



The CFO as Trusted Adviser

A look at the technology gap that prevents a good idea from becoming reality

Is the twenty-first-century CFO primarily a financial steward, managing issues of cost and compliance — or more of a business strategist, working closely with top executives to guide the company toward maximum shareholder value?

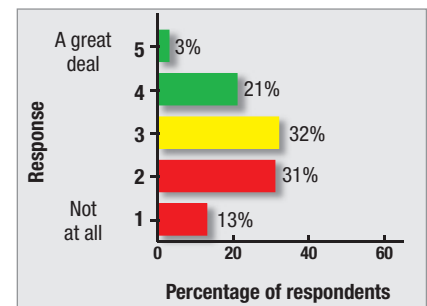
In September 2004, BetterManagement.com explored that issue and others in an online survey. In only four days, some 300 executives offered up their perspectives. They represented the gamut of industries, markets and organizational categories — yet the results showed some distinct trends.

For one, 81 percent of respondents felt the CFO is a trusted adviser to the corporation, playing a major role in shaping strategic direction at the highest levels. CFOs are keenly aware of the pressure to balance day-to-day stewardship with long-term vision. However, that ideal is stymied by tools and tasks that weren't designed for predictive insight, or which leave little time for long-term strategizing.

In fact, nearly three quarters of respondents said that their current business intelligence technology doesn't enable them to effectively identify and exploit revenue opportunities, evaluate performance across the enterprise or identify operating-level changes that would optimize overall performance.

These results point to some significant disconnects — between expectations and empowerment and between perception and reality. It's hard to adopt a strategic perspective when the view is blurred or obscured. It's

impossible to generate accurate foresight with financial intelligence systems that are fixed on the past. And it's a feat to sustain a visionary mindset when days are mired in cost-cutting initiatives, compliance tasks, period-end closings and routine reporting.



To what extent does your current business intelligence technology enable you to effectively identify and exploit revenue opportunities?

In the quest for an accurate handle on operations and finances across the organization, executives seem to be constrained by systems and processes that just weren't designed to generate that kind of comprehensive and verifiable picture.

In particular, the specific capabilities that respondents deem most valuable in a financial intelligence solution are the same ones they perceive to be most elusive. In the BetterManagement.com survey, 78 to 88 percent of respondents cited sophisticated analytics and predictive planning as important or very important, while nearly as many said these functions are difficult to achieve with their present financial intelligence systems.



The same was true even of the most elemental attributes of these systems, such as system integration, insight into operations, rapid consolidation, data management and flexibility to adjust to change. Survey respondents decisively said these capabilities were important and, at the same time, difficult to achieve.

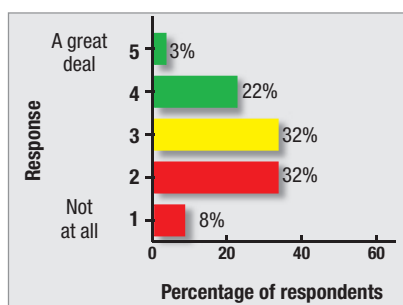
So while CEOs and the board are looking to CFOs to supply strategic leadership, the finance function is still grappling with some fundamental tactical issues, such as consolidating data from disparate business units and computing platforms, converting that data into a valid foundation for analysis and exploiting that analysis to drive meaningful change.

A holistic solution for financial intelligence

With SAS® Financial Intelligence, an unmatched solution suite for managing and improving the performance of the finance department, you can focus on specific financial business processes — planning, reporting, budgeting, consolidation, risk assessment, forecasting, strategy development, the audit process — and develop more predictive, accurate, relevant and timely results. The hindsight, insight and foresight provided by SAS Financial Intelligence creates an environment for the finance department to become a reliable, trusted adviser for other areas of the company.

SAS Financial Intelligence helps finance departments take a holistic approach to answering their most pressing questions. This complete solution suite combines a foundation for integrated, enterprisewide financial intelligence with specific solutions that create financial transparency and enable:

- Planning and financial reporting.
- Cost and profitability analysis.
- Regulatory compliance.
- Formulation, execution and measurement of strategy.
- Risk management.
- Forecasting.
- Optimization.



To what extent does your current business intelligence technology enable you to effectively evaluate performance across the enterprise and make operating-level corrections?

About SAS

SAS is the market leader in providing a new generation of business intelligence software and services that create true enterprise intelligence. SAS solutions are used at more than 40,000 sites — including 96 of the top 100 companies on the FORTUNE Global 500® — to develop more profitable relationships with customers and suppliers; to enable better, more accurate and informed decisions; and to drive organizations forward. SAS is the only vendor that completely integrates leading data warehousing, analytics and traditional BI applications to create intelligence from massive amounts of data. For nearly three decades, SAS has been giving customers around the world *The Power to Know*®.



World Headquarters
and SAS Americas
SAS Campus Drive
Cary, NC 27513 USA
Tel: (1) 919 677 8000
Fax: (1) 919 677 4444
U.S. & Canada sales:
(1) 800 727 0025

SAS International
PO Box 10 53 40
Neuenheimer Landsr. 28-30
D-69043 Heidelberg, Germany
Tel: (49) 6221 4160
Fax: (49) 6221 474850

www.sas.com