

The finance leader's playbook to digital transformation

 **Anaplan**



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Summary

Emboldened by digital transformation, today's finance leaders must reevaluate their strategic value and influence on the business. Digital transformation has opened the door to powerful new ways finance can assess and understand the business, surface insights and opportunities, enable more informed decisions, and contribute measurable business value.

How can finance leaders orchestrate this transformation? "The finance leader's playbook to digital transformation," is your roadmap to identifying modernization goals, evaluating what you need to get there, and making it happen.

For many companies, decade-old legacy technologies and spreadsheets shared over email are still at the core of many processes—including monthly P&L reporting and long-range planning. Even those organizations that have begun to transition to cloud-based digital capabilities often face limits to achieving organization accountability and visibility into business performance drivers. New tools to fully democratize data, improve transparency, and enable connected business planning are necessary to bridge the gaps.

What's more, attitudes and habits must change to get the most out of new systems and ways of working. Finance leaders need to take a holistic approach to enabling their transformation journey through focused efforts across the organization's culture, capabilities, and operating model.



In this playbook, four senior finance and information technology executives with experience guiding Fortune 500 organizations through digital transformation weigh in on the three zones of (1) culture and talent, (2) capabilities and (3) operating model and processes to transform the business and create elevated business value.

The three zones of digital transformation



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Zone one: Culture and talent

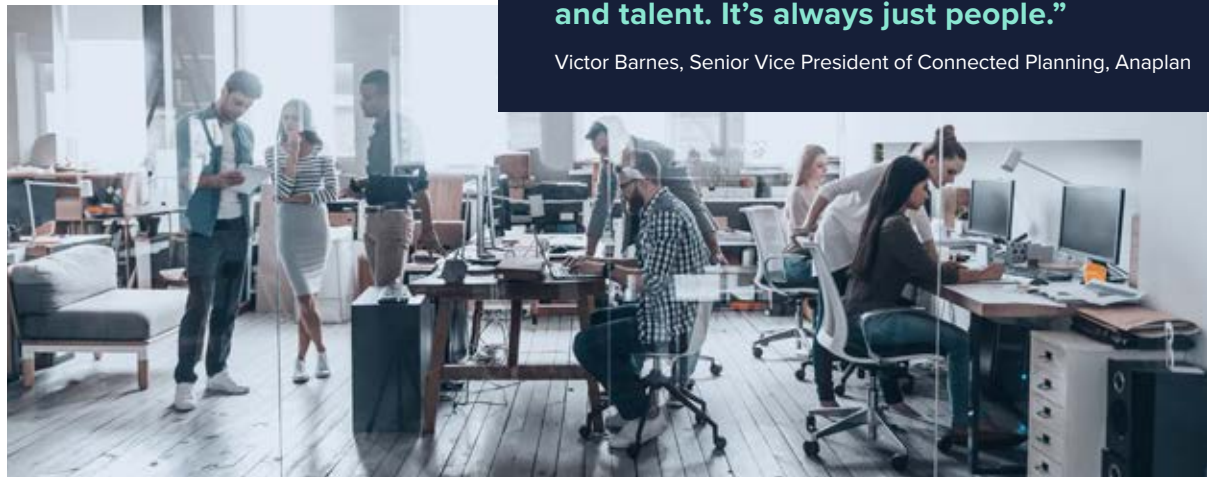
Change is uncomfortable. Human beings hold to the familiar with remarkable tenacity. No matter how necessary, simple, and promising the modernization may be, getting people to embrace a major transition to new ways of doing things is a challenge.

“I spend time making sure our teams understand the speed and scope of change in today’s world, and the necessity of developing new skills,” said Victor Barnes, senior vice president of Connected Planning at Anaplan. “The goal is not to automate processes and eliminate people. It is to better leverage their talent and inspire engagement so they can focus on the business and customers instead of manicuring data.”

“Culture and talent matter because people are the greatest source of positive change in any organization,” said Barnes. “Your number-one driver for growth is culture and talent. It’s always just people.”

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Victor Barnes, Senior Vice President of Connected Planning, Anaplan



Culture

Assessing the finance team's culture

The first step to modernizing your finance organization is to gain an understanding of the finance team's culture. What values and priorities do they embody and transmit to the rest of the organization?

