The Hackett Group®
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2024 FINANCE KEY ISSUES

Complimentary research

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The CFO Agenda

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Prioritizing to enable business success

At the beginning of 2023, most organizations were still preoccupied with the unprecedented confluence of inflationary price increases, rising interest rates, talent shortages, supply market challenges and geopolitical instability – all while considering the possibility of a recession. As the year progressed, headline inflation levels decelerated and many supply markets stabilized to more pre-pandemic norms. The end of 2023, however, saw a flare up in geopolitical concerns with the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

Entering 2024, the economic outlook remains uncertain, with projections that global economic growth could stall or even slow in 2024. In The Hackett Group's 2024 Key Issues Study, executives across business services functions relayed some big concerns: 62% worry about the impact of interest rates on their ability to invest during 2024, while 57% fear a recession during the year. Nearly one-half – 46% – expect labor and skill shortages to continue.

It is not surprising that margin improvement/protection tops the enterprise priority list for 2024. To address this, businesses will emphasize strategies around process efficiency, process automation, working capital optimization and consolidation to shared services. Significantly, 38% of executives we surveyed said slowing spending or delaying projects is likely should the economic outlook deteriorate.

One area that won't completely be in the crosshairs for spending cuts is technology. We were particularly interested in how organizations are approaching generative artificial intelligence (AI) given its potential transformative impact. While the 2024 Key Issues Study found business functions are in the early stages of exploring generative AI, respondents expect mid-level enterprise funding for generative AI to increase in 2024. A small but notable 16% of executives cited business transformation through generative AI as a high priority for 2024.

Against this backdrop, finance teams – like their selling, general and administrative (SG&A) counterparts – will feel increased pressure as their workload grows to enable the success of business stakeholders. This is why it is so critical for finance leaders to understand the potential impact of AI on the function and assess their readiness – including data, governance and processes – to take advantage of the AI promise.

2024 finance priorities

In the 2024 Key Issues Study, finance executives ranked their priorities for the year (**Fig. 1**).

FIG. 1 2024 priorities*

Rank	Priority	High confidence in ability to meet objective
1	COST MANAGEMENT AND OPTIMIZATION	86%
2	CASH FLOW PERFORMANCE, LIQUIDITY AND WORKING CAPITAL	76%
3	DATA (TIMELINESS, COMPLETENESS, RELIABILITY), INSIGHTS AND ACTIONABLE ANALYTICS	56%
4	PROFITABILITY GOALS, INCLUDING MARGIN EXPANSION	65%
5	DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION	54%
6	RELIABLE FORECASTING	50%
7	UPSKILLING OF EXISTING TALENT	56%
8	BUSINESS PARTNERING	74%
9	REGULATORY COMPLIANCE, INCLUDING ESG REPORTING	92%
10	CAPITAL INVESTMENT ALLOCATION AND DEPLOYMENT	91%

*Ranking by weighted average level of importance (i.e., low/moderate/high/critical) for the top 10 finance priorities selected by respondents

Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

2024 finance priorities (cont.)

Traditional finance objectives – cost optimization, cash flow and working capital, profitability, forecasting, regulatory compliance, and capital investment – dominate this year's priority list, with six of the 10 objectives falling in this area. On the other hand, despite persistent labor and talent issues, there is only one talent-related objective in this year's top 10.

Cost containment and cash flow optimization moved from the bottom half of last year's priority list to the top of this year's list – reflective of the current economic climate. Profitability goals/margin expansion also moved into the top five, replacing last year's focus on enabling growth. The ranking also shows escalating attention to improving data and insights in order to inform profitable growth and margin expansion. Data and analytics moved up three places on the list in 2024. Digital transformation dropped from the top spot to No. 5. However, this is likely due to other more immediate concerns than it is to a decline in focus because organizations will continue to advance digital transformation and explore the promise of generative AI.

In most cases, executives are fairly confident in their ability to achieve these objectives. Areas of lowest confidence include forecasting reliability, digital transformation, data enhancement and upskilling talent. In the cases of data and digital transformation, low confidence is likely due to the complex nature and span of effort required to make progress.

