



THE FINANCIAL PRO'S GUIDE:

5 WAYS TO MAKE AN IMPACT AT WORK



02

SETTING AND REACHING
SPECIFIC GOALS

05

ENSURING
LEGAL COMPLIANCE

08

MAXIMIZING YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S
EFFICIENCY

11

CARING FOR AND
EMPOWERING
EMPLOYEES

13

MAKING FINANCE A VITAL
PART OF CORPORATE
STRATEGIC PLANNING

It's no secret that the work world has changed, and this fast-paced, highly mobile, volatile environment requires a more strategic approach to finance than ever before. Simply put: **Financial strategy is critical to growth.**

Finance and accounting roles have moved well beyond the traditional notion of "bean-counting." Cost control is still important—and the need for accuracy certainly never goes away—but being a successful financial professional requires performing analytical functions, projecting your organization's future goals and needs and understanding the context of the competitive environment.

Traditionally, CFOs and their equivalents have focused on historical data relative to their particular organizations. In this age of globalization and rapid change,

that focus has switched. It's no longer enough to be an expert on your own business or even your own industry; now, it's necessary to understand worldwide trends, including social, cultural, political and technological shifts that affect the broader business landscape, as well as consumer behavior.

Business decisions are a mix of financial and non-financial elements, and **understanding only the numbers side positions a financial pro to be only half as effective as the organization needs.**

Remember: **Financial strategy is critical to growth.** So focus on how you can maximize your value to your organization by approaching your role through a wide-angle lens.

1

SETTING AND REACHING SPECIFIC GOALS

To truly make an impact, first you must understand your organization's goals and create personal goals that align with the corporate strategy. Consider the organization's overall direction and your specific

department or team's direction, then translate that to your role using these three steps:

- Link goals to behaviors
- Focus on self-development
- Use documentation



LINK GOALS TO BEHAVIORS

Begin with the end! Define the goal—for example, successfully bringing a new product to market or adding a location. Then identify two to three behaviors that are likely to drive a successful outcome. Now you'll know where you are expected to go, as well as how to get there.

FOCUS ON SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Generally, you should have six to seven goals, one or two of which are tied to personal self-development. **This type of personal goal-setting leads to long-lasting change** and creates greater engagement for you with your organization and its mission.

There are four important steps to establishing self-development:

- 1 ASSESS YOUR CURRENT SITUATION.
- 2 TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR INTERESTS.
- 3 SPOT CHECK WITH OTHERS.
- 4 SET SPECIFIC ACTIONS.



FIRST, SET YOUR GOALS

Use documentation. Goals should be documented in writing both formally and informally and discussed with your direct supervisor. (Performance management isn't just for HR!) The formal process might include a standard form, a performance-development plan or other assessments, specific timelines and checkpoints, and occasional updates.

Informal documentation might take the form of notes written from regular development conversations with your manager that support the formal process.

The SMART method can help you set goals that will make a real difference—and make you a standout at work. Consider your short- and long-term goals and then ask yourself the following questions:

SPECIFIC

- Does your goal clearly and specifically state what you are trying to achieve? (If your goal is particularly large or lofty, try breaking it down into smaller, specific SMART goals.)

MEASURABLE

- How will you (and others) know if progress is being made on achieving your goal? (Can you quantify or put numbers to your outcome?)

ATTAINABLE

- Is achieving your goal dependent on anyone else?
- Is it possible to reframe your goal so it only depends on you and not others?
- What factors may prevent you from accomplishing your goal?

RELEVANT

- Why is achieving this goal important to you?
- What values in your life does this goal reflect?
- What effect will achieving your goal have on your life or on others?

TIME-BOUND

- When will you reach your goal? (Again, if your goal is particularly large, try breaking it down into smaller goals with appropriate incremental deadlines.)

GOAL 1

TODAY'S DATE: _____

WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE
YOUR GOAL?

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL IN ONE SENTENCE?
(WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?)

THE BENEFITS OF ACHIEVING THIS GOAL
WILL BE:

HOW WILL I MEASURE SUCCESS?

GOAL 2

TODAY'S DATE: _____

WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE
YOUR GOAL?

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL IN ONE SENTENCE?
(WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?)

THE BENEFITS OF ACHIEVING THIS GOAL
WILL BE:

HOW WILL I MEASURE SUCCESS?

GOAL 3

TODAY'S DATE: _____

WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE
YOUR GOAL?

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL IN ONE SENTENCE?
(WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?)

THE BENEFITS OF ACHIEVING THIS GOAL
WILL BE:

HOW WILL I MEASURE SUCCESS?



NEXT STEPS:

ENSURE COMPLIANCE • MAXIMIZE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S EFFICIENCY • CARE FOR AND EMPOWER EMPLOYEES

2

ENSURING LEGAL COMPLIANCE

To move financial pros to the strategic side of the corporate table, first all the traditional basics must be buttoned down, and that starts with compliance.