Ray Curbelo, global line of business leader for finance at Anaplan, recommends taking the time to explore the culture of the finance organization in depth. "It's a fantastic investment not only for a new leader to learn about the business, the organization, but also to learn how the finance organization is applying their capabilities, and what culture is expressing itself."

Tactics for assessing culture

Finance leadership should engage directly with their team, from the top down, through middle and lower management, via focus group roundtable discussions and job shadows in which leaders pair with members of their team to see first-hand what they do in their day-to-day role. Partnership surveys sent to leadership within the finance organization and across business functions can provide a valuable window into finance culture and talent. Here are some of the questions you can consider for each of these tactics:

Focus groups

- How does the finance organization define success?
- What do they aspire to contribute to the business?
- How do they assess what the business needs?
- Are there gaps between finance's priorities and what the business actually values?

Job shadows

- How is the finance team interacting?
- How are they partnering with the rest of the organization?
- What are the daily habits of the finance team?
- Do these habits and interactions support what the business values most?
- How are they balancing the reactionary nature of their role with the opportunity to anticipate and proactively address opportunities or challenges?

Surveys

- What is the most valuable contribution you make to the business?
- What does finance contribute that makes your job easier or more productive?
- When you go to finance for help, what do you hope will happen? What actually happens?
- How does the partnership with finance bring value to the organization overall?

The information you gather will help you understand what the business needs versus what finance is delivering. Are there disparities between what matters most to the business and what finance prioritizes?

Strategies and tactics to evolve culture

Organizational culture can be one of the biggest barriers to change and notoriously difficult to budge. How you communicate and what you choose to put in the spotlight can move the cultural needle.

Overcoming the resistance to change takes persistence, but once result start coming in, resistance shifts to enthusiasm that can spread to other

“Maybe you do great audit and governance, but the business isn’t that excited about it. On the other hand, you might have modest analytic capabilities but that’s really important to the business. You’re over-invested in governance and underinvested in insight generation. What’s your strategy to impact this gap?”

Ray Curbelo, Finance Line of Business Leader, Anaplan

areas of the business. To move your organizational culture, look to these areas:

Empower problem solving

Encourage and reward a mindset of empowerment. What problems are holding back the finance organization? What problems have been there so long no one notices them anymore? Identify them and take action to resolve them, even if they seem impossible to change.

People might say, ‘I can’t do anything to improve this arcane planning process because the keepers of the process don’t allow change.’ You want to nurture a mindset that rewards taking ownership and driving change.

Commit to curiosity

Embrace curiosity, model an affinity for change and agile learning, and overcome the fear of trying a new way of doing things.

A growth-minded finance leader has the curiosity to step into the unknown. They don’t want to keep doing the same thing over and over; they want to



try something new to make an impact. Additionally, these leaders communicate openly with their teams and their business partners about the opportunity in front of them when they partner for change.

Celebrate innovative thinking

Growth-minded finance leaders encourage entrepreneurial thinking and idea sharing and crowd sourcing. You can encourage people to think differently and challenge the status quo by bringing financial analysts and others together for a hackathon guided by a data scientist. Invite competing groups to get creative searching for insights in a data set. What can you learn about the business from the data?

Once everyone has presented their ideas, ask the data scientist to show what can be done with correlations to help the team make new connections.

This exercise highlights data acumen and helps the team make new linkages between what’s happening across the business. By correlating different elements with each other, you can find new insights that are not necessarily evident otherwise.

Example: Creating a culture of feedback

When a new CFO arrived at a leading insurance company with a mandate to drive modernization, there were three goals:

- Drive finance's digital transformation.
- Optimize finance resources.
- Bring new value from the finance organization to the business.

Surveys of the culture revealed that finance was seen by the business less as strategic partners than as order takers. The CFO decided to start a dialogue with the business to find out how finance could do more. The goal: Gain a better understanding of what finance's customers in the business expect, how finance is measuring up against those expectations, and what kind of impact finance's contribution is making.

Finance leadership implemented a program of tactics to shift the culture toward feedback, targeting ongoing dialogue and improvement.

