

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.

ABOUT PINNACLE CONSULTING

Pinnacle is an **accounting and finance consulting firm** that provides **interim support and project-based** solutions to companies' internal accounting and finance teams.

Our consultants typically support **CFOs, CEOs/Presidents, Vice Presidents/Directors of Finance, or Corporate Controllers** depending on the company's need and size.

Clients we serve typically have revenue between **\$20 million to \$2 billion** with a sweet spot being between **\$70 million to \$700 million**.

AREAS WE CAN HELP:

We leverage the expertise of our CFO- and Controller-level consultants to support our clients nationwide in the following areas:

General Accounting

- Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable
- Payroll & Benefits Accounting
- Fixed Assets Accounting
- General Ledger Management
- Month-end & Year-end Close
- Audit Preparation & Support

Financial Planning & Analysis

(Corporate FP&A and Business Unit Level FP&A)

- Budgeting & Forecasting
- Strategic Financial Planning
- Profitability & Performance Analysis
- Cost & Expense Management
- Reporting & Dashboard Development
- Data Analysis & Visualization

Technical Accounting

- SEC Reporting
- M&A Due Diligence
- Equity & Stock-Based Compensation
- Accounting Standards Implementation (ex. ASC 606,842)

Treasury

- Cash Flow Management & Forecasting
- Treasury Systems & Technology
- Liquidity & Working Capital Optimization
- Risk Management & Hedging
- Debt & Capital Structure

Cost Accounting

- Cost Analysis & Optimization
- Overhead Analysis & Activity-Based Costing
- Product & Inventory Costing
- Standard Costing & Variance Analysis
- ERP Integration & Cost Reporting

Internal Audit

- Internal Controls Assessment & Optimization
- Risk Assessment & Mitigation
- Operational Audits & Process Improvement
- Compliance Audits & Regulatory Support
- Audit Readiness & External Audit Support
- Process Documentation
- SOX Compliance & Readiness

Tax

- Income Tax
- SALT
- Sales & Use
- M&A Tax Support
- Tax Planning & Strategy

TWO TYPES OF CONSULTING PROJECTS WE SUPPORT

At Pinnacle, we understand that finance and accounting teams often face both urgent challenges and complex technical needs. That's why our consulting services support two key project types: **Need-Based Projects** and **Technical-Based Projects**.

Whether you're experiencing rapid growth a key departure, or a transition, we provide the expertise to ensure your finance and accounting operations remain strong and efficient.

NEED-BASED PROJECTS

Many companies face sudden staffing gaps or increased workloads that make it difficult to maintain financial operations. Pinnacle provides immediate support to help businesses navigate these situations efficiently.

- Rapidly growing company where existing staff can't keep up with volume.
- Struggling to get financial reports out on time.
- Someone just left the company and the team won't be able to handle the workload without them.
- Someone critical just left the company and they want to get an interim in there to help with the knowledge transfer.
- The company is thinking about selling and wants to get their accounting/finance team buttoned up to increase the value of the company.
 - Put procedures in place.
 - Enhanced reporting capabilities (cash flow, etc...)
- Example: CFO/Controller gives notice. We provide an interim-CFO/Controller to keep the finance function stabilized until the full-time person is hired. This interim resource makes sure the department doesn't fall behind and ensures a smooth onboarding process for the new hire, keeping them from inheriting a mess.

TECHNICAL-BASED PROJECTS

Some business challenges require specialized technical knowledge to ensure compliance, accurate reporting, and effective financial oversight. Pinnacle offers experienced consultants with expertise in complex accounting regulations and financial systems.

- Company is implementing a new ERP system and needs someone who can help from an accounting/finance standpoint.
- Company needs help complying with a new accounting pronouncement such as ASC 842,606.
- Company needs help with due diligence when thinking of buying a company.
- Company needs help with due diligence when they are thinking of selling.
- Example: Company had an ERP implementation gone wrong. No one on the internal finance team knows how to get the reporting out of the system. We will deploy one of our consultants to help bring the system up to date and train the internal team on how to get what they need.

By applying our industry expertise and hands-on approach, Pinnacle supports businesses in navigating financial complexities and driving long-term success.

PINNACLE IN-ACTION

At Pinnacle, we help businesses turn financial and operational challenges into opportunities for growth. Our team works side by side with clients to create customized solutions that deliver real impact. Below are **real-life examples** of how our expertise and hands-on approach have helped companies tackle complex financial situations and move forward with confidence.

HELPING AN ACCELERATED FILER FILE ITS 10Q AFTER LOSING A KEY FINANCIAL LEADER 7 WEEKS BEFORE ITS DUE DATE

Turning a 7-week leadership gap into a timely 10Q success.

THE SITUATION:

A 1.2-billion-dollar public company had a key financial leader give notice just 7 weeks before their 10Q was due leaving the CFO and the rest of the leadership team in fight or flight mode get their Q-filed timely and accurately.

THE CHALLENGE:

Our client needed someone capable of consolidating their 3 business units, leading a team of inexperienced staff, being the liaison to their Big 4 auditor, helping the shared service team reduce the time it took to close, and finally, draft a presentation for the board of directors to be given prior to filling the Q.

OUR SOLUTION:

We provided an experienced financial leader capable of managing all related processes, people, and technology at a company of this size and complexity.

THE RESULT:

Our consultant improved the close process, worked with the external auditors, and drafted and gave the presentation to the board of directors leading to a successful 10Q filing.

STABILIZING A PE-BACKED COMPANY THROUGH A PERIOD OF RAPID EXPANSION

How we provided interim leadership that stabilized financial operations and helped work towards their aggressive growth goals.

THE SITUATION:

A private equity firm was in the process of acquiring businesses across multiple locations. With rapid expansion came the need for stronger financial oversight, including improved recordkeeping, financial reporting, and overall fiscal management. The firm required an interim CFO to stabilize operations, implement best practices, consolidate financials, and ensure accurate reporting during this period of growth.

THE CHALLENGE:

The firm faced significant financial oversight challenges due to its rapid expansion. They needed an interim CFO who could quickly assess existing processes, identify gaps, and implement improvements to enhance financial reporting, transparency, and overall fiscal management.

OUR SOLUTION:

Pinnacle provided an experienced interim CFO who immediately stabilized the firm's financial operations. He assessed current recordkeeping, identified inefficiencies, and implemented streamlined systems to improve financial reporting and transparency. Beyond daily financial management, the CFO played a crucial role in aligning financial objectives with the firm's growth strategy, working closely with leadership to ensure long-term success.

THE RESULT:

The interim CFO's impact was so significant that the client retained him long-term. His leadership in refining financial operations and providing strategic insight made him an indispensable part of the firm's leadership team. By providing the right interim leadership, we not only addressed the immediate financial challenges but also delivered a lasting solution—securing a trusted, full-time CFO who continues to drive financial stability and future growth.

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



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