

Gartner CFO & Finance Executive Conference Highlights

Key insights from top sessions

10 – 11 September 2025
London, U.K.



Explore tracks from the 2025 conference

Gartner CFO & Finance Executive Conference

10 – 11 September 2025 | London, U.K.

Missed the 2025 conference?

Visit our website to learn more about the key insights and take-aways from this unique gathering of finance leaders.

[Learn More](#)

Tracks at a Glance

Attendees participated in more than 80 Gartner insights-backed sessions, specifically designed to help CFOs and finance leaders navigate today's challenges by evolving and transforming data, processes, technologies, staff capabilities and organizational models. Each track showcased a particular area of focus to help attendees consume insights most relevant to their roles within the finance function.

CFO as Enterprise Leader: Drive Profitable Growth Decisions

CFO as Functional Leader: Set Your Technology and Talent Strategies

FP&A: Modernize Data, Analytics and Planning

Controller: Streamline, Simplify and Automate Workflows

Finance Transformation: Revitalize and Accelerate Your Transformation Programs

Gartner Opening Keynote: Unlocking Finance's New Identity With Key Habits

CFOs face **unprecedented uncertainty, volatility, complexity and ambiguity** driven by economic forces, tariffs, cost pressure, changing regulation, and the rapid advance of AI and automation. This environment demands a shift in how finance operates and how finance leaders see themselves.

In uncertain times, the default identity is the “Guardian,” focused on protecting the organization by cutting costs, mitigating risk and preserving the status quo. However, the Guardian playbook has unintended consequences: breeding short-term thinking, creating a dangerous-to-fail culture and starving resources for growth initiatives.

In the 2025 Gartner Opening Keynote, Mallory Bulman and Clement Christensen explored how CFOs must evolve their identity to become “catalysts”, initiating change while protecting the balance sheet to drive competitive advantage and achieve long-term growth.

Keep reading to explore take-aways from 7 of 80+ sessions at the 2025 conference →

“History shows us that at every economic inflection point over the past 30 years, CFOs who won evolved their identity to become catalysts for improving the status quo.”



Mallory Bulman
CFO Advisory Leader,
Senior Director

Super-Charging Forecasting: A New Data Paradigm for Transformative Insights



Matthew Mowrey

Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

A fundamental obstacle to better forecasting is the entrenched accounting perspective we apply to data. In this session, FP&A leaders learned how to unlock the full potential of data by shifting to a paradigm centered on business drivers and their relationship to a forecast model. This enables the framing of data required to provision driver-based machine learning models.

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77% of finance teams don't have a driver map.

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Sketch everything! Capture the relationships among drivers you know exist, or brainstorm those you suspect exist.
- Formalize driver identification and engage the business for input.
- Create a rule-based model in your development environment, or experiment with auto-ML in your planning software.

How to get started:

- Review Gartner insights on how to [Unlock Driver-Based Forecasting Through Better Data Provisioning](#).
- Learn [Top Tips for Evaluating Finance Technology to Maximize Value](#).

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Unlocking the Value of Cloud ERP in Finance



Nisha Bhandare

Distinguished VP Analyst

Session summary

CFOs are demanding a flexible and agile approach to manage their ERP program that can support their business through continuous disruption and accelerate digital transformation. In this session, finance leaders learned how to leverage their ERP to deliver the promise of process optimization while enabling agility and innovation within the function to support evolving business needs.

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Cloud ERP ranked #1 out of 60 most valued finance technologies for 2025

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Embrace an ERP strategy based on flexible, modular components, each supporting a specific finance capability.
- Lay out business outcomes that your finance team needs to achieve, such as improving cash flow, driving operational efficiencies or reducing risk.
- Identify core, differentiative and innovative capabilities that will be needed to effectively drive listed business outcomes.
- Build a map that connects finance's desired capabilities to drivers of enterprise strategic objectives, agnostic of any particular technology, to make sure your technology strategy supports these objectives.

How to get started:

- Walk through [3 Steps for Finance to Shape Effective Cloud ERP Design](#).
- Determine how you can [Champion Effective Change Management](#) and align ERP with corporate goals (complimentary research).

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FP&A's Simple Formula for Finance Business Partnering Success



Silvia Pontini

Senior Principal Analyst

Session summary

Despite years of in-person decision support, a tangible return on expensive investments in finance business partnering teams still eludes FP&A leaders. In a repeat of a popular session from the 2024 CFO Conference, a Gartner expert explained why teaching-focused business partnering far outperforms the traditional consulting-style approach at injecting greater FP&A acumen into decisions.