Leadership level: Engagement surveys

Every six months, finance sent a business partnership survey to all levels of management across the enterprise, asking such questions as:

- What kind of interaction have you had with finance?
- Have you seen improvements since our last survey?
- How much value is finance driving for you as a business partner?

Individual level: Performance goals

The way the finance team was evaluated was shifted to encourage a focus on enabling business success and taking feedback seriously.

- Individual performance goals were tied to 360-degree feedback not just from those they report to within finance, but also from those they interacted with throughout the business.
- This, in turn, compelled managers to ensure that employees developed the habit of seeking feedback as they complete projects. Everyone was on board and incentivized to engage with their business peers.

Communication

The finance team changed the way they talked about their accomplishments, looking at results from the point of view of their business customers.

- At quarterly meetings, town halls, company updates, and other presentations, results are presented from the business unit's perspective.
- They focused on business accomplishments, their value to the business, and how finance contributed to it.

The result was a shift in culture toward active partnerships to enable the business. As the business came to view finance as a valuable partner, they leaned into finance for insight on business decisions.



Talent

Assessing talent for today and tomorrow

Accomplishing your goals requires the skills to execute your vision. What is the talent profile at your organization today, and what talent do you need to take the team into the future? How will you cultivate the talent you need to achieve your objectives, and how can you build strength? Can you build the skills you need internally, or do you need to look outside the organization? Regardless of industry, transformational skills require data literacy, technology acumen, and business experience in addition to financial expertise. What talent gaps are standing in the way of progress toward your transformation goals?

To assess gaps in the talent pool, consider the finance organization from a business perspective. How can finance drive the most value for the

business? What is your competitive advantage within the finance function to drive value for the business? What skills will you need today, and in the future, to achieve longer-term goals and initiatives? Your resources should be aligned with the areas with the greatest potential to contribute business value, where you can best leverage the unique skills of the finance team. If you devote significant resources to a function that is necessary but not a source of new business value, can that function be optimized, outsourced, or automated?

In terms of bench depth, are you building the pipeline you need to develop leadership over time? Are you creating opportunities for finance leaders to gain the business experience they need to move up?

Strategies and tactics to strengthen the talent bench

The skills and credentials traditionally associated with finance are no longer sufficient to deliver the business value that the transformational finance function seeks to contribute. To transform the finance function and the business, you'll need technology acumen and data literacy as well as experience in the business.

"Today's finance talent has a much different profile than finance talent of the past," said Sara Baxter-Orr, global head of CFO practice at Anaplan. "Thanks to automation, finance talent needs to be much more strategic. You need to have modeling capabilities, mathematical capabilities, and rigorous data fluency as well as intellectual curiosity about the forensics involved in analyzing data."

Several strategies can help you level-up abilities within your organization and recruit valuable external talent.



Collaborate with business units to rotate finance talent

Cycle rising leaders to various business units to gain experience leading innovation projects or heading up new divisions or regions. It's important for your team to understand how the business works, including commercial strategies, sales, marketing, supply chain, and operations.

Tie talent assessment to broader accountability

Create a finance talent board with VPs across different areas of the finance organization. Use this board to evaluate potential promotions based on criteria that spans organizational performance goals.

"Based on how you structure that governance model for strategic initiatives—your daily operations, leadership assessments, talent assessments—that in itself drives culture," said Curbelo. "The talent board holds individuals accountable to more than an individual manager, encouraging teamwork and a collective commitment to change."

Broaden recruitment beyond traditional finance backgrounds

Business and technology experience may help infuse talent in certain finance roles, particularly as you increase engagement with the business and advance digital transformation.



Cultivate data literacy

Prioritize digital capabilities and data fluency. Create programs to develop greater understanding of technology implementations and data science. Baxter-Orr recommends implementing a data acumen test to prove a minimum level of data fluency, as well as requiring the finance team to advance their skills with at least 15 hours of digital literacy education each year.

“Get some outside perspective from some of your most trusted partners on what they’re seeing across other industries and with your peers in terms of data literacy,” said Baxter-Orr. “Business strategy is data driven.”

Look for creativity and critical thinking

Data modeling, which is at the core of finance and risk analysis in the digital era, involves creative thinking and an incisive eye for what matters. To create useful scenarios, you need ideation and data.