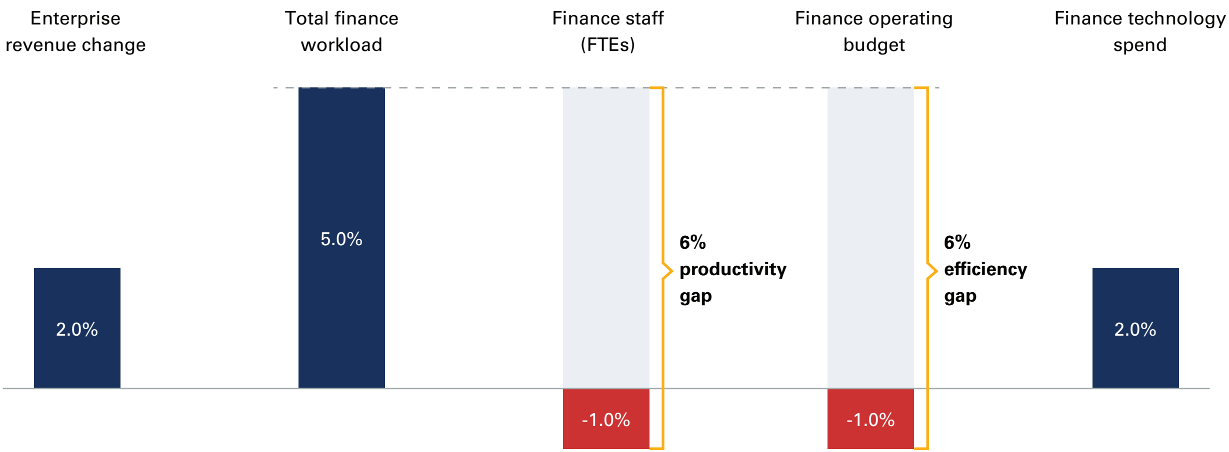
Meeting these objectives requires commitment. Last year, we observed some key mismatches – with a relatively low percentage of finance organizations planning major projects to address their top priorities. The same is true this year. At least one-half of finance organizations are supporting cost management and optimization, data enhancement, and digital transformation with major initiatives in 2024. Otherwise, the percentages of organizations with corresponding initiatives are quite low – particularly for business partnering and talent development, which will be essential to successful finance transformation.

Finance's increased workload will continue to create productivity and efficiency gaps

Addressing these varied priorities will require resources. The 2024 Key Issues Study confirms and quantifies what finance executives already know: They must find a way to do more with less. In 2024, the finance workload is predicted to increase by 5%, reflecting the broadening of priorities, while head count and operating budget decrease slightly (**Fig. 2** on page 6). This creates productivity and efficiency gaps of 6%. The good news is that these gaps have decreased over the past year – from 9% and 10% respectively in the 2023 study. However, finance executives still have a significant challenge in front of them.

While they are counting on technology to help fill the gaps, spending is expected to increase by only 2% in 2024 – down from last year's 5% projected increase. Later in this paper, we discuss the higher levels of dissatisfaction with investments in core, emerging and data technologies. Finance organizations have invested heavily in these technologies, but a significant percentage are not necessarily seeing the benefits they expected. A more moderate level of spending may reflect increased enterprise focus on realizing greater value from existing investments – for example, bringing current tools to scale.

FIG. 2 Change in projected finance workload, staffing, budget and technology spend from 2023 to 2024



Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

Planned improvement initiatives

Finance executives also outlined the top initiatives they have planned for 2024 (**Fig. 3**). The clear takeaway here is that organizations are looking to standardize, scale and leverage investments already made since the beginning of the digital transformation journey. Confidence in the ability to deliver does vary. In areas where confidence lags, finance teams may need to reconsider their approaches to ensure success.

FIG. 3 Top 10 initiatives in 2024

Ranking	Initiative	Confidence level that initiative will be successful
1	SIMPLIFY, STANDARDIZE AND AUTOMATE PROCESSES	76%
2	ESTABLISH OR ADVANCE A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE AND/OR GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES PORTFOLIO AND LOCATION STRATEGY	68%
3	IMPLEMENT DIGITAL FINANCE TECHNOLOGIES	48%
4	EXPAND USE OF SELF-SERVICE TOOLS	60%
5	IMPROVE ANALYTICAL, MODELING AND REPORTING CAPABILITIES	73%
6	IMPROVE AND EXPAND MASTER DATA MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE	47%
7	OPTIMIZE THE INTEGRATED PLANNING PROCESS	37%
8	ADOPT A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK APPROACH THAT SUPPORTS BUSINESS PARTNERING WITH OTHER FUNCTIONS	57%
9	OPTIMIZE THE CLOSE AND CONSOLIDATION PROCESSES	69%
10	LAUNCH FORMAL INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE WORKING CAPITAL PERFORMANCE	50%

Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

priority

1

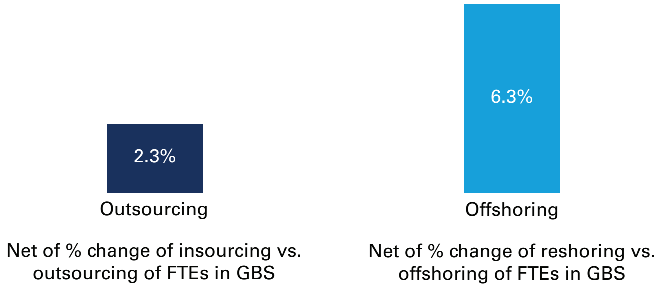
Cost management and optimization

Cost reduction is a perennial part of the finance priority list, but it does move up and down. Given the current economic mood, it is not surprising to see cost rise from the bottom of last year's top 10 list to the top of this year's list. Finance must maintain ongoing financial operating discipline and ensure intelligent cost management – both for the function and enterprise.

