GrowCFO

Tech Innovation Report

AI in Planning, Budgeting and Performance Management

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Executive Summary

Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A) and Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) are at the heart of strategic decision-making for organizations. CFOs, finance directors, and FP&A leaders are under growing pressure to not only manage traditional processes (planning, budgeting, forecasting) but also to drive performance analysis that encompasses both financial and non-financial metrics.

This white paper outlines the key challenges in FP&A/EPM today, examines emerging trends and evolving requirements across industries, and explores how new technologies – especially AI and machine learning – are transforming planning, forecasting, and performance management. It also provides real-world case studies of organizations that have implemented advanced FP&A tools and techniques, along with expert insights (from Gartner, McKinsey, Accenture, and others) and an overview of leading technology vendors (Oracle, SAP, Anaplan, Workday Adaptive Planning, etc.).

The goal is to equip finance executives with a comprehensive view of the current FP&A/EPM landscape and practical guidance on modernizing these functions for better agility and strategic impact.

What’s the problem

Key Challenges in FP&A and EPM

Finance teams continue to face significant challenges in Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A) and Enterprise Performance Management (EPM), which hinder their efficiency and strategic impact.

These persistent issues indicate a pressing need for finance teams to evolve their processes, skills, and technology to enhance their strategic contributions.

Intensive Manual Work & Data Overload FP&A professionals spend a significant portion of their time—**65%—on data collection and validation rather than analysis**[1]. Fragmented data sources lead to poor quality and slow reporting cycles, with over half of FP&A teams primarily using Excel. The explosion of available data complicates processing and makes it difficult to extract actionable insights.

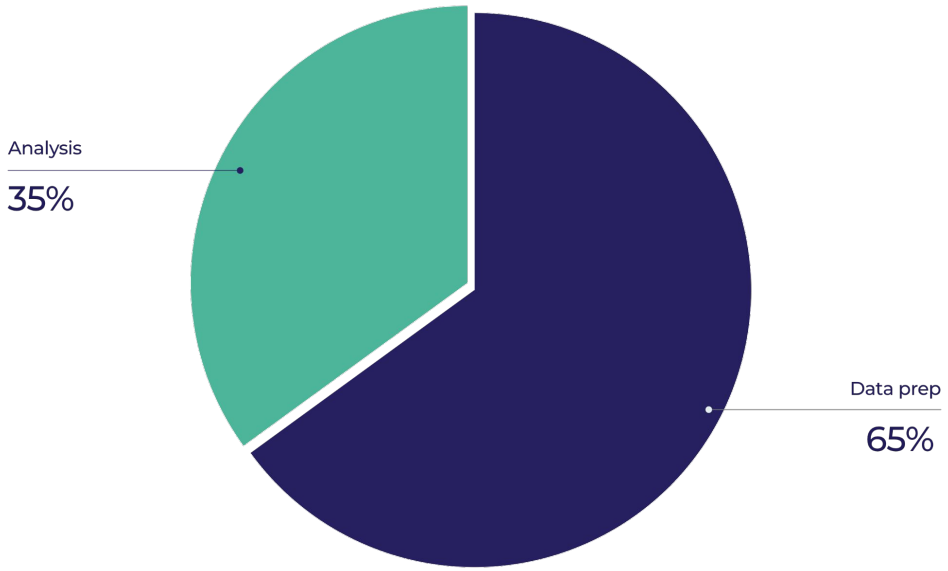
Planning, Budgeting & Forecasting Pain Points Annual budgeting processes are often slow and inflexible, with **29% of companies taking over 10 days to finalize forecasts**[6]. Many finance teams struggle to predict performance beyond six months due to economic volatility and outdated methods. Misalignment between top-down corporate goals and bottom-up departmental plans creates credibility issues, while reliance on static budgets leaves organizations ill-equipped for dynamic market conditions.

Performance Analysis & Metrics Challenges Organizations find it challenging to integrate financial and non-financial performance indicators, preventing a holistic view of enterprise performance. Although data-driven decision-making is increasing, finance teams often deliver insights too slowly. Explaining performance deviations requires cumbersome manual effort due to the scattered nature of the data.

Organizational and Skills Gaps There is a growing demand for data science and analytics skills in FP&A, yet many teams feel underprepared. **Over 40% of FP&A professionals report being overworked**[2]**,** complicating talent retention and the ability to meet new demands. Additionally, internal resistance to adopting new technologies highlights the need for a cultural shift toward data-driven decision-making.

Intensive Manual Work & Data Overload

- **Time Spent on Low-Value Tasks:** A significant portion of FP&A effort goes into collecting, reconciling, and validating data rather than analysis.
- In fact, only **35% of FP&A professionals' time is spent on high-value tasks like generating insights, with too much time devoted to data gathering and validation**[1].



- **Data Silos and Quality Issues:** Finance often deals with fragmented data sources and poor data quality. **9% of organizations cite poor data quality as a hindrance to data-driven decisions**[4] , and teams must reconcile massive datasets. This slows down reporting and planning cycles. Ensuring a "single source of truth" remains difficult when 52% of FP&A teams still primarily use Excel for planning[5].
- **Information Overload:** The volume of available business data has exploded, outpacing FP&A's ability to process it. Traditional systems require extensive **data reconciliation and consolidation before insights can be extracted for budgets or forecasts**, delaying decision-making. Finance teams struggle to filter signal from noise in big data, especially when handling **non-financial metrics (operational KPIs, customer data, etc.)** alongside financials.

Planning, Budgeting & Forecasting Pain Points

- **Lengthy, Rigid Budget Cycles:** Annual budgeting processes are often slow and inflexible. Organizations can take weeks or months to build budgets that are quickly outdated by market shifts. **29% of companies report it takes more than 10 days just to finalize a forecast**[6], reflecting process inefficiency. Such drawn-out cycles make it hard to respond to fast-changing conditions.

- **Forecasting Uncertainty:** In an era of high volatility, predicting future performance is increasingly challenging. **63% of finance teams struggle to forecast beyond a six-month horizon**[6] , underscoring uncertainty in markets and the limits of current forecasting methods. Finance executives cite economic volatility (e.g. supply chain disruptions, labor shortages) as a major stressor, since traditional FP&A processes geared toward quarterly or annual forecasts cannot keep up with real-time challenges.

- **Top-Down vs Bottom-Up Misalignment:** A frequent hurdle is reconciling top-down targets with bottom-up plans from business units. **Many organizations face misalignment between corporate goals and departmental budgets, requiring FP&A to harmonize these approaches for better outcomes** . Without alignment, plans lack credibility and strategic coherence.

- **Static Planning in a Dynamic World:** Relying on static annual plans or outdated methods is risky. Yet **45% of companies still rely on traditional static budgets**[6] , which cannot easily adapt to shocks. This is a challenge when new expectations are for continuous planning and rolling forecasts.

Performance Analysis & Metrics Challenges

- **Linking Financial and Non-Financial Metrics:** Modern EPM requires analyzing drivers of performance that include non-financial indicators (customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, ESG metrics, etc.). Many organizations struggle to integrate these into their performance dashboards. Siloed systems mean KPIs like customer churn or production yield might not directly tie to financial outcomes in planning models. CFOs find it challenging to present a holistic view of enterprise performance.

- **Timely Insight Generation:** Turning data into actionable insights quickly is a common pain point. Even though data-driven decision-making is rising (with **64% of decisions now data-driven, up 12% from last year[3]**), finance teams often deliver insights too slowly. One study found **"digital world class" finance organizations can generate forecasts 57% faster than typical teams[7]** , highlighting a gap for others. Many CFOs lack confidence in their team's ability to provide timely, forward-looking analysis.

- **Variance Analysis & Accountability:** Explaining "why" performance deviates from plan is cumbersome when data is scattered. Diagnostic analytics (looking at root causes of variances) often require manual effort. Gartner projects that by 2027, up to **90% of "what happened" and "why it happened" analysis in finance will be fully automated[8]** , indicating that many organizations have yet to reach this level of analytical maturity today.

Organizational and Skills Gaps

- **Shortage of Strategic Skills:** Traditional accounting skills are not enough in modern FP&A. Finance teams need data science, analytics, and business partnership capabilities. A recent survey **shows demand for business partnering skills in FP&A has jumped – 50% of teams now prioritize it, a 9% increase**. However, only **19% of teams feel they are "optimized to perform[38]**", indicating many FP&A functions are still maturing.

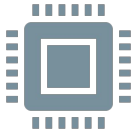
- **Talent & Bandwidth Constraints:** FP&A teams often feel overworked. Over 40% of mid-career FP&A professionals report being **overworked, which raises retention risks[2]**. Talent shortages in analytical roles make it hard to keep up with new demands (like advanced analytics). Upskilling is crucial – finance leaders are partnering with HR to reskill staff in areas like digital tools and analytics . (Suggested visual: an infographic listing top skills needed in modern FP&A: data analysis, technology aptitude, communication, business acumen, etc., versus current skill gaps.)

- **Change Management & Culture:** Adopting new FP&A technologies and methods faces internal resistance. Long-standing reliance on spreadsheets and legacy processes creates a cultural barrier to change. Finance teams must shift toward a data-driven culture. As one executive noted, success with AI/ML in FP&A required **strong C-level support and a move toward fact-based decision-making throughout management**. Change management is as important as the technology itself in overcoming FP&A's challenges.