“Scenario planning requires creativity and discernment,” said Baxter-Orr. “What are the top three or four things that would delay a project, what would the ramifications be, and how can I ensure against them? You’ve got to be imaginative, but you also can’t prepare for every possibility. You have to be able to envision the three to five scenarios that matter.”

Example: Promoting breadth and business acumen

New CFOs often find that their workforce is largely tenured in finance, with limited business acumen. The finance team may not fully understand how the business operates or how it delivers value to customers. To move toward a more business-focused future state, one growth-oriented CFO decided to prioritize the broadening of the finance team's skillset.

The goal was to create a deep bench of finance team leadership that had experience in multiple functions within finance and in the business at large. Leaders who understand how the business works overall are better able to recognize the broader implications of decisions, including how decisions in one area may impact another. To get there, the team adopted three strategies to promote breadth:



Develop the entry level

College recruits with finance degrees were entered in an early career development program designed to develop broader business-finance acumen. Over four years, they rotated to three finance and one or two business roles. This fast-tracked a culture of breadth and facilitated new experiences.



Develop the leadership level

The finance team changed how they evaluated promotions. Instead of prioritizing a rapid rise, promising leaders were encouraged to make lateral moves to develop breadth before taking the next step up. Leaders with high potential were given the chance to lead a different function slightly outside their comfort zone to broaden their perspective on the business.



Work the talent pool

During talent assessments when merit and bonus discussions were taking place across business functions, leaders actively looked for areas where talent could be exchanged to give people opportunities and experience in other parts of the business. This resulted in greater breadth for the individual, as well as infusions of new skills circulating throughout the business.

Anaplan value



How you restructure your workforce for a transformational finance function can have major cost implications. Anaplan's Connected Planning capabilities let you work with human resources to explore options, modeling the impact of various hiring strategies on budget, and planning across departments.

More important, the extremely detailed and factual view into the business that Anaplan provides enables finance leaders to do their best work, even bringing out new skills they might not be able to express otherwise.

"Anaplan allows you to be creative and challenge the status quo because you have the ability to make new analytical connections," said Curbelo. "It liberates talent to do their best. Model builders and users are exposed to a brand-new landscape of the possible. Access to that world of insight allows finance leaders to ignite change and be a champion of change."

Whether you're talking to IT, the board, or shareholders, finance leaders need to be able to tell a compelling story and back it up with equally compelling data. Anaplan provides the data that finance leaders need to tell a compelling story, speak with conviction, and explain why they care, why it's important, and what the impact is.

Zone two: Capabilities

Modernization to drive growth takes more than the talent and culture to tackle change. In the age of big data, finance organizations have to stretch themselves outside of their traditional roles to create new connections to business data elements. Visibility into the business allows finance leaders to recognize opportunities and forecast outcomes. What are your current data modeling and analysis capabilities? What capabilities do you need to accomplish your goals? How will you bridge that gap?

As new capabilities allow you to improve forecast accuracy and see more clearly where each dollar goes, new processes can help you drive efficiencies, capture more sales, and free up cash flow. Greater ability to monitor progress on key initiatives and explore potential setbacks or course corrections mean that you can bring your product or service to market more quickly, capture more market share, and increase earnings. With depth of insight into the way your business runs comes the confidence to get leaner and more agile in the way you create, deliver, and sell your product or service. The scope of the contribution that finance can deliver to the business increases dramatically when you have the tools in place to easily access and analyze business data and planning across business functions.



“One way to focus on capabilities that generate value is optimizing resources through automation. The next level is to create insight to drive growth. That means investments in ERP, planning systems, and analytics supporting business functions.”

Ray Curbelo, Finance Line of Business Leader, Anaplan



Assessing the finance function's capabilities

First, think about how finance is positioning itself in the business. Does the business turn to finance to help craft a strategic path forward or is it seen as a back-office engine for accounting, transactions, and regulatory compliance? Growth-minded finance leaders build functions that enable the organization to achieve their business goals.