Legal missteps lurk around seemingly every corner. Just ask the Department of Labor, which levied \$82 million in fines in 2013,¹ or the IRS, which issued \$4.5 billion in employment tax penalties in 2013!²

Now add into that mix the complexities of ever-changing healthcare reform, and you don't have to wonder why financial leaders are losing sleep at night.

Specifically, organizations nationwide are scrambling to track employee hours to determine health-benefit eligibility as required under the Affordable Care Act. A Paycor survey found that 28 percent of organizations still aren't sure how they're going to report hours. That uncertainty opens the door to thousands of dollars in fines per employee per year and makes reliable financial modeling virtually impossible.

Technology can play a part in mitigating your compliance risk. According to the 2013 State of Compliance Survey by Compliance Week and PricewaterhouseCoopers, **U.S. organizations are using technology for training (74 percent) and document management (57 percent).**



IN 2013 THE IRS ISSUED
\$4.5 BILLION
IN EMPLOYMENT TAX PENALTIES.

YOUR ORGANIZATION MIGHT CONSIDER:

1

Outsourcing payroll processing and payroll tax filing to reduce errors and get your staff back to the work it does best. The IRS says **one-third of employers make payroll mistakes**, which can lead to lawsuits, large back-tax bills and employee turnover. When you let payroll experts handle such tasks, your team gains the time, energy and mental space to move on to work that adds greater value for the organization.

2

Adopting an integrated time and attendance application that offers visibility into your employees' hours, ensuring that you can classify their jobs properly, control labor expenses and determine your responsibility for providing health benefits.

3

Leveraging an electronic HR application to track employee performance reviews, new-hire information, benefit-enrollment data and other employee data. A cloud-based system allows HR and Accounting quick access to important data any time and anywhere, creating a comprehensive reference point that helps protect you in the event of an audit or lawsuit.

4

Using online onboarding to ensure employees fill out new hire documentation, such as I-9 and W-4 forms, electronically. They can even acknowledge reading important company documents, such as your employee handbook, social media guidelines or harassment policies. An electronic onboarding solution can record and store this information and allow you to report on it in case of an audit or lawsuit.

**ONE-THIRD
OF EMPLOYERS MAKE
PAYROLL
MISTAKES**



COMPLIANCE SCORECARD

Can you answer yes to all of these questions? If not, you might be at risk of fines, penalties or even lawsuits.

| CONCERN | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Are your employees all classified correctly? | | |
| 2. Are you certain that hourly employees are not working unpaid overtime? | | |
| 3. Do you and your staff understand wage-and-hour laws and possible penalties? | | |
| 4. Are you properly tracking employee hours to determine ACA eligibility? | | |
| 5. Are taxes being deducted for every employee, regardless of status or location? | | |
| 6. Is your employee data completely secure? | | |
| 7. Do you have complete performance records for all your employees? | | |
| 8. Are policies consistently and clearly communicated throughout your organization? | | |



3

MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S EFFICIENCY

A recent Paycor survey of more than 1,400 small to mid-sized businesses revealed that 51 percent of businesses still store employee data in multiple spreadsheets.

Buried under all those piles of paper is your organization's bottom line—the one that's shrinking as you lose time and money on outdated, inefficient processes.

Too many organizations collect data without a clear purpose or by using archaic systems. In either case, bad data and bad practices compromise growth and opportunity. Financial professionals need to be clear and candid with organizational leadership about

the quality of corporate data. Bad data won't heal itself—and neither will the bad decisions that result from it.

According to Forbes, research shows "more than 60% of companies are now investing in Big Data and analytics tools ... [yet] only 14 percent have done any significant 'statistical analysis' of employee data."

The other 86 percent? They're still challenged by reporting, wading through mountains of disconnected reports that yield little, if any, actionable information. What it does yield is wasted time and effort—and incalculable frustration.

Selecting a cloud-based reporting tool allows organizations to collect, analyze and use accurate, complete data. That in turn empowers Finance and Accounting to make efficient, strategic decisions about issues such as head count, technology investments, vendor partnerships and total compensation offerings.



PRIORITIZE

LIST THE FIVE THINGS MOST IMPORTANT TO GROWING YOUR BUSINESS:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

NOW, LIST THE FIVE THINGS YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME DOING:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

In a perfect world, of course, those lists would look identical. But in reality, how many crossover points do you have? If it's only one or two—or none at all—it's likely that you're getting bogged down in tasks that zap time from your higher-value work.

Today's financial pros need **to spend as little time as possible on making the trains run on time** and instead put effort into extracting data to create long-term models and projections that fuel decision-making.

BRAINSTORM

LIST THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT DATA POINTS YOU NEED TO DEVELOP AT YOUR ORGANIZATION:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

PARTICULARLY IN SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS, FINANCIAL LEADERS NEED TO BE THE VISIONARIES WHO ASK NOT ONLY, "WHAT DOES THIS COST?" BUT GET TO THE CORE OF, "WHAT IS THE VALUE? WHAT IS THE ROI?" THAT CAN BE DONE EFFECTIVELY ONLY WHEN THE FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION IS SOLID.