Recent Trends and Evolving Requirements

The FP&A and EPM landscape is evolving rapidly as organizations respond to economic uncertainty, technological change, and higher expectations from the business. Key trends shaping FP&A across industries include:

Demand for Agility and Continuous Planning



Extended Planning & Analysis (xP&A)

Data-Driven Decisions and Analytics

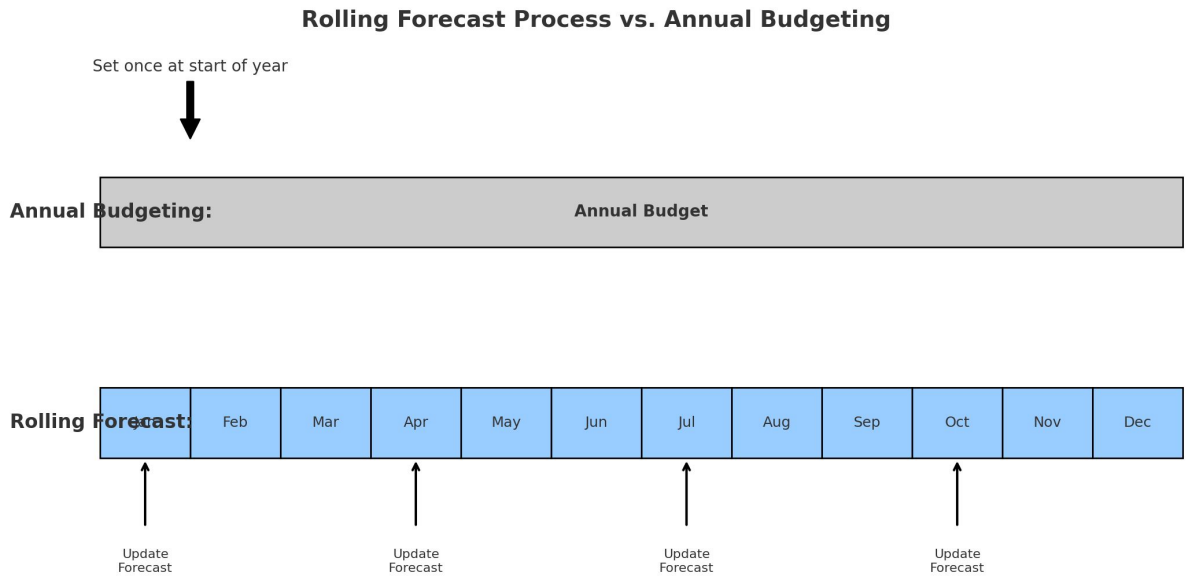
Emphasis on Scenario Modeling and Risk Management

FP&A as Strategic Business Partner

Incorporating ESG and Non-Financial Metrics

Demand for Agility and Continuous Planning

Gone are the days of set-and-forget annual plans. CFOs now emphasize agility – the ability to re-forecast and re-plan quickly as conditions change. Rolling forecasts (continuously updating outlooks) and scenario planning are becoming mainstream. **Nearly half of companies (49%) now use rolling forecasts, up 2% from last year**[9] , though many still also maintain annual budgets. The recent global disruptions (pandemics, supply chain shocks, geopolitical events) have reinforced that finance must be ready with "plans B and C." Preparedness for uncertainty has risen on the priority list . For example, the Hackett Group notes an **"accelerated emphasis on preparedness for uncertainty"**[10] among finance priorities, even as digital transformation and business partnering remain top focus areas . Finance teams are expected to produce timely re-forecasts and "what-if" analyses on demand.



Annual Budgeting: A fixed budget is created once at the beginning of the year and remains unchanged.

Rolling Forecasting: Forecasts are updated periodically (e.g., quarterly), allowing for ongoing adjustments based on current data.

Extended Planning & Analysis (xP&A)

- FP&A is extending beyond finance into operational domains – a trend Gartner dubs **Extended Planning & Analysis (xP&A)**. This approach aligns financial plans with operational plans in sales, HR, supply chain, IT, and more for an integrated enterprise-wide planning process. The goal is to break down silos so that all parts of the business plan on the same assumptions and objectives.

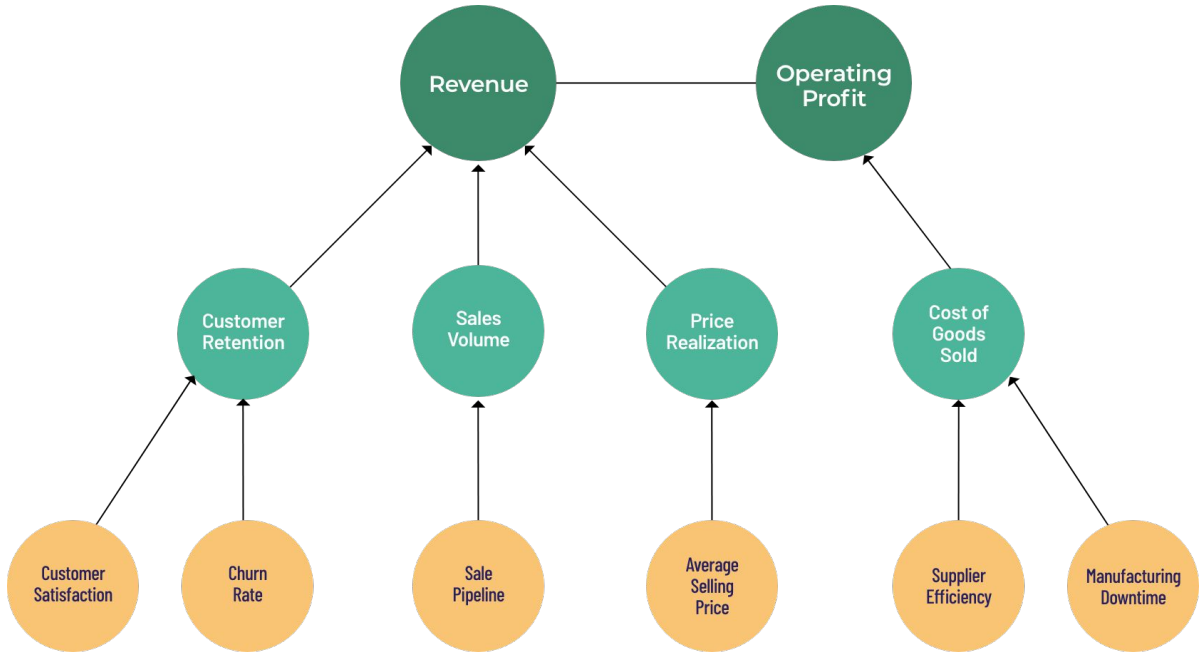
- For instance, **Oracle's cloud EPM platform touts the ability to model and plan across finance, HR, supply chain, and sales on a unified platform[11]** , reflecting demand for connected planning. Similarly, **Anaplan's "Connected Planning" approach lets companies link strategic, financial, and operational plans in real time[12]**.

- This trend means FP&A professionals increasingly collaborate with other departments, facilitating a single conversation around both financial metrics (revenue, margins) and non-financial drivers (headcount, units produced, pipeline coverage, etc.). According to a recent webinar poll of finance professionals, **44% have already implemented integrated (cross-functional) planning models, and 34% plan to do so[39]** , demonstrating momentum toward xP&A.

Data-Driven Decisions and Analytics

Organizations are doubling down on data-driven decision-making. As noted by **The FP&A Trends Survey 2024** , **64% of decisions are now data-driven, a 12% year-over-year increase**[3] . This reflects both greater data availability and improved analytics tools. FP&A is expected to turn big data into predictive insights – spotting trends, leading indicators, and risks from both internal and external data. Advanced analytics (such as predictive modeling, regression analysis, and even AI-based predictions) are increasingly used to augment human judgment. There is also a push for self-service analytics within finance and for business users: interactive dashboards, drill-down reports, and real-time KPI monitoring. However, becoming truly data-driven requires investment in data infrastructure and quality. Many CFOs are maintaining or increasing spending on analytics and technology despite budget pressures – **78% of CFOs planned to increase or maintain enterprise digital investments**[14], viewing digital/analytics capabilities as key to navigating inflation and volatility. The mandate is clear: use data to provide forward-looking insight, not just backward-looking reports.

Example KPI Tree:
Linking Financial Outcomes to Operational Drivers

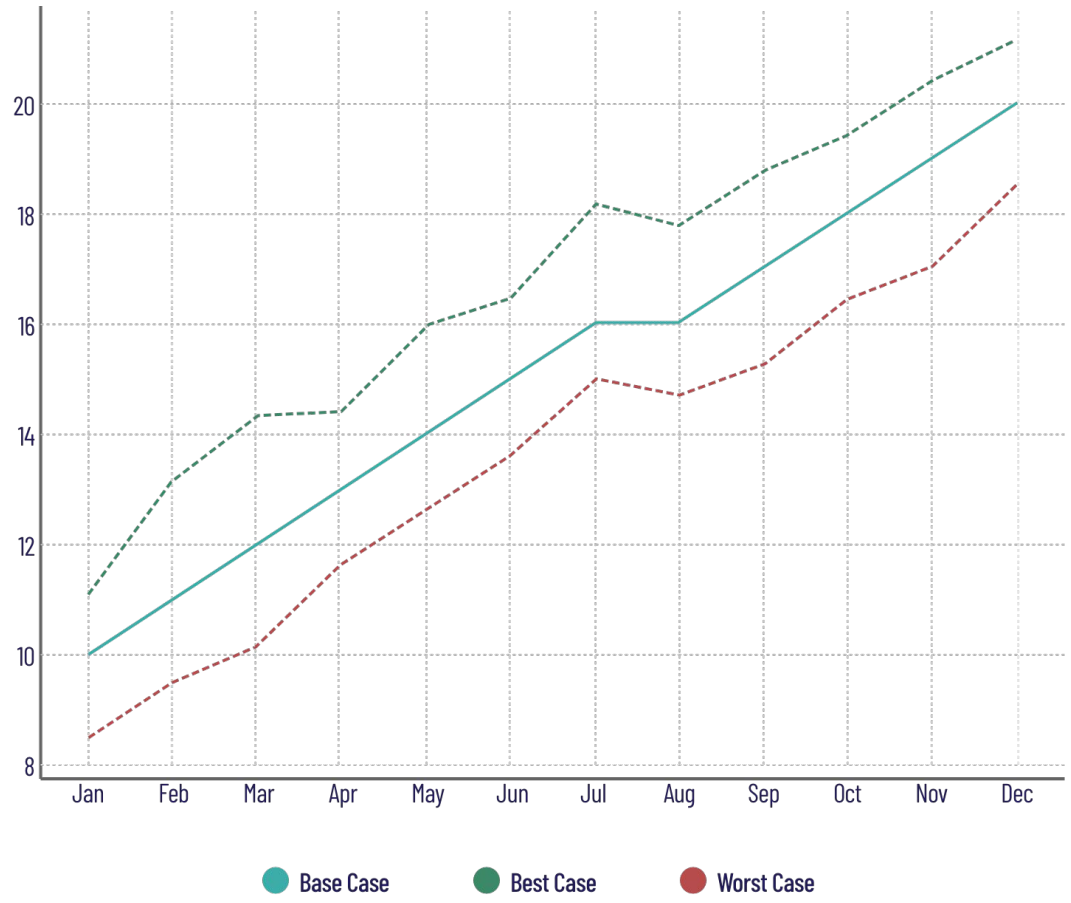


Emphasis on Scenario Modeling and Risk Management

The volatility of recent years has made scenario planning a critical FP&A capability. CFOs want to see the financial impact of various what-if scenarios (e.g., "What if supply costs rise 10%?", "What if we lose a top customer?", or "If a recession hits next year, how do we respond?"). **Scenario planning was highlighted during the pandemic and has only increased in importance** . Yet, not all organizations are there: **21% of FP&A teams cannot run any scenario analyses at all presently[15]** , often due to tool limitations or data issues. On the positive side, about **22% can run scenarios within a day[15]** , which is a benchmark of agility.