To uncover the capabilities that you need to drive that strategic impact, ask yourself—and your team—the following questions:

- What are the strategic goals for the next 3–5 years, how we make money, and how we spend money? Do our strategic plans align to and drive both financial plans and operational plans?
- How are we going to optimize capital expenditure?
- How do we collect and analyze data in a consistent, meaningful way that is understood by different functions, and allows us to make informed decisions?
- What are the methods of collaboration and feedback between the finance team and other functions?
- How are longer-term goals and initiatives planned and tracked?
- Do we use rolling forecasting to understand impact that is longer-term?
- What systems of alerting are in place to spot divergence and anomalies?
- Can we evaluate multiple scenarios and tradeoffs?
- When financial plans don't align to strategic plans, what are the mechanisms to evaluate scenarios and trade-offs like mergers and acquisitions, product development, or new go-to-market strategies?

Strategies and tactics to build new capabilities

Securing investment and commitment to the development of major new capabilities that overhaul entire systems can be an uphill battle, even if business leadership agrees that modernization is important. Several strategies and tactics can help finance organizations add new capabilities outside of their traditional roles.

Technology stack rationalization

Organizations, especially large ones, have multiple ERPs, CRMs, HR, and marketing systems, in addition to homegrown data sources. These redundancies impact finance functions' ability to get a holistic view of data and bring the right insights to the right users at the right times. It also includes having the ability to make informed decisions using data that might be outside the organization as well. Growth-minded finance leaders

prioritize technology stack rationalization to achieve a global view of the business in addition to cost saving and efficiency wins. Rolling out incremental versions of new technologies, testing, learning, and sharing results as you go can help generate quick wins, and rally the organization around the bigger vision.

Incubate new capabilities gradually

Look for areas where your ideas for transformation can be implemented on a small scale in one well-defined project. Monitor results and collect feedback. If that phase goes well, extend your experiment to one or two other test areas. If feedback is positive, start developing a plan for the investment needed to scale the implementation to its full potential.



“Test implementations allow you to try new approaches and learn from them quickly, rule out what’s not valid, and build the case more effectively for things that prove to be valuable,” said Curbelo. “I tested it, this is what I learned, this is the feedback I got, this is the data to support it, and let’s talk about why we should scale it and what it’s going to take.”

Ray Curbelo, Finance Line of Business Leader, Anaplan

Three focus areas for modernization:

1. Enable comprehensive access to business data

You need data to discover ways to drive your business, but the data is rarely democratized. In addition to having access to the data, you need to bring the right insights to the right user at the right time to help them make informed decisions with all necessary data.

2. Prioritize analytic tools for insights to drive growth

The ability to run business and customer experience analytics is essential to finding new ways to generate shareholder value. The reason is that companies can't drive overall growth through simply selling more. They need to focus on what matters to the customer through their experience. A positive customer experience leads to more growth, because if your customers are happy, (1) they are more likely to buy more, (2) you are less likely to lose them and (3) they could become a marketing asset by sharing their positive experience with your prospects.

Focusing on metrics that measure customer experience in addition to drivers of direct business growth, like revenue growth companies, can balance both sides of the scale. For example, a company might define growth not only by growing revenue but growing the profit margin. From a pure business perspective, you are focused on measuring efficiency across your business to drive down your operating expense. This might motivate a company to simplify their processes by implementing an "automated" call center system to limit the number of calls that have to be taken by a live agent. Although this may drive down cost for the company, in the long term, an unmonitored customer experience may result in revenue loss because customers find it difficult to address their issues in a timely and effective manner.

"If you advertise a beautiful red dress and I drive to the mall to get it and you don't have it because your forecast was off, I'm disappointed. The retail rep is disappointed because she lost a commission. Now you have a disappointed employee and a disappointed customer. You spent money on advertising and you made zero dollars. Accurate forecasting is critical."

Sara Baxter-Orr, Global Head of CFO Practice, Anaplan

3. Improve your ability to forecast accurately

A finance leader is always looking at revenue, but they're also simultaneously managing costs. They need to know the answer to the following questions:

- Are they spending the right dollars in the right places at the right times to maximize the revenue?
- Are they uncovering efficiencies at a granular level and at a holistic level for opportunity that could have both revenue and cost implications?
- Are they removing barriers to collaboration so sales and finance are aligned on revenue plans driven by sales forecast?
- Are they aligned to HR for workforce planning to ensure they're both maximizing those resources and getting them in place at the right times for cost efficiency?
- Are they aligned to supply chain to optimize inventory and manage costs?

