# CFOs brace for transformative changes by 2025



CFOs are poised to face transformative changes in their roles and responsibilities by 2025, driven by a variety of factors including ongoing talent shortages, escalating cyber threats, a renewed emphasis on return on investment (ROI), and the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within business processes. According to a survey conducted by IBM in 2024, the top-performing CFOs, representing the top 9% in performance metrics, demonstrated a marked increase in engagement with crucial elements such as cybersecurity, brand reputation, enterprise strategy, technology, and talent management. Notably, the survey highlights a direct connection between high performance and broader engagement across the organisation.

As the landscape evolves, it is anticipated that CFOs will find themselves becoming more involved in cross-departmental activities, potentially leading to a blend of responsibilities traditionally held by both CFOs and Chief Operating Officers (COOs). Industry experts suggest that CFOs who have not yet formed strong partnerships within their organisations should consider building closer relationships with Chief Information Officers (CIOs) or Chief Technology Officers (CTOs). The IBM survey reveals that 65% of CFOs feel pressure to accelerate ROI across their technology investments, yet only a third reported collaborating with technology leaders during the early stages of IT planning.

Moreover, a significant shift in communication style is required as well. The ability to narrate data-driven stories becomes essential, enabling CFOs to articulate how financial strategies align with departmental and company goals. By enhancing their storytelling capabilities based on financial data, CFOs can foster better understanding and integration of their budgetary insights into broader strategic decisions made by leaders within other departments.

The impact of AI on accounting and finance functions is set to escalate. In 2024, only 34% of finance teams had adopted standard AI solutions, with a mere 11% utilising generative AI. However, as 2025 approaches, it is expected that the uptake of AI for automating routine processes, such as accounts payable and receivable, will accelerate. This transition will allow finance professionals to reallocate their time towards more value-adding tasks. The adoption of AI-powered techniques for forecasting and budgeting is anticipated to shift these processes from static, annual exercises to dynamic, real-time activities. However, obstacles remain as companies must standardise data for AI compatibility and ensure accuracy in AI outputs.

Talent acquisition in the accounting sector is becoming more challenging due to a dwindling supply of graduates and heightened expectations for work-life balance among employees. In response, CFOs may increasingly rely on AI to automate fundamental tasks, facilitating productivity with a smaller workforce. The trend is also moving toward outsourcing, with smaller firms seeking external assistance to manage workloads and larger organisations adopting strategic outsourcing. The role of fractional CFOs—contract CFOs who provide services on a part-time basis to multiple clients—has surged by 57% since 2020 and is projected to continue growing. Such interim leadership can be especially beneficial for smaller entities that do not require a full-time CFO.

With the rise of AI technologies comes heightened cybersecurity risks. As AI-enabled threats proliferate, CFOs are expected to play an integral role in security discussions. There has been a notable increase in cyberattacks targeting financial data and operational networks, elevating the importance of CFOs collaborating with IT leaders to fortify security measures. The financial repercussions of data breaches have reached unprecedented levels, with the average cost in 2024 recorded at $4.88 million. However, only a fraction of mid-market organisations assigned budget responsibilities for cybersecurity to their CFOs. As the stakes rise, it is likely that many firms will reassess how they allocate these financial responsibilities, effectively integrating CFOs into cybersecurity investment strategies.

As the role of CFO evolves, new skills will be essential. A heightened emphasis on data literacy is necessary to navigate the complexities of AI initiatives. While professionals do not need to become data scientists, they must possess the ability to interpret data effectively, recognise inconsistencies, and carry out analyses. Additionally, soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and relationship-building will prove invaluable as CFOs engage more broadly across the organisation. Adapting to rapid change will underpin success for finance professionals in this dynamic environment, positioning those who embrace new trends to deliver significant value to their organisations by 2025.

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

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