytical performance. Standardized systems and organized digital data storage allow your financial team to improve daily operations. This paper will

focus on this first, most pivotal step to improving a firm's financial operations. Such standardization enables Step 2 (Optimization) by removing structural deficiencies, redundancies and pain points.

2. Optimize to Reduce Risk and Costs while Sharing Services

Optimization isn't just about implementing digital systems, but designing and implementing workflows. Normalized procedures designed for ease and intuitive completion free your team for higher-order tasks.

3. Predict Future Financial and Market Conditions for Better Long-Term Position

Standardized, optimized systems give your team access to the most up-to-the-minute information on the firm's performance, growth and health, along with the time to understand and utilize that information. Furthermore, flexible, real-time analysis in your financial recording tools allows your team to assess the current state of the business and the business environment, improving predictive capacity. When your right-hand analyst can generate a quick ratio based on this morning's numbers, your presentation to the board can't be any more current or relevant. Your business - and the financial department you oversee - will thrive.

4. Drive Profit Growth, Capitalize on Opportunities and Raise the Bar

The first three levels of maturity in a financial

department work together to generate a self-service, highly automated model that reduces the management of financial transactions to a minute percentage of your team's daily functionality. See the business story behind the numbers, then act to guide the future of that story.

Financial and ERP Systems in Service Need a Personal Touch

If you operate in a service-based industry rather than manufacturing or product-specific fields, these four steps can seem easier said than done. Soft skills are highly valued, high-touch customer service is key and individualized, unique contracts are often your bread and butter. Nothing in service seems as cut-and-dried as four steps on a conceptualized graph.

But bear with us.

Unit4's unique ERP software has been developed to include uniquely customized aspects, both internally (for your team) and externally (in order to gather and harness big data). As your team moves with you through the four steps to maturity, your firm's financial and analytical empowerment will grow as well.

Efficient process execution is a key component in effective standardization. As you begin to standardize through the use of ERP capabilities, you will improve your business capabilities and access to data for daily decision making and problem solving. Your service improves, and your clients notice. As you generate new business and/or sign new contracts, your improved workflows and standardized processes will enable you to grow sustainably, while minimizing growing pains. Your expanding business capabilities and data access will continue to grow as you do, providing the foundation for higher-order processes.

That strong foundation improves over time, providing flexibility and elasticity to adapt to change. Unit4's unique People Platform lets you work smarter, not harder, to design your capabilities around the needs of people--both your own employees and the clients you serve. The People Platform (the technological foundation for all Unit4 operations) harnesses the very latest advances in key technologies. Leverage social and mobile technologies, cloud storage, big data and predictive analytics in unprecedented ways and flexible capacities. You can:

- Make changes at a role-specific level.
- Adapt quickly and organically to even major changes, like acquisitions or mergers.
- Analyze internal or external social media for up-to-the-minute understanding of the social context and opinion surrounding your firm.
- Pre-populate expense reports, improve each team member's individual system interactions and otherwise improve the software for your firm's unique needs.

The Unit4 Elastic Foundation is unique in the ERP industry. Your business's unique data model and business model are incorporated directly into your ERP software, feeding analytical and reporting capacity. The software will even change the look and feel of data entry screens based on user patterns and preferences to maximize productivity and minimize time constraints.

All this functionality combines for an ERP system that provides smart context for all your business's operations.



Starting with Step 1

So how does one begin? Standardizing your financial team's transactional operations with the right financial system is the key to unlocking the analytical potential of digital systems and 21st-century financial reporting. Start with:

Accuracy and Completeness

If you have multiple stakeholders, work from individual spreadsheets, use email to communicate and/or try to work from multiple systems, you are setting your team up for roadblocks, delays and decreased productivity. A single system that provides big-picture reporting and analytical tools is the foundation for each step to a business's financial maturity. Make it strong.

Structure and Procedures

If your training is inconsistent or your team ignores procedural consistencies, you have ground-level problems to correct. Identify problems and their solutions through discussion with your team and regular quality control checks. Set the rules and demand accountability through quality control standards. Start now, before a major system reintegration comes into the picture.

Tasks and Responsibilities

Identify clear ownership for each piece of the financial and reporting puzzle. Let each team member know their function(s) and how those functions overlap. Expect and encourage responsibility. Set standard workflows and communicate your expectations clearly--and more than once. An ERP is only as good as the people that populate and use it, so align your team around accurate and complete reporting by showing them the powerful analytics that can result.

These ground-level tasks will improve accuracy and reduce delays in data availability. A strong and enthusiastic team is the key to successful standardization.

With that standardization in place and Unit4's capability as your foundation, you can now deliver accuracy and efficiency in reporting on your key financials, enjoy fast and intuitive procurement procedures, handle even the most complex expensing with ease and monitor/track periodic accounting processes.

Moving On

Don't stop with Step 1. Standardization and procedural streamlining are just the first step to achieving the full potential of your finance team. Continue to grow your finance department strategically through Unit4's Steps 2, 3 and 4. When report generation and quality control take minutes instead of hours or days, your team has the capacity to devote resources to further process improvement and analytics. You can scale IT, technical and analytical support sustainably over time to best help your company in pursuit of its long-term goals.

Unit4's accounting solutions are designed specifically to help service-industry providers manage an streamline day-to-day transactional tasks. Gain full visibility of audit, control, and finance processes. Deploy internet commerce for your business and gain access to powerful metrics to help you understand what's selling and what isn't, when, where, and why. Manage even complex expenses on a single screen and handle receipts painlessly and accurately. And manage core financials on a unified database with significant and ongoing cost savings.

This is what Step 1 - Standardizing your operations - looks like when operationalized through Unit4.



About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue north of 500M Euro and more than 4000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

unit4.com

Unit4 N.V.

Stationspark 1000

3364 DA Sliedrecht, Postbus 102

3360 AC Sliedrecht, The Netherlands

T +31 (0)184 44 44 44

F +31 (0)184 44 44 45

E info.group@unit4.com

Copyright © Unit4 N.V.

All rights reserved. The information contained in this document is intended for general information only, as it is summary in nature and subject to change. Any third-party brand names and/or trademarks referenced are either registered or unregistered trademarks of their respective owners.

WP150226INT-5405