Answering these questions requires sufficient and accurate forecasting. You need detailed, accurate forecasting to get the right product to the right place just in time, maximizing sales and freeing up cash flow.

Example: Creating a granular view of sales

In the digital age of empowered customers and relationships, customer experience is a key driver of growth in every industry.

“Finance has never had to think about this before,” said Curbelo. “How well do I understand my customer and how they use and perceive my product? How does my business create value for customers? How do I evaluate customer experience, and how might that generate future returns?”

To better understand customers and how to meet their needs—and drive increased revenue—one growth-minded CFO decided to create a more granular view of the business. They wanted their team to operate like a business unit, with a business perspective defining their objectives. That meant gaining a more detailed understanding of the customer experience.



Finance needed to be able to see more than volume of goods sold in order to better understand P&L drivers. Which particular products were being sold in what configurations to which customers? Were there hidden opportunities to drive new sales and optimize revenue?

Once detailed customer data was made accessible, it was possible to collaborate with the sales team to analyze what was being purchased in each region, triggering insights on missed opportunities. Perhaps outlets in one region might benefit from products that had success in other regions with a similar climate, for example. This intelligence drove sales and customer acquisition for the customer, improving their experience, while generating new revenue for the company.

Granular access to data also illustrated the business impact of changes in sales forecasts and other projections immediately, giving the team a business-oriented perspective on their contributions.

Anaplan value

Anaplan brings business data together in a platform where everyone can have access to the same real-time data with transparency and accountability to the source. This provides the granular view you need to understand what is happening in the business and discover where new value can be added.

“Democratized data is your ability to have data coming through on a regular basis, but how are you going to actually leverage it? Are you going to download it in a spreadsheet? No, it’s much too big. Anaplan’s role is to set up the types of models that can ingest that data and do something useful with it.”

Victor Barnes, Senior Vice President of Connected Planning, Anaplan

Anaplan models enable you to explore options, create alternative scenarios, and see the effect of your decisions on your plans and those of others in the business immediately. It allows you to create much more accurate forecasts based on more detailed inputs and unifies forecasting and planning across business functions to reveal the impact of changes in one area on the rest of the business. Anaplan brings people, processes, and data together to power your business.



“A transformational CFO is a business leader first and a CFO second. They should be the critical enabler driving transformation strategy.”

Carla Moradi, Senior Vice President of Go-To-Market Transformation at Anaplan

Zone three: Operating model and processes

Growth-minded finance leaders cast a discerning gaze on how the finance organization is run, how transformation happens both within and beyond the finance group, and, most important of all, how the business at large makes decisions and crafts strategy.

Enabling transformation means creating the structures, widespread buy-in, and governance necessary to keep a big, complex project on track. It also means creating and sustaining the holistic, enterprise-level vision necessary to achieve major business objectives such as improving the employee and customer experience, freeing up fresh cash flow, and getting to market ahead of competitors.

Assessing gaps in finance’s operating model

How good is your current operating framework at advancing the goals you want to achieve? What kind of operating model do you need to put in place to facilitate the future you have in mind? What governance will you need to hold the team accountable for effective delivery of that vision? Will you need a transformation leader to guide this process?

Earnings, market share, and other metrics of business performance illustrate how effective your operating model is. Another way to assess how well the finance organization and business at large are being served by current methods of evaluating options and making decisions is to consider employee satisfaction and the customer experience, both in terms of finance’s internal customers (within the business) and the external customers that the business serves.

“You want to monitor KPIs and make sure you’re achieving your corporate targets such as driving growth, efficiency, cash flow, speed to market, market share, and earnings,” said Baxter-Orr. “But you also need to ask, are your clients within the business happy with you? Am I doing all I can to serve customers and employees? When those two are being served really well is when companies truly lead.”



Being customer and employee–centric means investing in automation and data science to improve their experience. Effective systems improve the customer experience by allowing you to deliver the right product where and when it’s needed. Employee satisfaction comes from solving complex problems, not from doing rote things because a company didn’t invest in the right systems and processes. Ultimately the success of your operating model depends on your investments and the success of your investments depends on governance.

