

THE CFO'S FIRST 90 DAYS

A Strategic Finance Assessment Playbook



WHY THE FIRST 90 DAYS MATTER

When stepping into a new finance leadership role at a growing, privately held company, the first 90 days are critical. It's your window to assess the situation, build trust, and set the foundation for scale. This framework, inspired by the real-world experience of top-performing CFOs, outlines what to evaluate and where to focus your attention across six key areas.

USE IT TO:

- Quickly uncover risks and inefficiencies
- Identify low-hanging fruit and early wins
- Align the finance function with growth goals
- Lay the groundwork for reporting, systems, and strategic impact

1. TEAM & FOUNDATION

- Do we have the right people in the right seats?
- Are roles and responsibilities clear?
- Are critical processes owned and documented?
- Evaluate the Controller: strengths, gaps, capacity
- Review current policies, procedures, and controls
- Establish trust through 1:1s with functional experts (AP, AR, Credit, etc.)

QUICK WINS:

- Fix handoff breakdowns
- Clarify responsibilities
- Identify process owners

2. REPORTING & FP&A

- YTD vs. Plan Reporting
- Segment P&Ls
- Common Size Analysis
- Backlog & Forecast Tie-Outs
- Flash Reporting
- Seasonality Modeling
- Revenue & COGS Categorization
- Forecast/Model Assessment

QUICK WINS:

- Establish a basic MD&A cadence
- Clean up flash reporting for execs
- Bridge plan to actuals with comments

3. SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

- ERP: What are they on? Is it the right one?
- Payroll
- CRM
- Expense Management
- Project Management
- Close Calendar
- JE Checklist
- Document SharePoint and its utilization
- Training plans and power users

QUICK WINS:

- Standardize close process
- Clean up chart of accounts
- Identify 1-2 broken systems for replacement

4. TREASURY & RISK

- Cash Forecasting (by vendor category)
- Banking Structure & Signatories
- Credit Cards, Terms, Controls
- Insurance, Brokers, Risk Assessment
- Debt Model & Covenant Compliance
- Payment Terms Standardization

QUICK WINS:

- Create cash schematic
- Categorize vendors by risk or payment method
- Review debt obligations and covenants

5. STRATEGIC OPS & COMMERCIAL

- Go-To-Market Strategy Review
- Sales Quoting/Pricing Process
- Key Customer/Revenue Concentration
- Supply Chain Terms, Single Source Risks
- Lease & Vendor Agreements
- Inventory, Freight, and Working Capital Targets

QUICK WINS:

- Review vendor contracts for savings
- Identify pricing inconsistencies
- Build a dashboard of commercial KPIs

6. PEOPLE, ORG & PLANNING

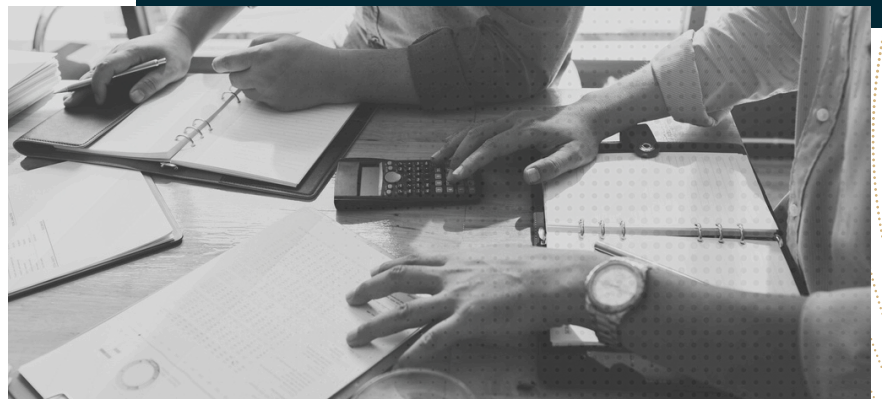
- Org Chart & Job Descriptions
- Performance Reviews & Bonus Plans
- Succession Planning
- Recruiting & Open Roles
- Comp Ratio Analysis
- PTO, HR Systems, and Headcount Reporting

QUICK WINS:

- Clean up the org chart and titles
- Clarify bonus eligibility and targets
- Document open roles and hiring timelines

BONUS: MEETINGS TO BOOK IN FIRST 30 DAYS

- Banks
- Auditors (Tax + Financial)
- Healthcare & Insurance Brokers
- 401(k) Committee
- IT/System Admins



Use this checklist to drive clarity, align your team, and create a finance function that fuels sustainable growth.

Want help applying this framework to your organization? Take our [FINANCE FUNCTION HEALTH CHECK HERE](#) or set up a meeting.



Want to discuss your specific situation? Reach out to one of our experts for a confidential discussion.

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