The evolving requirement is for scenario modeling tools that are fast, flexible, and use rich data (including external data like market indicators). Some companies are exploring *enterprise digital twins* – virtual models of the business that allow experimentation with complex interdependent scenarios . In financial services, regulators now expect robust scenario and stress-testing (e.g., CCAR in banking). In other industries, boards and management expect FP&A to present a range of outcomes (best case, base case, worst case) and contingency plans. The ability to navigate "what if?" questions and quantify risks is now a core FP&A deliverable.

Scenario Comparison: Revenue Projections (Base / Base / Worst)



FP&A as Strategic Business Partner

The role of FP&A is expanding from number-cruncher to strategic advisor. There is a growing expectation for finance to *partner* with business units, guiding decision-making with financial insight. “Finance business partnering” means working closely with departments like marketing, operations, or R&D to translate strategy into financial terms and ensure accountability. Surveys find CFOs putting high priority on this shift – **business partnering and finance agility rank among the top priorities for finance leaders in 2025** .

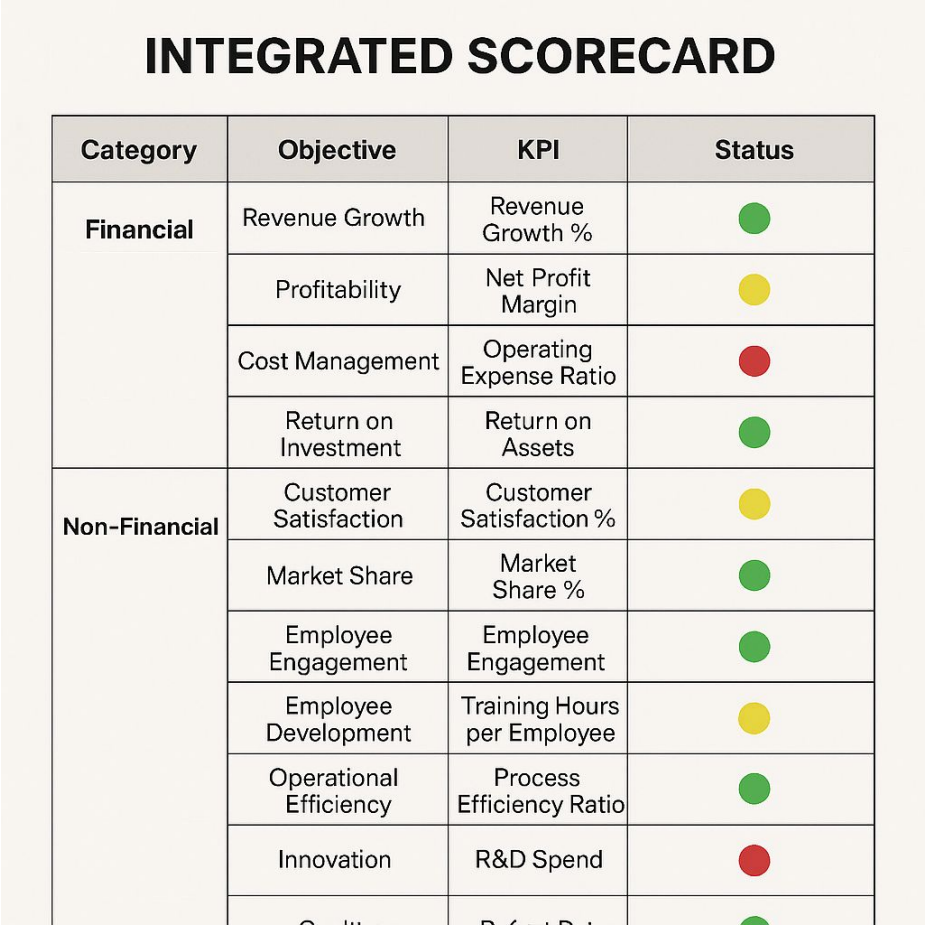
What this means in practice:
FP&A professionals spend more time in cross-functional meetings, use storytelling to communicate insights, and help drive strategic initiatives (such as evaluating new investments or guiding pricing strategy). However, being a true business partner requires freeing up time from mundane tasks (hence the push for automation) and developing soft skills. The payoff is substantial: finance becomes a trusted advisor, not just a reporter of results. A McKinsey article emphasizes that **“next-level FP&A” involves greater speed and flexibility, enabling more effective strategic support across the company**[16] . We also see new titles like “FP&A Business Partner” in organizations, reflecting this dedicated role.

Incorporating ESG and Non-Financial Metrics

As stakeholders focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals and other non-financial outcomes, FP&A teams are asked to measure and plan for these areas too. This includes integrating metrics like carbon emissions, diversity indices, customer satisfaction scores, or quality metrics into performance reports and forecasts. EPM systems are evolving to handle such metrics – for example, Oracle has introduced **EPM for ESG reporting**[17] , and many planning tools now accommodate operational data feeds.

Industry regulators and investors increasingly demand quantification of non-financial impacts, so FP&A must evolve to link these to financial performance (e.g., cost of carbon, or how customer satisfaction drives revenue). The trend is towards a more holistic performance management approach, where success is not only measured in dollars but also in key operational and sustainability metrics. This broadens the scope of FP&A and requires collaboration with departments like sustainability, HR, or operations to gather relevant data.

While this section of the innovation report is brief, it underscores that modern FP&A must widen its aperture beyond the income statement.



INTEGRATED SCORECARD

Category	Objective	KPI	Status
Financial	Revenue Growth	Revenue Growth %	🟢
	Profitability	Net Profit Margin	🟡
	Cost Management	Operating Expense Ratio	🔴
	Return on Investment	Return on Assets	🟢
Non-Financial	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction %	🟡
	Market Share	Market Share %	🟢
	Employee Engagement	Employee Engagement	🟢
	Employee Development	Training Hours per Employee	🟡
	Operational Efficiency	Process Efficiency Ratio	🟢
	Innovation	R&D Spend	🔴

How can technology help?

Emerging Technologies and Platforms Transforming FP&A/EPM

01

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning in FP&A

02

Advanced Analytics and Predictive Modeling

03

Scenario Modeling Tools and “Digital Twins”

04

Cloud-Based FP&A Platforms and Collaboration

1. AI and Machine Learning in FP&A

Predictive Forecasting:

ML algorithms can analyze historical data (and even external data like market trends or weather) to produce statistically driven forecasts for revenue, demand, etc. These algorithms often detect nonlinear relationships and leading indicators better than manual methods. Early results are promising – one global consumer goods company found that **AI/ML-based forecasts were ~1.6% more accurate than manual forecasts**; more importantly, automation enabled them to generate **80% of a full P&L forecast in 2-3 hours, a task that previously took several days and ~200 people**[29] . This speed gain is transformative, allowing finance teams to re-forecast much more frequently.

Anomaly Detection & Variance Analysis

AI can monitor financial results and automatically flag anomalies or variances from plan, explaining drivers faster. Gartner predicts that by **2025, 70% of organizations will use AI/ML to support data quality and modeling tasks, producing not only accurate data but also explaining its derivation**[18] . In practice, this means AI tools can help validate data integrity (detect outliers in data feeds) and perform first-pass variance analysis (e.g., identifying that a sales drop is mainly due to volume vs price, or flagging unusual expense spikes). This greatly reduces the time analysts spend hunting for explanations.

Scenario Generation:

AI can assist in scenario planning by rapidly crunching through thousands of potential combinations of assumptions. **Agent-based simulations** or other AI models can generate scenario outcomes (like best/worst case financial projections under various conditions) far faster than manual Excel tweaks. For example, some companies use ML to model macroeconomic scenarios on their financials to understand potential impacts. During the COVID-19 volatility, such tools proved invaluable to foresee cash flow under different recovery curves.

Decision Support & Prescriptive Analytics

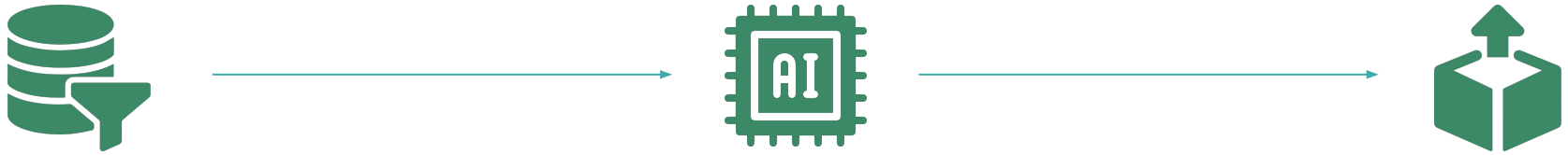
The cutting edge of FP&A is using AI for *prescriptive* advice – not just forecasting what will happen, but suggesting actions. AI systems can analyze data and recommend decisions (e.g., "reduce marketing spend in region X next quarter based on projected ROI drop"). While this is still emerging, finance teams are exploring AI assistants. For instance, **generative AI** (like large language models) might soon be used to produce narrative explanations of financial results or answer executives' questions in plain English by querying financial data. Some vendors are integrating conversational AI (chatbot interfaces) into analytics platforms to let users ask, "Why did revenue drop in April?" and get an AI-generated analysis.