4

CARING FOR AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES

Financial pros can play a vital role in developing corporate culture and increasing employee engagement, and it goes well beyond simply loosening the purse strings. It's about caring for employees and building relationships that lead to productive partnerships throughout your organization.

The most elemental piece of caring for employees is keeping their personal data secure and private. As a financial professional, you have access to your colleagues' most sacred data—such as Social Security and bank account numbers—so a glitch in your systems, or those of your vendors, has the potential to wreak havoc on an employee's life.

Ensuring that you work with trustworthy, expert partners keeps your employees protected and conveys to them that you care about their well-being, and not just the organization's bottom line.

The good news is, when employees feel engaged, the bottom line reflects it! Conversely, when your employees aren't satisfied, and feel a low level of attachment to the organization and its mission, your bottom line feels that, too—in the worst way. Studies show that 66 percent of all lost customers can be traced to an interaction a customer had with an indifferent employee.³

Considering that research also shows that only about a third of the U.S. workforce describes itself as engaged, employers are at risk of paying the price in a very tangible way. That's where financial pros come in as problem solvers.

Think broadly about ways in which you can expand your reach and team with other members of your organization to boost employee satisfaction. For example, can you work more closely with IT to facilitate the acquisition of technology resources? Can you partner creatively with HR to allocate funds to an employee-appreciation event that originally wasn't in the budget?

Such practices show openness and flexibility, as well as a willingness to **view cash as a strategic tool**. Being a good steward of your resources reflects a concern for the people who comprise the organization, as well as the organization's overall health.

BRAINSTORM

HOW MIGHT YOU PARTNER WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR NON-FINANCIAL COLLEAGUES TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION THROUGHOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

5

MAKING FINANCE A VITAL PART OF CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Financial pros must cater not only to bookkeeping and transactions—that's ultimately low-risk and low-reward. Strategic work is where you can add value and be an advocate for the larger interests of the organization. Financial pros need to provide organizational leadership with practical tools for issues such as:

- Evaluating vendor agreements and strategic partnerships
- Developing new products or adding services
- Projecting sales and determining pricing structures
- Determining what competitors are doing and where they're going
- Calculating the true ROI of any initiative—beyond mere cash flow
- Analyzing trends and forecasting
- Managing change

Moving to that strategic level begins with minimizing the time spent on day-to-day minutiae. Identifying and using emerging technology tools can empower you to stay focused on what really matters to the bigger picture. For example, outsourcing payroll and tax filing frees members of your team—whether it's one person or 1,000—to **devote their time and talent to studying the competitive landscape and developing financial models.**

A web-based reporting tool can make data more functional, providing the groundwork for accurate projections and ROI calculations that more clearly communicate high-level information to executives, business owners or boards of directors.

That transforms the role of the financial professional to that of a future-focused leader who takes ownership of positioning the organization for growth and success.

SUMMARY

Financial expert Suze Orman has said, "A big part of financial freedom is having your heart and mind free from worry about the what-ifs of life."

As a financial pro, you know the world of business probably never will be worry-free, but you can direct your energy to preparing for the what-ifs your organization might face. To elevate your value to leadership, you must connect strategic thinking to your focus on dollars and cents.

By setting clear business goals, maximizing your organization's efficiency, ensuring legal compliance and caring for and empowering employees, you will establish financial strategy as a critical piece of your organization's process and earn a seat at the table for the most important conversations.

SOURCES

1. US Department of Labor Enforcement Data, 2013. | 2. Internal Revenue Service Enforcement Data, 2013. | 3. Leigh Branham, "The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave," webinar, 2014.

HOW MANY HATS ARE YOU WEARING TODAY?

Paycor eliminates the administrative hassle of spreadsheets and disconnected systems so you can shorten your to-do list. Contact Paycor to learn how:

- 1 Our payroll processing and tax filing** reduces errors and gets you back to focusing on more strategic initiatives
- 2 Our Time and Attendance Application** offers visibility into employee hours, ensuring that your organization can classify jobs properly, control labor expenses and determine responsibility for providing health benefits
- 3 Our Reporting and Analytics tool** allows you to track and analyze all payroll and HR information such as compensation and 401(k) data or company demographics and enables you to schedule reports to run and email to anyone at any time
- 4 Our Employee Mobile App** allows associates to view their check stubs, find the company directory or request time off from their mobile phone
- 5 Our HR Application** streamlines everyday HR processes such as benefit administration, associate communication, employee self-service and even open enrollment
- 6 Our Applicant Tracking** solution streamlines recruiting and hiring, helping you electronically find and hire the top talent
- 7 Our Onboarding solution** connects employees to your organization before their first day of work



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