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85% of FP&A organizations say they can't sustain the level of current support that's being demanded of them.

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Engage your CFO and senior finance leaders with the business case and economic logic of an FP&A capability diffusion model.
- Study the use cases for an FP&A capability diffusion model, and identify decisions in your organization that could be better supported through technology, rather than in-person FBP.
- Redeploy FP&A budget toward building and governing decision support tools, rather than hiring for FBP skills.
- Avoid delaying your organization's transition to a capability diffusion model.

How to get started:

- Read [Finance Business Partnering: Guide to Driving Business Growth](#) (complimentary research) to drive better decisions and create sustainable growth across your organization.
- Use the [Magic Quadrant for Financial Planning Software](#) to understand the FP&A software vendor landscape.

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Building Leadership Competencies for the Future of Finance



Dennis Gannon
VP Analyst

Session summary

Less than half of finance employees are satisfied with people management at their company and one in four are looking for a new job, leaving finance leaders struggling to deliver on business objectives. The best finance leaders not only have to wear many hats, but they must find ones that fit. Understand how to build your organization's effectiveness through a focus on key leadership competencies.

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It takes more than a 20% pay raise to lure most employees away from a manager who engages them and next to nothing to poach disengaged workers.

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Define competencies for high-performing people management and use assessments and individual development plans for early leadership candidates.
- Address the predictors of manager failure (emotional intelligence, empathy and communicating for results), to better support immediate and long-term development needs.
- Develop managers to improve retention by creating intentional and impactful moments to build engagement.

How to get started:

- Use Gartner [Connector Manager](#) and [Competency Frameworks](#) as part of performance evaluation at every leadership level.
- [Speak with a Gartner analyst](#) to develop specific strategies to increase the sense of belonging within your finance organization.

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How Always-On Change Management Can Boost Finance Transformation Success



Marco D'Ascoli
Director Analyst

Session summary

Despite 74% of CFOs directly leading change efforts, organizations still struggle with implementing change, resulting in suboptimal outcomes. This is due to outdated, point-in-time tactics that don't fit today's fast-paced environments. This session explored how finance transformation leaders can adopt a dynamic, iterative approach that prioritizes the needs of affected groups to drive improved outcomes

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74% of CFOs report being directly involved in their organization's change management efforts this year.

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Prioritize transformation initiatives that boost change capacity and provide tailored stakeholder narratives to drive buy-in for those transformation plans.
- Deploy prioritization workshops to address stakeholders' change needs while using stakeholder segmentations to maintain buy-in and turn opponents into supporters.
- Formalize team upskilling efforts to institutionalize critical transformation competencies and develop a change scorecard to track change adoption and employee fatigue in the long-term.

How to get started:

- Hear Gartner experts discuss [3 Change Management Principles to Supercharge Your Finance Transformation](#) (*complimentary event*) to learn additional tactics to increase your chances of transformation success.
- Review Gartner recommendations on [Reducing Change Fatigue and Increasing Engagement for Finance Employees](#).

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3 Building Blocks of Sustainable Finance Process Excellence



Tamara Shipley
VP Analyst

Session summary

For maximum return on investment on improvement projects, finance transformation leaders must establish an integrated system for managing performance, improvement and stakeholder relationships. In this session, attendees learned how to build the infrastructure to drive, evolve and sustain finance process excellence.



A poor foundation for finance processes can negatively impact business growth and strain relationships with stakeholders.

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Build a maturity-informed performance management system using metrics that matter, metrics that provide context and metrics that trigger action.
- Create an improvement management system with multiple solution capabilities.
- Implement a relationship management system that ensures accountability.

How to get started:

- Use [Tailored Stakeholder Updates to Steer Finance Transformation](#).
- Drive improvement with the [Finance Process Maps, Charter and Procedures Templates Toolkit](#).

How to Create Long-Term Value With Strategic Cost Optimization



Michelle Carlsen
Director Analyst

Session summary

Long-term value realization has become increasingly challenging, and most CFOs have already executed multiple rounds of cost reductions. This session explored how the top finance teams use the unique selling points of their companies to develop a differentiated cost structure strategy, and how to prioritize spending on areas that will produce the best long-term returns.

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Only 11% of companies sustain cost reductions into a third year.