Automation of Routine Processes

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and AI together can automate data consolidation, report generation, and even the initial drafting of commentary. This frees up human analysts for higher-value work. Gartner's vision is that FP&A roles will shift as automation handles the grunt work: indeed, they foresee **finance analysts being augmented by AI such that they focus on interpretation and strategy, not data wrangling** . Real-world adoption is still low – only **6% of FP&A teams have adopted AI in their processes so far[20]** – but this is expected to rise rapidly. A survey in 2022 showed **57% of organizations were planning to adopt AI/ML in FP&A[18]** , indicating a strong pipeline of projects.

Expert Insight (Accenture): *"With AI, agile FP&A teams can uncover hidden patterns from structured and unstructured data and augment finance managers with new insights. This increases the speed and accuracy of forecasting and financial planning, freeing up time to focus on knowledge-driven activities that deliver new value.*[21]*"* This insight underlines how AI is seen as an amplifier for finance teams – improving accuracy and efficiency, not replacing the human judgment but enhancing it.

AI In FP&A From Data to Insights



Inputs:

ERP Data
CRM Data
External Data (Economic, Industry)
Operational KPIs
Historical Financials

AI/ML Engine Functions:

Forecasting
Anomaly Detection
Scenario Generation
Variance Analysis

Outputs:

Faster, Accurate Forecasts
Automated Variance Analysis
Real-Time Alerts
Prescriptive Insights

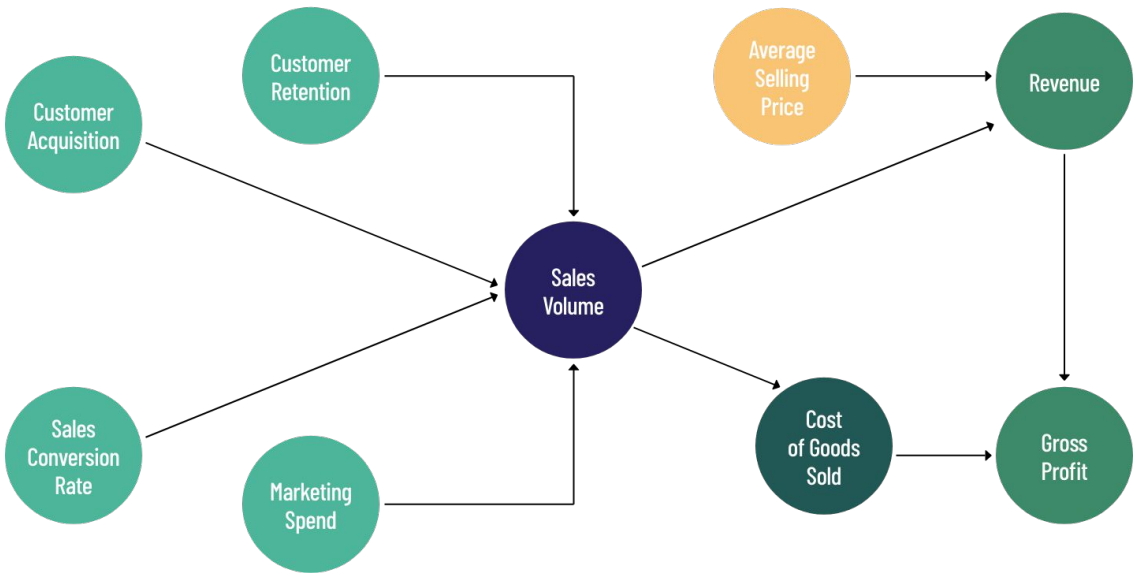
Gartner Predictions[18]
70% of organizations using AI in FP&A by **2025**
90% of finance analytics automated by **2027**

2. Advanced Analytics and Predictive Modeling

Driver-Based Modeling	Many organizations are shifting to driver-based planning, where key business drivers (e.g. customer count, units sold, productivity metrics) feed into financial outcomes. Modern EPM software allows building such models and running sensitivity analyses. However, adoption is still growing – only **9% of companies report their driver-based modeling is fully automated**[40] , suggesting room to expand. As tools improve, more FP&A teams will build dynamic models that instantly show how changing a driver (like sales volume or staffing levels) affects revenue and costs.
Predictive Analytics	Techniques like regression analysis, time-series forecasting, and even machine learning are used to predict future metrics. For example, predictive models can forecast customer churn, which FP&A can translate into revenue impacts. Another example is predicting cash flow based on patterns in receivables and payables. These analytics can be embedded in planning cycles to improve accuracy. EY developed an "Intelligent Forecasting" solution leveraging ML to improve forecast accuracy for clients[23] , reflecting a broader trend of using data science in finance.
Real-Time Dashboards & Alerts	Modern analytics platforms give real-time or near-real-time visibility into performance. FP&A teams are implementing dashboards that update continuously as new data comes in (sales transactions, production data, etc.). This enables "rolling" monitoring, not just periodic reporting. Some companies set up alert systems – e.g., if sales in a region fall 10% below forecast, an alert triggers FP&A to investigate immediately, rather than waiting for month-end.
Cloud Data Platforms	Underpinning advanced analytics is the move to cloud-based data warehouses and analytics platforms, which allow large-scale data crunching. Finance is increasingly partnering with IT to ensure finance data lakes or warehouses are in place. This also facilitates incorporating external data (economic indicators, benchmarks) into analysis. For instance, scenario models might pull in real-time interest rate or commodity price data to adjust forecasts. Cloud analytics also improve collaboration: multiple stakeholders can view and interact with the same data in real-time, which is crucial for integrated planning.

Actual vs Predicted Revenue (ML Model)

Driver-Based Financial Model: Operational Inputs to Financial Outcomes



3. Scenario Modeling Tools and Digital Twins

scenario analysis is critical – and new tools are making it easier. Many EPM software solutions now have built-in scenario modeling modules, allowing finance teams to create and compare scenarios with a few clicks. Key advancements include:

On-the-Fly Scenario Analysis:

Rather than maintaining separate Excel files for each scenario, leading tools let users toggle assumptions (GDP growth rates, pricing, etc.) and automatically see the impact on financial statements. About **22% of organizations can run scenario analyses within a day**[15] , thanks to such tools, enabling quick turnarounds to management queries.

Monte Carlo Simulations:

Some companies employ Monte Carlo simulation for key forecasts (e.g., projecting a range of possible EBITDA outcomes with probabilities). This leverages computational power to model uncertainty more rigorously. Such approaches provide distributions rather than single-point forecasts, giving CFOs a sense of best-case, worst-case probabilities.

Enterprise Digital Twins:

An emerging concept is the digital twin of the enterprise – a comprehensive financial model that mirrors the real business. Accenture highlights that *"enterprise digital twins" are an emerging capability that let FP&A model complex interdependencies not handled by current tools*[24] . For instance, a digital twin could simulate how a supply chain disruption cascades through operations into financial results, capturing second- and third-order effects. While still nascent, this technology could significantly improve strategic planning and risk management.

Collaborative Scenario Planning:

New platforms allow multiple stakeholders to participate in scenario planning simultaneously (e.g., finance, operations, and strategy teams co-create scenarios in a shared tool). This ensures broader perspectives are considered and speeds up alignment on action plans for each scenario. During crisis periods, many companies have set up war-room style processes where FP&A rapidly models scenarios for leadership decisions – having agile tools is essential for that.

4. Cloud-Based FP&A Platforms and Collaboration

The shift to cloud-based FP&A/EPM solutions underlies many of the technology advances above. Cloud platforms (such as **Oracle Cloud EPM, SAP Analytics Cloud, Anaplan, Workday Adaptive Planning, OneStream**, etc.[26]) provide a unified environment for planning, forecasting, and reporting accessible from anywhere. Benefits and features driving adoption:

- **Single Version of Truth:** Cloud FP&A solutions typically integrate data from ERP, CRM, HR, and other systems into one platform, eliminating data fragmentation. This ensures everyone works off the same numbers (actuals and plan data). It addresses the data silo challenge where Excel files proliferated with different assumptions.
- **Real-Time Data and Collaboration:** In-cloud, multiple users can work concurrently on models or input their plans, with changes visible in real time. This greatly improves collaboration among distributed finance teams and with business partners. For example, budget owners can input forecasts directly into the system, and FP&A can see consolidated results instantly. Version control issues are minimized.
- **Frequent Updates & Best Practices:** Cloud vendors push regular updates (often quarterly), introducing new features like AI algorithms, improved user interfaces, and best-practice templates. Users benefit from innovation without lengthy upgrade projects. This is particularly useful as vendors incorporate AI/ML features natively into their tools (for instance, some planning software now offer AI-driven forecast suggestions or anomaly detection out-of-the-box).
- **Scalability and Performance:** Cloud computing power allows running complex calculations (like large-scale scenarios or consolidations) much faster than before. Models that might choke spreadsheets can run in seconds on a cloud platform with in-memory processing. This is crucial for enterprises with large data volumes or many users (e.g., a global company with hundreds of planners). For instance, **Hapag-Lloyd, a large logistics company, was able to involve 400 planners in a fully integrated planning model linking sales, capacity, and cost drivers on a unified platform[23]**– something only feasible with a robust tool.
- **Security and Control:** Modern platforms also offer robust security (data encryption, access controls) and audit trails which are important for financial data integrity. Finance can control who sees/edits what, which was harder to manage in email spreadsheet workflows.
- **API and Integration:** Cloud FP&A tools often come with APIs to connect to other systems or ingest data automatically (e.g., daily sales from a CRM). This ensures plans and forecasts are continually refreshed with the latest actuals. Integration extends to visualization tools as well – many FP&A platforms have dashboards, or integrate with BI tools, to present results in rich visual formats.

