# Cautious optimism among finance leaders as AI integration grows



As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into business operations, particularly within the finance sector, a new study reveals a landscape of cautious optimism amongst finance leaders. Conducted by Basware in collaboration with Financial Times Longitude, the survey involved responses from 400 CFOs and finance executives around the globe and highlighted a prevailing excitement about AI's potential, tempered by concerns over its return on investment (ROI).

The survey indicates a significant movement towards further AI investment, with 78% of respondents planning to increase their AI spending in the next 12 to 18 months. However, the same report reveals that approximately half of the CFOs surveyed are prepared to cut their AI budgets if tangible results are not evident within a year. This hesitancy appears rooted in the fluidity of the global economic landscape, which complicates decision-making regarding AI investments.

Notably, the report unveils that nearly one-third (31%) of organizations currently do not possess a clear strategy for implementing AI technology. This lack of structured planning is identified as a significant barrier to adoption. Additionally, 41% of financial leaders express challenges in strategizing their AI investments amidst broader economic uncertainties, which echoes sentiments from even large corporations like Meta, struggling with the challenges of demonstrating ROI for their substantial AI expenditures.

Despite these challenges, the adoption of AI in financial operations is garnering proven benefits. The survey highlights improvements in areas such as accounts payable automation, where companies leveraging AI have reported an impressive ROI of 136% over three years. This suggests that strategic application of AI can indeed yield significant financial advantages. Furthermore, according to the findings, 75% of CFOs believe that AI enables finance teams to concentrate more on strategic initiatives such as regulatory compliance and e-invoicing, enhancing overall operational efficiency.

However, the successful implementation of AI technologies faces notable obstacles. For instance, 40% of finance leaders identified poor change management capabilities as a critical challenge hindering AI adoption, while 31% reported that a lack of a defined strategic vision inhibits progress in this area.

Perttu Nihti, Chief Product Officer at Basware, highlighted the complexity of the CFO's role, stating, "The office of the CFO handles a range of complex functions, from regulatory compliance to financial reporting. AI-powered automation can relieve pressure in these areas by reducing hours and improving efficiency. However, the success of AI investments relies on knowing where to begin and demonstrating its impact." Nihti further articulated the current state of AI implementation, noting, “We are at a tipping point for AI. By focusing on high-value areas where AI can deliver quick, measurable results, such as compliance, error reduction, and fraud detection, businesses can justify their AI investments and show value across the organisation.”

The findings from this survey spotlight a dual narrative in the finance sector: one of recognition of AI's transformative potential and another of caution surrounding the strategic direction and measurable outcomes of such investments. As businesses navigate this complex landscape, the challenge will be to align AI strategies with organisational goals, ensuring that AI technologies deliver the anticipated benefits without undue risk.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://sharedserviceslink.com/news/the-ai-tipping-point-in-finance-cfos-demand-roi-as-ai-adoption-grows> - This article corroborates the survey conducted by Basware and Financial Times Longitude, highlighting the plans of 78% of CFOs to increase AI investments and the demand for ROI within a year.
* <https://sharedserviceslink.com/news/the-ai-tipping-point-in-finance-cfos-demand-roi-as-ai-adoption-grows> - It also supports the finding that half of the CFOs are prepared to cut AI budgets if tangible results are not evident within a year.
* <https://news.basware.com/en/the-ai-tipping-point-half-of-cfos-will-axe-ai-investment-if-it-doesnt-show-roi-next-year> - This article confirms the survey results, including the intention of 78% of CFOs to increase AI investments and the readiness of half to cut AI budgets without measurable returns.
* <https://news.basware.com/en/the-ai-tipping-point-half-of-cfos-will-axe-ai-investment-if-it-doesnt-show-roi-next-year> - It also discusses the lack of a clear AI strategy and change management capabilities as significant barriers to AI adoption.
* <https://ginimachine.com/blog/the-roi-of-implementing-ai-in-financial-services/> - This article explains the importance of ROI in justifying AI investments and the challenges associated with calculating ROI in financial services.
* <https://sharedserviceslink.com/news/the-ai-tipping-point-in-finance-cfos-demand-roi-as-ai-adoption-grows> - It supports the benefits of AI in areas such as accounts payable automation and the potential for significant ROI.
* <https://news.basware.com/en/the-ai-tipping-point-half-of-cfos-will-axe-ai-investment-if-it-doesnt-show-roi-next-year> - This article highlights that 75% of CFOs believe AI enables finance teams to focus on strategic initiatives like regulatory compliance and e-invoicing.
* <https://sharedserviceslink.com/news/the-ai-tipping-point-in-finance-cfos-demand-roi-as-ai-adoption-grows> - It corroborates the challenges faced in change management and the lack of a defined strategic vision for AI implementation.
* <https://news.basware.com/en/the-ai-tipping-point-half-of-cfos-will-axe-ai-investment-if-it-doesnt-show-roi-next-year> - This article quotes Perttu Nihti, Chief Product Officer at Basware, on the complexity of the CFO's role and the importance of demonstrating AI's impact.
* <https://ginimachine.com/blog/the-roi-of-implementing-ai-in-financial-services/> - It further explains the need to focus on high-value areas where AI can deliver quick, measurable results to justify investments.
* <https://sharedserviceslink.com/news/the-ai-tipping-point-in-finance-cfos-demand-roi-as-ai-adoption-grows> - This article summarizes the dual narrative in the finance sector regarding AI's transformative potential and the caution surrounding its strategic direction and measurable outcomes.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiogFBVV95cUxPeV8xVVUwN05oNy1aeHdrX2Y4Rk9aXzlXSmZhcEdBbUZVREZUT0xJTGltUEZsS3Rydk5Tdm8xVUZLR2d4dVpHempyWVhMWVptc18zVTRqWW5Zb2JoTjA5dnlLRk52dk5xUWR3bnp3T2hPMTVHRWhySnRYVXpoRmctemRtZjZZd1dZXzV3VmVvSWlsbG5nR2JqT25Ob0xEU3h4LWc?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.techradar.com/pro/2025-could-be-the-year-of-reckoning-for-ai-as-a-global-survey-of-cfos-shows-rampant-nervousness-about-roi> - Please view link - unable to able to access data