Strategies and tactics to enhance processes

Ambitious transformation is a complex process that requires collaboration across functions backed up by solid governance and a diligent campaign of change communication to succeed. To prepare your organization for new ways of doing things, look at how decisions get made, how and what kind of performance is rewarded, and how the team is held accountable for progress on transformation objectives.

“You need to make sure that the dependencies are understood between and among all of the various different initiatives within a big program so you can make good decisions,” said Moradi.

Changes in how you organize and run the finance organization can pave the way for transformation and help avoid pitfalls in managing a transformation program. Aspects of your operating model can also influence culture and performance, incentivizing the finance organization to think more broadly about their function and the business at large. Consider these areas:



Modernize the engine for decision-making to promote diversity of thought, accountability, and awareness

It might look like making the CFO into the sole decision-maker would simplify the process, but hierarchy is less important than how decisions get made. Regardless of structure, you want to set up frameworks to make sure that the CFO is not the sole decision-maker and that others are incentivized and feel accountable.

Think about this example: If the CFO is the sole decision-maker, transformation teams might optimize their approach, metrics, and updates for what matters to that one person. However, with one perspective alone, you can't unlock additional value or risks. Instead, you should consider a steering committee that is held accountable for driving critical decisions related to your transformation.

Create a diverse transformation-initiative steering committee

Digital transformation touches all aspects of the business. Even when a transformation project is centered in finance, having commitment across

the C-suite or the finance leadership team to make decisions together ensures buy-in and builds forward momentum.

The steering committee guides investments, direction, and outcomes of transformation initiatives. A subset of the leadership team, this is the team that will be held accountable for transformation and should be diverse enough across business and finance functions to compel those outcomes. Identify a day-to-day operational leader to drive the initiative.

This group could include the following members to make sure you can build accountability, measure success, and set direction through a diverse set of perspectives and interests:

- Two to four business unit leaders.
- The Chief Accounting Officer and Head of FP&A.
- The head of finance technology and IT.

Having a diverse and well-represented group of leaders helps you define the success of the transformation initiative together, and share ownership and accountability beyond just the finance team.

Example: Leaner processes with bottom-up forecasting

How would the business change if you could incorporate every piece of available data into your forecasts, down to the insights of individual store managers on the ground interacting with customers? Transformational technologies can make it reality.

“When you have a platform that lets you get down to extremely detailed drivers, millions and billions of pieces of data can be automated and streamlined into a forecast coming from your most outer edges, as opposed to relying on trends or history,” said Baxter-Orr.

The Anaplan platform was designed to work in the cloud. Unlike some solutions, it is not legacy software application running in a shared data center. Because it is cloud-native, it can be implemented quickly and instantly made accessible to users anywhere in the world. The result is rapid time to value.

One consumer products business decided to create a system where data from the furthest reaches of their business could be incorporated into regular sales forecasts. What had been the work of corporate finance analysts using spreadsheets was shifted to a data-rich platform that included real-time data streams from every sales outlet. Together, the finance team and those in the field collaborated to enhance the accuracy of sales forecasts. As a result, it was possible to target product shipments with more precision for greater efficiency.

“You can say, ‘I believe this is what you’re going to sell in the next six weeks. Can you please, based on what you know, validate or override



it—and say why you overrode it,” said Baxter-Orr. “Imagine that being done across your company.”

“Forecasting is normally done top-down because you don’t have the platform to do a bottom-up,” continued Baxter-Orr. “With the right platform to manage data, you can be constantly reforecasting and recalibrating.”

As confidence in the accuracy of your forecasts grows, new business efficiencies become possible.

“Now you don’t have to have eight days of inventory on hand, you can have two, because you know you are getting it right,” said Baxter-Orr. “Before, you had to have a hefty supply of safety stock. If you can minimize stock on hand yet still meet customer demand, now you’re optimizing cash flow.”

Anaplan value

Whatever strategy or initiative your organization is pursuing, Anaplan gives you visibility and accountability through all of the parts of the organization that matter to your success.

“Anaplan is your insurance plan,” said Moradi. “When you have planning going on in all the different pieces and parts of your organization that are required to make a specific strategy or transformation happen, you need the transparency Anaplan provides to give you certainty about progress toward your goals.”

The depth and breadth of information available on your Anaplan platform lets you forecast what’s coming so you can anticipate problems and move quickly when things change.