The pandemic accelerated the move to cloud planning solutions as teams went remote – being able to access planning systems from anywhere became essential. As a result, even organizations that once hesitated to move sensitive financial processes off-premise are now embracing cloud EPM. **78% of CFOs in 2023 indicated they would maintain or increase digital investments (like cloud EPM) despite cost pressures[14]** , underscoring the strategic importance of these platforms.

5. Other Notable Technologies

Robotic Process Automation (RPA): RPA bots are being used to automate routine, repetitive tasks in finance. For FP&A, this might include pulling data from various systems, refreshing reporting templates, or even validating report mappings. RPA can bridge gaps where systems aren't integrated, reducing manual effort (for example, a bot could transfer data from an old legacy system into the planning tool nightly). This improves cycle times and reduces errors.

Natural Language Generation (NLG): Some companies are experimenting with NLG software to draft narrative analysis (e.g., the MD&A section of financial reports or commentary on variances). The software takes numerical data and produces human-readable paragraphs. While not yet widespread, NLG could assist FP&A by providing first drafts of performance commentary, which analysts can then refine.

Mobile and Chat Interfaces: Accessing FP&A insights on mobile devices or via chatbots is a convenience factor for busy executives. A few vendors offer mobile apps for their EPM tools, allowing CFOs to review key metrics or even approve budgets on the go. Chatbot interfaces (often leveraging AI) can allow users to ask questions ("What's our forecasted cash for next quarter?") in a Slack or Teams chat and get an instant answer from the FP&A system. This trend aligns with making data and insights more accessible to decision makers in real time.

Blockchain for Finance Data: While early-stage, there is talk of using blockchain ledgers for certain finance data to ensure immutability and trust. In performance management, this could apply to intercompany transactions or shared metrics in consortiums. It's not mainstream yet, but innovative finance teams are keeping an eye on it for niche use cases where data provenance is crucial.

Emerging Technologies in FPA and Their Benefits

Technology	Key benefit
AI / Machine Learning	Improves forecast accuracy and enables anomaly detection
Predictive Analytics	Anticipates future trends and supports data-driven decisions
Cloud FP&A Platforms	Enables real-time, collaborative planning at scale
Robotic Process Automation (RPA)	Automates repetitive finance tasks and data transfers
Natural Language Generation (NLG)	Automatically drafts narrative insights from financial data
Scenario Modeling Tools	Allows fast 'what-if' analysis for strategic agility
Digital Twins	Simulates enterprise performance under multiple scenarios
Self-Service Dashboards	Empowers users to explore data without relying on IT

Key Vendors and Platforms

The Vendor Landscape is Changing

There is emerging, though still early-stage, evidence suggesting a shift in FP&A (Financial Planning & Analysis) from large, monolithic vendor platforms toward smaller, more agentic AI tools. This trend aligns with broader enterprise movements toward composable tech stacks, increased flexibility, and AI-native tooling. A number of things are driving the change:

1. Dissatisfaction with Legacy Vendors
Gartner and BARC surveys consistently show that users of traditional EPM vendors (e.g., Oracle, SAP, IBM) are frustrated by:

- Long implementation cycles
- Lack of flexibility/customisation
- High TCO (total cost of ownership)
- Limited real-time or predictive capabilities

Many finance teams are seeking lighter, more agile tools — often using Excel or Google Sheets as a fallback — even after investing in enterprise planning suites.

2. Rise of Composable FP&A Architectures

- Composability is becoming a defining theme in enterprise tech, including finance.
- Instead of relying on one big EPM system, companies are combining best-in-class tools: e.g., using **Pigment for planning**, **Stampli or Tipalti for AP**, **Agicap for cash forecasting**, and **Notion/Excel for custom processes**.
- Agentic tools can slot in more easily to this modular approach, performing specialist tasks like scenario generation, driver sensitivity, or narrative reporting.

3. Adoption of AI Copilots and Agents
Tools like **GPT-powered Excel add-ins**, **Microsoft Copilot**, **Causal**, and **Numeral** are being used for:

- Natural language querying of data
- Generating insights or forecasts
- Automating repetitive tasks like data cleansing or variance explanations

These tools are cheap to adopt, quick to test, and don't require ripping out existing systems — enabling "bottom-up innovation" by FP&A teams.

4. Vendor Strategy Shifts Acknowledge This Trend
Even big players like **Workday Adaptive**, **Anaplan**, and **Oracle** are moving toward more "agentic" experiences:

- AI-powered scenario planning
- Embedded machine learning forecasts
- Integration with AI copilots

Their pivot signals competitive pressure from smaller, more nimble solutions.

5. Startups and Point Solutions Are Gaining Traction
New AI-native FP&A tools (e.g., **Causal**, **FlowFi**, **Basis**) are building focused solutions that use agents for:

- Real-time forecasting
- Revenue modeling
- SaaS metrics reporting

They often win with SMEs or scale-ups who don't want complex enterprise systems.

6. Finance Teams Taking Control

- There's a cultural shift in finance — teams want more control, transparency, and adaptability.
- Agentic AI gives analysts superpowers *without* depending on IT, complex integrations, or long vendor negotiations.
- This aligns with broader **"citizen developer"** and **no-code/low-code** trends in finance ops.

📊 Illustrative Use Case

A scale-up company using Google Sheets and Xero integrates **GPT-powered forecasting agents** to: Run budget-vs-actual commentary
Reforecast next quarter in seconds using historical drivers
Simulate 3 hiring plans across 6 business units

They avoided traditional FP&A systems entirely.

Large Enterprise Solutions

The market for Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A) and Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) solutions is diverse, featuring both established vendors and new cloud-based entrants. Here's a summary of key players and their offerings:

Oracle (Oracle Fusion Cloud EPM): A comprehensive suite that integrates planning across finance and operations. Known for its robust functionality, it supports connected planning and is particularly strong for large enterprises. Recognized as a leader in Gartner's Magic Quadrant.

SAP (SAP Analytics Cloud & BPC): Offers a unified platform for planning and analytics, with strong integration with SAP ERP systems. Known for its analytics capabilities and real-time data integration, many SAP users are migrating to the cloud-based SAC.

Anaplan: A cloud-native platform focusing on Connected Planning. Its flexible modeling capabilities and collaborative features make it suitable for large enterprises looking for custom solutions. Consistently rated highly by Gartner.

Workday Adaptive Planning: Known for user-friendliness and quick deployment, this solution excels in budgeting and forecasting for mid to large organizations. It integrates well with Workday ERP and has strong capabilities in scenario modeling.

OneStream: A unified platform for FP&A, financial consolidation, and reporting, appealing to larger enterprises. It offers a single source of truth and integrates advanced analytics and AI features, positioning itself as a leader in the market.

Board[26]: Combines business intelligence and corporate performance management in one platform. Its flexibility allows organizations to tailor planning applications, making it suitable for complex models.

IBM (Planning Analytics / TM1): Features a powerful calculation engine and Excel integration, suitable for complex financial modeling. While historically lagging in user experience, it has modernized its interface and offers both cloud and on-premises deployment options.

These platforms cater to a range of organizational needs, emphasizing integration, flexibility, and advanced analytics capabilities.

Middle Market Solutions

There are several other notable vendors in the FP&A/EPM space that cater to specific segments or offer unique features:

- **Planful** (formerly Host Analytics) – a cloud FP&A solution popular with mid-market companies for ease of use in budgeting, reporting, and with a focus on quick time-to-value.
- **Vena** – an Excel-based FP&A platform (uses Excel as the front-end but a database back-end) favored by finance teams that want to keep an Excel interface. It often serves mid-sized firms and was noted as a strong performer (a "Challenger") in some rankings.
- **Prophix** – provides budgeting, planning, and reporting mainly for mid-market, known for its automation and user-friendly interface.
- **Jedox** – a German CPM platform with an Excel-like interface and strong modeling capabilities, also recognized in Gartner reports for its flexible deployment and suitability for planning at scale.
- **Adaptive (Workday)** – already covered above under Workday, but worth noting it's used by many midsize firms and some enterprises.
- **Emerging tech-driven startups**: e.g., **Pigment, DataRails, Mosaic, Abacum** – these are newer FP&A tools focusing on flexibility, cloud connectivity, and often targeting tech startups or mid-market companies with more modern UIs and AI features. They are not market leaders yet, but are pushing innovation (like AI-driven analysis or easier integrations with cloud data sources).

Planful - AI-Enabled FP&A and Workforce Planning

The Next Era of Finance in Europe: 2025 Finance Survey, conducted by Planful, showed AI adoption is gaining momentum in FP&A but remains uneven across EMEA.