Key actions for finance leaders:

- Meet with stakeholders to introduce the framework and brainstorm on differentiators.
- Gain explicit alignment on a shortlist of differentiators from senior leadership.
- Conduct a learning session with budget owners to introduce the concept of differentiation and explain how it will impact budgeting.
- Identify internal processes that need to be adapted to support differentiation.

How to get started:

- Use the [4 Levers to Drive a Cost-Conscious Culture](#) research to learn how to sustain structure improvements.
- Learn how to [Unlock Returns Through Early Validation of Business Case Assumptions](#).

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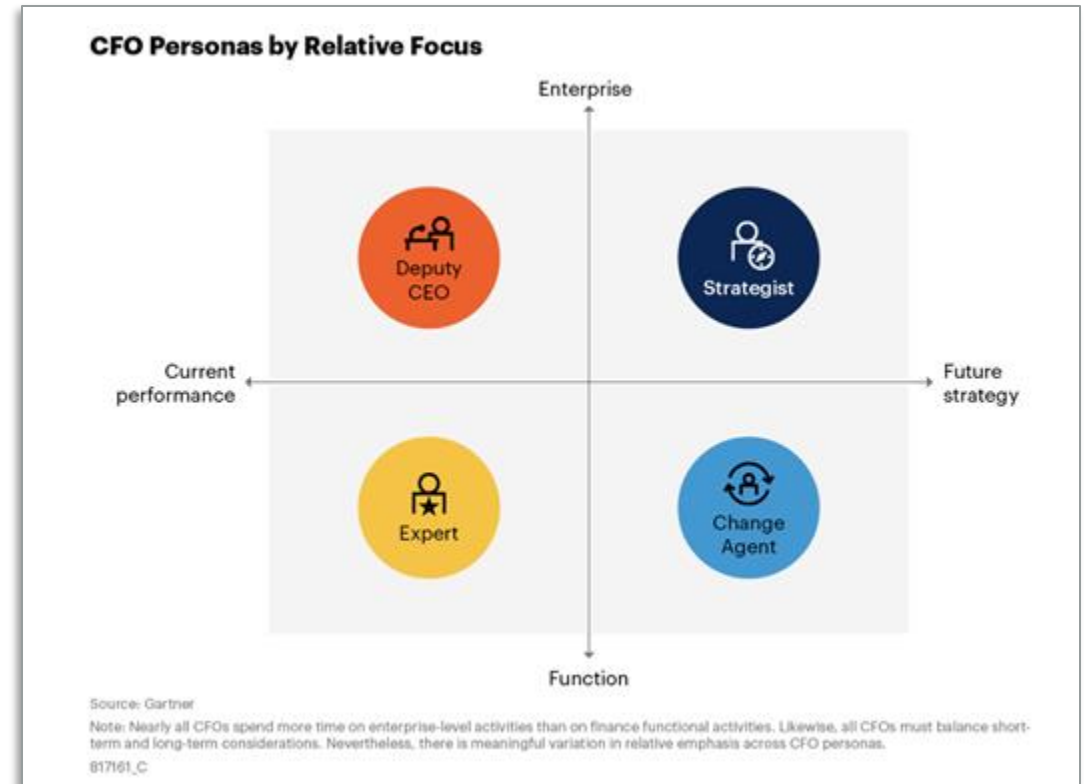
Determine your CFO management persona

Managing your time effectively is vital for success as a CFO, but your ideal time allocation varies with your organization, tenure and team makeup.

Take this **3-minute assessment** to determine your “CFO persona” and:

- **Learn** time trade-offs, unique strengths and red flags for your persona
- **Assess** gaps between your current CFO persona and your optimal persona
- **Receive** actionable next steps and resources to optimize your time as CFO

[Start Assessment](#)



Navigate your top challenges with Gartner support



Explore the [Gartner AI in Finance Resource Center](#) to gain a better understanding of the key elements of a solid finance AI strategy, including hiring AI talent, purchasing AI-enabled technology and measuring ROI.



Build a cost management strategy that drives financial value. Use the Gartner [Cost Optimization Decision Framework](#) to make strategic trade-offs without risking your business.



[Talk to a Gartner Representative](#) and learn more about Gartner for Finance and discover how we can help you deliver on your critical priorities and lead your finance function through digital transformation.



View additional [Gartner for Finance](#) tools and support, including [sample engagement plans](#) that detail how Gartner can better support your finance technology decisions within just the first few months of becoming a client.



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