“When factors shift, Anaplan gives you the visibility to assess the situation and allows you to change your behavior to meet new needs,” said Moradi. “Anaplan lets you craft a richly informed strategy based on a comprehensive view of the data and circumstances.”

Improving speed to market and cash flow with Anaplan

The combination of access to data and access to models and analytics to leverage that data lets you stay on top of complex processes and drive success. Two primary objectives that Anaplan can help with are speed to market and managing cash flow.

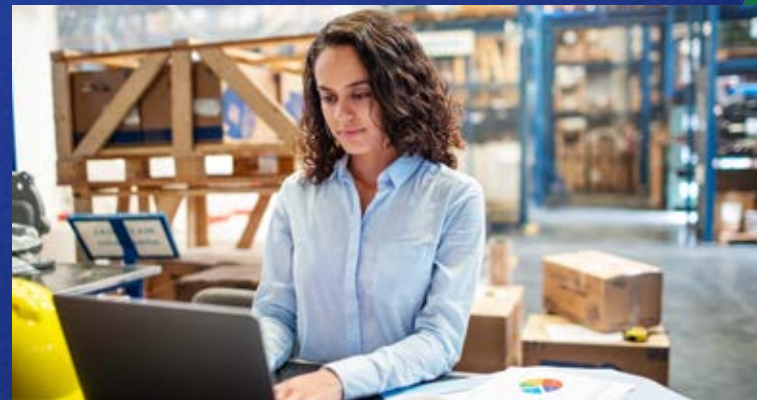
“If you want to get your product first to market—and get the 60 percent of market share that typically goes with that—put everything on Anaplan

so you can track your progress and know if you can get there first,” said Moradi. “You can experiment with various decisions and scenarios. What can you change about that product to be first to market?”

In terms of cash flow, Anaplan lets you trim supply chain excesses by gaining a more detailed view of demand and where, when, and how you order product.

“Anaplan allows you to connect all of the pieces on that journey,” said Moradi. “How are you doing demand? What orders are you placing to the factory? How specific are your orders? What are you shipping to what stores? Anaplan lets you verify what is happening in each area and make changes as they’re needed.”

Lean processes mean more just-in-time ordering, more precise distribution of product, and better cash flow.



Request a [free demo](#) to see how Anaplan can help you drive digital transformation.

Conclusion

Few roles have the enterprise-wide perspective, business insight, financial acumen, and data literacy of the transformational finance leader. Finance has a unique perspective on business planning, because they bring the numbers together from across the organization to forecast performance for the month or quarter ahead.

“Finance knows better than anyone how disorganized and not-connected the whole organization is,” said Moradi. “Everybody else is naïve about it, but finance knows.”

Today’s finance leaders are uniquely positioned to guide the business into the future by creating a culture of curiosity and problem-solving, cultivating broad skillsets attuned to the digital age, implementing powerful data insight capabilities, and improving the frameworks and processes that govern business decisions.

There is a great deal at stake. With sophisticated data intelligence capabilities finally within reach, there are new efficiencies to be gained and new opportunities to drive growth and profitability to be discovered. Those who implement transformative technologies will tap into those insights and gain a competitive advantage. When you bring people, data, and processes together, you expand the realm of the possible and open the door to new ways to deliver a growth agenda guided by finance leadership.



About Anaplan

Anaplan, Inc. (NYSE: PLAN) is a cloud-native enterprise SaaS company helping global enterprises orchestrate business performance. Leaders across industries rely on our platform—powered by our proprietary Hyperblock® technology—to connect teams, systems, and insights from across their organizations to continuously adapt to change, transform how they operate, and reinvent value creation. Based in San Francisco, Anaplan has over 20 offices globally, 175 partners and approximately 1,600 customers worldwide.

Anaplan puts Corporate Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A) teams in control with user-friendly enterprise formulas to create models that scale and evolve with your business. Streamlined management capabilities empower financial analysts to move from a reactionary mode to accountability and ownership.

Anaplan's Business Unit FP&A solution empowers Business Units to align to and meet the targets set by corporate finance while offering them the flexibility to build plans and scenarios to analyze changing demand, marketplace disruption and volatility, competitive pressures, and more.

To learn more, visit anaplan.com