The survey identifies key drivers of transformation, including:

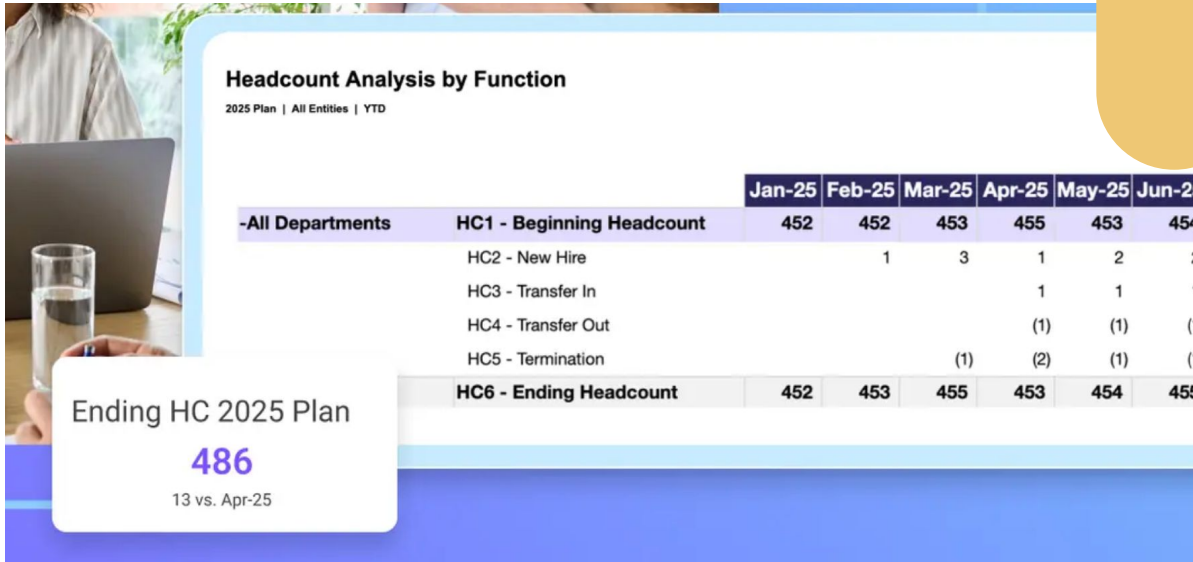
AI and automation to accelerate forecasting, anomaly detection, and decision-making.

The need for **integrated workforce planning** linking Finance and HR for more accurate people-cost forecasting.

The push for **tech stack simplification** to improve efficiency and reduce data silos.

Planful's Workforce Pro - The next evolution in workforce planning

- Model headcount, cost drivers & financial impact—not just static reports
- Plan people investments in line with strategy
- Enable finance & HR to avoid budget surprises



Planful = Finance agility + strategic workforce planning in one platform

planful

Drivetrain: AI-native Business Planning Platform

Drivetrain brings the speed of AI and the clarity of a modern planning platform; helping finance teams forecast faster and decide smarter.

Your Data. Unified. Instantly: With 800+ integrations, Drivetrain provides real-time, analysis-ready data; no manual work needed.

AI Where It Matters Most: Build models, and generate reports in natural language.
AI Agents handle everything from complex data transforms to multidimensional models.

Fast Time to Value: Rapid deployment, quick ramp-up, and an intuitive self-serve interface deliver the lowest total cost of ownership in the category.

- Cash Flow Forecasting
- Revenue Planning
- Sales Capacity Planning
- Financial Consolidations
- Headcount Planning
- 3-Statement Reporting
- Investor Reporting
- Expense Planning

98%
avg reduction in data consolidation time

5+
days saved every month on reporting

6-8
weeks average go-live time (G2)

5.7
months average payback period (G2)

Trusted by finance teams across 17+ countries

OBSERVE.AI · POSTMAN · ADORE ME · teikametrics · dental intelligence · FERMÀT · matillion · rightworks

See Drivetrain in Action

Excel & Power BI

Microsoft Excel (legacy but ubiquitous): It must be said – Excel is *still* one of the most widely used "FP&A tools" on the planet. Many organizations continue to rely on spreadsheet models for budgeting and forecasting.

As noted, **over half (52%) of FP&A teams still use Excel as a primary planning tool**.[28]

Excel's familiarity and flexibility are unmatched, but its limitations (error-proneness, scalability issues, lack of collaboration) drive the move to dedicated FP&A platforms. In modern EPM strategies,

Excel often remains in use as a front-end or ad-hoc analysis tool, even if the corporate plan is managed in a central system.

Most FP&A software now offer Excel add-ins or integrations to allow users to work in Excel while pulling data from the centralized database – aiming to give the "best of both worlds."

The continued reliance on Excel is a reminder that any new solution must be adopted carefully; user adoption (change management) is as important as technical capability.

How are companies achieving automation using Power BI, Power Query and Python for Excel?

Companies are increasingly achieving *automation in FP&A and reporting workflows* by combining **Power BI**, **Power Query**, and **Python for Excel** to build low-code, scalable, and flexible automation pipelines — often without needing full-scale IT involvement. Here's how they do it:

Data Preparation & Ingestion – Power Query:

- Automates data extraction from various sources (ERP, CRM, cloud databases).
- Supports scheduled data refreshes in Power BI to keep dashboards current.
- Offers no-code tools for merging, pivoting, filtering, and deduplicating datasets.
- **Example**: Automatically pulls daily revenue and cost data from an ERP for rolling forecasts.

Automated Reporting & Dashboards – Power BI:

- Dashboards auto-refresh with new data, providing real-time visualizations (P&L, KPIs).
- Implements row-level security for tailored user views and automates alerts for key exceptions.
- **Example:** Alerts triggered when gross margin falls below target.

Advanced Logic and Forecasting – Python:

- Enhances automation with predictive models for forecasting and custom transformations.
- Facilitates scenario simulations and uses NLP for financial commentary analysis.
- **Example:** Uses Python for a rolling 12-month forecast based on historical data.

Automation of Manual Excel Tasks – Python for Excel:

- Automates calculations, chart creation, and data reshaping directly in Excel without macros.
- Utilizes Python libraries like pandas and matplotlib for enhanced functionality.
- **Example:** Generates and formats a weekly board pack, including forecasts and visuals.

By chaining these tools together, companies create repeatable, robust automation pipelines:

Power Query pulls and transforms data from source systems
Power BI or **Excel dashboards** visualize and distribute insights

Python injects intelligence (forecasting, commentary, simulation)
Scheduled refreshes and workflows automate everything with minimal manual touch

Industry specific solutions

Manufacturing & Industrial

Key Focus: Integration with production planning and supply chain (S&OP)[34].
Challenges: Demand forecasting, inventory optimization, linking operational metrics (e.g., machine uptime) to financial outcomes.
Tools: Scenario planning for commodity price fluctuations and disruptions; integrated business planning software for aligning financial plans with sales forecasts and factory capacities.
Trends: Advanced analytics and AI for demand forecasting; capital expenditure planning; cost optimization through lean initiatives..

Financial Services

Key Focus: Regulatory compliance and risk management[35].
Challenges: Stress testing, scenario analysis, managing large data volumes, frequent rolling forecasts due to market volatility.
Collaboration: Close integration with Treasury for liquidity management.
Trends: Use of AI for customer analytics and revenue forecasting; emphasis on data privacy and cloud adoption.

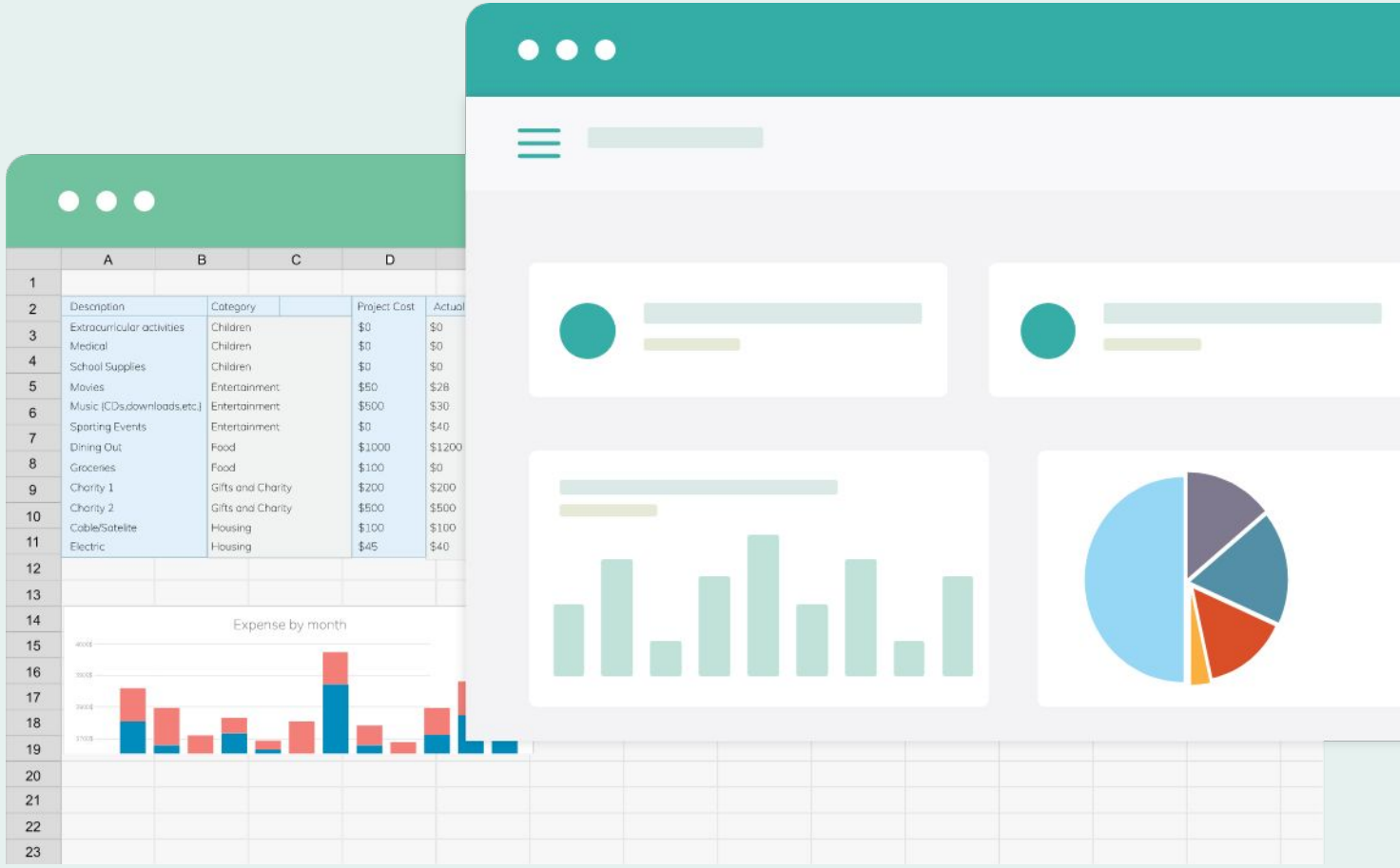
SaaS/Tech

Key Focus: Metrics like Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR) and customer churn.[37]
Challenges: Complex revenue forecasting due to subscription models, linking financial outcomes to key performance metrics.
Tools: Specialized dashboards and scenario planning for growth strategies.
Trends: Agile forecasting cycles; adoption of cloud planning tools, data visualization, and AI; stock-based compensation forecasting due to heavy equity use.

Healthcare

Key Focus: Managing uncertain patient volumes and high fixed costs.[36]
Challenges: Linking clinical metrics (e.g., bed occupancy) to financial performance; workforce planning amid staffing shortages.
Tools: Scenario planning around reimbursement models and policies; specialized FP&A solutions to handle complexity.
Trends: Use of analytics to predict patient admissions; service line profitability analysis combining clinical and financial data.

Case Studies – Advanced FP&A in Action



Global Consumer Goods Company:
AI-Enhanced Forecasting

Challenge: Frequent forecast inaccuracies and long cycle times involving hundreds of stakeholders.

Solution: Implemented an AI-driven forecasting tool to augment the traditional planning process. The AI model was trained on historical sales, marketing spend, and economic data.

Results: The company found that **AI-generated predictions improved forecast accuracy by ~1.6%** compared to manual forecasts. More strikingly, they automated a large portion of the forecasting work – *"80% of the full P&L is now generated automatically in 2-3 hours, whereas before it took several days and around 200 people".* This freed up the FP&A team's time, allowing analysts to focus on interpreting results and partnering with business units on action plans. Post-implementation, finance staff reported spending more time on strategy and **business partnering, calling it a "skills transformation" in FP&A.** This case exemplifies how AI and automation can compress planning cycles and elevate the role of finance.

Source: Accenture[29]

Fintech Company:

ML-Based Forecasting & Cost Optimization

Challenge: A rapidly growing fintech startup struggled with forecasting expenses and aligning them with revenues. The manual process led to reactive cost management and surprises in cash burn.

Solution: The finance organization deployed a machine learning-based forecasting solution, particularly to predict operating expenses and customer acquisition costs. They also embedded finance business partners within teams to interpret the forecasts and advise on cost decisions.

Results: The fintech's FP&A team became a proactive strategic player. According to an industry case description, the finance org *"became a key driver of strategic execution by leveraging ML-based forecasting and embedded business partners"* . The ML models provided early warnings on expense trends, and the business partnering approach ensured department heads took action (e.g., optimizing marketing spend when forecasted ROI was dropping). This led to improved cost optimization and extended the company's runway – a critical success factor for a high-growth startup. The case underlines the power of combining advanced analytics with human insight and collaboration.

Source: FP&A Trends Webinar[30]

Large Retailer:

Transforming FP&A with Product Management Approach

Challenge: A huge retail enterprise had dozens of finance dashboards and tools, leading to inconsistent data, high maintenance costs, and slow development of new reports. Essentially, the FP&A toolset was fragmented and not user-centric.

Solution: The retailer's FP&A team adopted **product management principles** to overhaul how they manage financial data and analytics tools. They treated each report/dashboard as a "product" with stakeholders, iteratively improving usability and consistency. This involved viewing **"data as an asset" and "data as a product"**, standardizing data definitions, and focusing on user experience . They also implemented a "Four-in-a-Box" methodology to bring together key stakeholders (customer, product manager, developer, UX) for each FP&A product .

Results: Over two years, this approach led to more innovation and streamlined processes in FP&A. Data discrepancies were greatly reduced and efficiency improved . Notably, the finance team set a goal to influence behavior like **reducing reliance on Excel by 80%** (by providing better internal tools) – and made significant progress toward it. The product mindset ensured that FP&A outputs (reports, forecasts, analyses) truly met the needs of internal "customers" (executives and business managers). This cultural shift, as presented by the company's finance leadership, demonstrates an innovative way to address data and process challenges by borrowing from the tech world's playbook.

Source: FP&A Trends[31]

Pharmaceutical Company:
AI Agents in Finance

Challenge: A global pharma company needed to improve the speed and accuracy of its finance operations, including forecasting and reporting, amid a complex business environment. Traditional methods were labor-intensive, and leadership sought more real-time insights.

Solution: The company's finance innovation team experimented with **AI agents (digital assistants)** in FP&A. These AI agents can handle tasks like generating forecast updates, answering finance queries, and performing variance analysis, by interfacing with the company's data in natural language. This initiative was part of a broader analytics and automation program.

Results: As shared by the company's finance team, the use of AI agents began **"reshaping enterprise finance"** by offloading routine work from humans and speeding up analysis . For example, an AI agent could automatically draft a commentary on monthly financial results for review by analysts, cutting down manual writing time. Or it could run scenario simulations overnight and present the outcomes each morning. While still in early stages, the case showed tangible efficiency gains and hinted at a future where AI co-pilots assist FP&A professionals in decision support. This case study underlines the importance of innovation and willingness to pilot new tech in a conservative industry like pharma, to stay ahead in FP&A capabilities.

Source: FP&A Trends[32]

Oil & Gas Company:

AI-Powered Financial “Digital Twin”

Challenge: An oil & gas exploration and production company faced highly volatile market conditions (fluctuating commodity prices) and needed better foresight in its financial projections. Existing forecasting methods resulted in large swings and limited accuracy, hindering capital planning and investor guidance.

Solution: The company built an AI-powered financial model – essentially a **digital twin of its business** – that integrated data from operations (production volumes, drilling schedules), market data (oil price scenarios), and financial metrics. This model was powered by a financial insights generator employing machine learning to synthesize these data sources.

Results: The new model delivered over **85% accuracy in year-end projections with greatly reduced fluctuations** in forecast updates. This level of accuracy was a big improvement, giving management more confidence. They achieved it by combining multiple data sources and using AI to detect patterns, which a traditional model might miss. The digital twin allowed rapid scenario analysis – for instance, they could simulate the financial impact of an oil price drop from $80 to $60 per barrel instantly, and plan accordingly. The CFO credited this AI-driven approach with improving the agility of their planning and even helping to identify cost inefficiencies that were not obvious before. This case exemplifies how heavy industry players can leverage advanced analytics to tame uncertainty and drive better performance management.

Source: Accenture[33]

Actionable Insights and Recommendations for CFOs

Closing process gaps:

Invest in streamlining data management and reducing manual work (through automation and better tools) so that FP&A talent can focus on value-add analysis. For instance, aim to flip the 80/20 rule – get analysts spending far more time on analysis vs. data prep (currently only 35% is on high-value analysis ; best-in-class firms push this much higher).

Digital FP&A Transformation:

Treat FP&A modernization as a critical component of the enterprise's digital transformation. This includes selecting the right FP&A/EPM platform that fits your needs (whether a comprehensive suite or a best-of-breed cloud solution) and ensuring it's adopted. The data strongly suggests that digital investment in finance is non-negotiable – **accelerating digital transformation is the top finance priority** , and CFOs are maintaining these investments even in tight times. A modern, cloud-based planning system with real-time data and collaborative features is becoming the price of entry for effective FP&A.

Leveraging Advanced Analytics and AI (Step by Step):

Begin incorporating AI and advanced analytics in targeted areas. A pragmatic approach is to start small – for example, pilot an AI-driven forecasting model for a particular segment or try an ML tool for expense analysis – and measure the improvement.

Gartner's vision of 70% of organizations using AI in finance by 2025[18] means those who fail to explore these technologies risk falling behind. However, successful adoption requires addressing data quality (garbage in, garbage out) and building trust in the models.

As the case studies showed, incremental gains like a few percentage points of accuracy or a major cycle time reduction can justify the investment and build momentum. It's also recommended to upskill the team or bring in analytics talent to fully exploit these tools.

People and Skills Development:

Strengthen the FP&A team's skills in business partnership, storytelling with data, and technology. The human element remains crucial – even as AI automates analysis, human judgment is needed to ask the right questions and drive decisions.

Encourage a culture of continuous learning, perhaps rotating team members through business units to deepen their understanding (and thus become better partners).

Aligning FP&A objectives with strategic business goals (OKRs/KPIs) will ensure the team focuses on what matters most.

Tailor to Industry and Business Model:

One size does not fit all. CFOs should identify the unique drivers and pain points of their industry and ensure their FP&A processes are designed accordingly. If you're in a subscription-based software business, for instance, invest in systems and metrics for customer lifecycle modeling. If you're in manufacturing, ensure your FP&A solution can handle operational data and perhaps consider integrated business planning tools. Peer benchmarks and case studies (like those provided) can offer guidance on what "good" looks like in your sector.

Change Management and Skills:

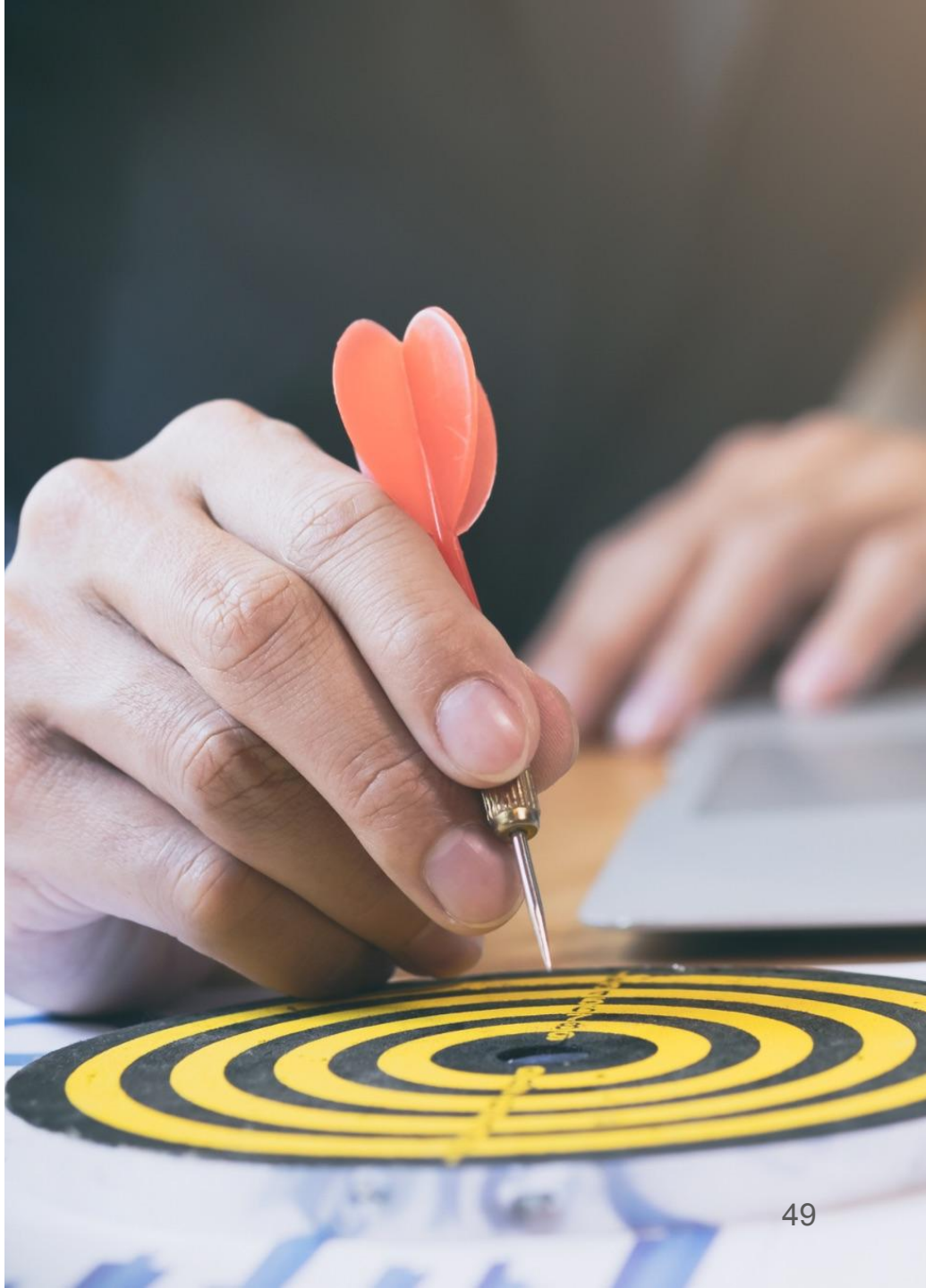
When adopting new tech, invest in training your team. The best tools fail if the team doesn't use them properly. Design new processes that take advantage of the automation (don't just layer tech on top of bad processes – re-engineer the process for efficiency). Perhaps upskill team members in data analysis, so they can interpret the rich analytics from these systems and turn them into actions. Many finance teams are now hiring or developing "Finance Automation Leads" or similar roles, which blend accounting knowledge with tech savvy to continuously improve systems.

Foster a cultural shift that emphasizes strategic analysis over routine tasks. This may involve redefining roles and KPIs—such as shifting from focusing on the accuracy of historical data entry to measuring the impact of forecasts on business decisions and financial performance. For example, instead of merely tracking budget variances, teams could evaluate how well forecasts aligned with actual outcomes and contributed to informed decision-making.

Measure and Communicate Impact

As changes are implemented, track improvements (e.g., forecasting error reduction, time saved, faster closing, improved decision turnaround) and communicate these wins to stakeholders. This helps reinforce the value of advanced FP&A to the organization's leadership and secures ongoing support. For example, if implementing rolling forecasts allowed the company to respond faster to a market change, document that narrative. Or if an AI model identified a trend that prevented a loss, highlight that. Quantify ROI where possible.

Ultimately, world-class FP&A and EPM capabilities enable an organization to navigate uncertainty with confidence and to execute strategy with agility. By addressing core challenges, staying abreast of trends, harnessing cutting-edge technologies, and learning from cross-industry successes, finance leaders can transform FP&A from a back-office function into a strategic differentiator. The insights, data, and examples in this white paper are a starting point for that journey. CFOs should evaluate their current state against these findings and chart a roadmap that moves their FP&A practices into the future – one where the finance team is truly the analytical powerhouse driving enterprise performance.



Selecting the Right Solution

Key factors to consider include:

✅ **1. Business Fit and Use Case Alignment**
Core use cases: Budgeting, forecasting, scenario planning, driver-based modelling, financial close?
Company size and complexity: Are you a scaling SME, mid-market, or multinational?
Industry-specific needs: Do you need support for subscription/SaaS metrics, CAPEX-intensive projects, or multi-entity consolidation?

🟡 *Tip:* A fast-growth SaaS firm may prioritise cohort analysis and rolling forecasts, while a manufacturer might need capital planning and inventory integration.

🔗 **2. Integration Capabilities**
Native connectors to ERP, CRM, HRIS, and data lakes (e.g., NetSuite, Salesforce, Workday, Snowflake)
Real-time or scheduled data sync?
Can it unify actuals, budgets, KPIs, and non-financial drivers?

⚠️ Watch out for tools that require heavy manual data prep outside the system.

🧠 **3. AI and Predictive Capabilities**
Does it offer machine learning-based forecasting or anomaly detection?
Can it run driver sensitivity analysis or generate scenarios quickly?
Is there natural language generation (e.g., automated commentary)?

🧮 *Forward-looking insight* is the next frontier — look for tools that go beyond historical reporting.

🎯 **4. Flexibility and Modelling Power**
Can you build complex, customised models? (e.g., multi-scenario headcount planning)
Does it support rolling forecasts, top-down + bottom-up planning, and zero-based budgeting?
Spreadsheet-style flexibility vs. structured models — what's the balance?

🧩 Composable tools like **Pigment**, **Causal**, and **Anaplan** shine here.

Key factors to consider include:

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Spreadsheet-style flexibility vs. structured models — what's the balance?

🧩 Composable tools like **Pigment**, **Causal**, and **Anaplan** shine here.

👩‍💻 **5. User Experience and Adoption**
Is it intuitive for finance users (drag-and-drop, no-code)?
Can business users contribute without relying on FP&A (decentralised input)?
How fast is onboarding and training?

🚧 Poor usability kills adoption. Even powerful tools fail if no one uses them properly.

🛠️ **6. Configuration vs Customisation**
Can you configure workflows, dimensions, reports without IT or vendor reliance?
Do changes require a developer or expensive consulting?

💡 Modern FP&A platforms emphasise **self-service configuration**.

🛡️ **7. Security, Compliance, and Auditability**
Role-based access and approval workflows
Audit trails for changes to budgets and forecasts
Compliance with regulations (SOX, GDPR, etc.)

💸 **8. Cost and ROI**
Upfront costs vs. long-term ROI (automation time savings, insight-driven decisions)
Does the pricing scale fairly with users or entities?
Beware of hidden costs (implementation, support, integrations)

Key factors to consider include:

9. Scalability and Roadmap
Will the platform scale with your growth (new geographies, entities, headcount)?
Is the vendor innovating (AI, integrations, industry-specific templates)?

🚀 *Your FP&A system should be a growth enabler, not a bottleneck.*

🧩 **10. Ecosystem and Support**
Is there a strong partner or community network?
Does the vendor provide responsive support and training?
Can it play well with other tools (e.g., Power BI, Tableau, Slack, Excel)?

In short, The best solution is one that fits your current workflows, solves your biggest pain points quickly, and positions you for future growth, with minimal disruption. Look for a platform that combines automation, real-time visibility, and scalability with finance-specific intelligence, and make sure it's built for teams like yours.

How to find the right solution for you

- Be clear on your requirements and what is important to you.
- Examine all the alternatives. Read reviews, ask for recommendations from fellow finance leaders.
- Software comparisons are available in a number of places.
  - The FP&A Market Guide – A Guide to 3rd Generation FP&A Tools
  - The reviews on G2 are particularly useful:
    - https://www.g2.com/categories/budgeting-and-forecasting
- Make a short list:
  - Ask vendors on your shortlist questions that will determine whether they meet your needs.
  - Consider whether a demo from the vendor would be useful, and don't be afraid to ask the vendor to tailor the demo to show how their product specifically meets your key needs.

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Live demos from top solutions transforming financial planning and performance management

Wednesday | 24 September 2025
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM BST

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32. **FP&A Trends – "AI Agents in FP&A" video presentation by Peter Galik, Global Head of Innovation, Analytics and Automation at Takeda**, FP&A Trends website
33. **Oil & Gas Digital Twin Case**, Accenture — >85% projection accuracy.
34. **The Hackett Group, IBP in Manufacturing**, 2023 — Manufacturing IBP.
35. **PwC Banking Rolling Forecast Best Practices**, 2022 — Banking rolling forecast.
36. **KPMG Healthcare FP&A Insights**, 2023 — Driver-based staffing models in healthcare.
37. **Juniper Networks Finance AI Use Cases**, Juniper Networks — Generative AI commentary.
38. **FP&A Trends Survey 2024**, "The 2024 FP&A Trends Survey Results: Key Insights and Findings Unveiled," fpa-trends.com — Demand for business partnering skills up 9% to 50%; only 19% of teams feel "optimized to perform."
39. **FP&A Trends Survey, "The 2024 FP&A Trends Survey Results: Key Insights and Findings Unveiled," fpa-trends.com** — Poll showing 44% implemented integrated planning models, 34% plan to implement them.
40. **FP&A Trends Survey 2024**, "The 2024 FP&A Trends Survey Results: Key Insights and Findings Unveiled," fpa-trends.com — Only 9% of organizations have fully automated driver-based models.
41. **The Next Era of Finance in Europe: 2025 Finance Survey, Planful**