Within the finance function, the cost opportunity continues to grow. Our 2023 analysis of Digital World Class® finance organizations (those in the top quartile in both business value and operational excellence) found that these performance leaders run at a 47% lower cost than the peer group. This represents a $48 million advantage for a typical $10 billion company. One reason for this advantage is that Digital World Class finance organizations automate far more core transactions than the peer group. Accelerating automation not only helps organizations run more efficiently; it is key to counteracting the impact of labor trends.

Projected increases in outsourcing and offshoring to lower-cost global business services (GBS) centers (**Fig. 4** on page 9) are consistent with the finding on page 6 that finance is prioritizing initiatives to establish or advance centers of excellence (COEs) and/or GBS and location placement. Together, these suggest that labor arbitrage – as a cost-saving strategy – remains foundational to the enterprise value proposition.

FIG. 4 Percentage increase in outsourcing/offshoring



Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

Finance – like all SG&A functions and the enterprise at large – needs a deliberate, sustainable approach to optimizing costs, rather than one-off belt tightening. Cost optimization is difficult to sustain as demonstrated in The Hackett Group's 2023 North American SG&A Study and Scorecard. After two years of stellar reductions, SG&A costs rose as a percentage of revenue for 42% of the largest companies in North America and outpaced inflation at 14% of all companies. Only 15% were able to cut their absolute SG&A costs in 2022, and only 7% have reduced their SG&A costs year-over-year for six or more years over the past decade.

Finance organizations will be wise to explore generative AI as part of this deliberate and sustainable cost reduction approach. Although adoption is still maturing, generative AI has huge promise. Our recent research[1] found that generative AI could yield a 40% reduction in SG&A costs and a 40% reduction in SG&A staff over the next five to seven years. Now is the time to be planting the seeds for this potential paradigm shift in delivery model and cost structure.

[1] Generative AI Could Yield a 40% SG&A Cost Reduction, The Hackett Group, 2023

priority

2

Cash flow performance, liquidity and working capital

The cost of working capital is on the rise, with liquidity coming at a cost premium. The Hackett Group's 2023 Working Capital Survey, which analyzed the performance of the 1,000 largest listed nonfinancial companies with headquarters in the United States, found that cash conversion cycle (CCC) – the composite measure of working capital performance – deteriorated 3% in 2022. Days payable outstanding was the main driver of CCC erosion – a sign that companies have reached a ceiling for supplier payment terms and are starting to lose leverage with suppliers.

There were several notable developments. In 2022, all three key components of working capital, as well as CCC, moved with greater magnitude than they have in recent years. Furthermore, the gap between top performers and median companies continued to widen – not because the best-in-class companies improved significantly, but because median companies' working capital performance showed notable degradation. Finally, despite improved accounts receivable performance in 2022, excess working capital grew substantially. The top 1,000 companies have nearly $1.9 trillion tied up in working capital – up 12% from the year prior.

priority

2

Cash flow performance, liquidity and working capital (cont.)

Disruption and uncertainty do not appear to be easing. But the nature of these challenges is evolving. Organizations with strong working capital management capabilities will be best positioned to sense and react to changing demand signals and other sources of instability.

In response, finance must optimize working capital through continued strengthening of supplier payment terms where possible, inventory management, targeted collections, capabilities for enabling faster and/or easier payments, and more frequent monitoring of the accounts receivable portfolio. In addition to executing specific strategies that drive working capital improvement, optimizing working capital also requires strengthening capabilities for managing it – including elevating awareness and skills, increasing visibility into key indicators, and sharing information better across functions.

priority

3

Data, insights and actionable analytics

The ability to master data and turn it into timely, meaningful, and actionable insights is key to achieving many of the finance priorities. Finance executives ranked the actions that they plan to take in 2024 to improve and expand finance's analytics capabilities (**Fig. 5** on page 13). These fall into three primary categories.

The Key Issues Study revealed significant opportunity for finance organizations to move past the pilot stage or small deployments (**Fig. 6** on page 14). Overall, organizations are not fully deploying data-related technologies that hold potential for significant improvement in actionable insights – limiting benefits to the enterprise. The most notable example is master data management tools, which facilitate the cleaning of datasets and harmonizing of master data hierarchies across a company's application structure. This is a critical prerequisite for enabling effective digital and generative AI transformation. Projected growth in adoption is strong.

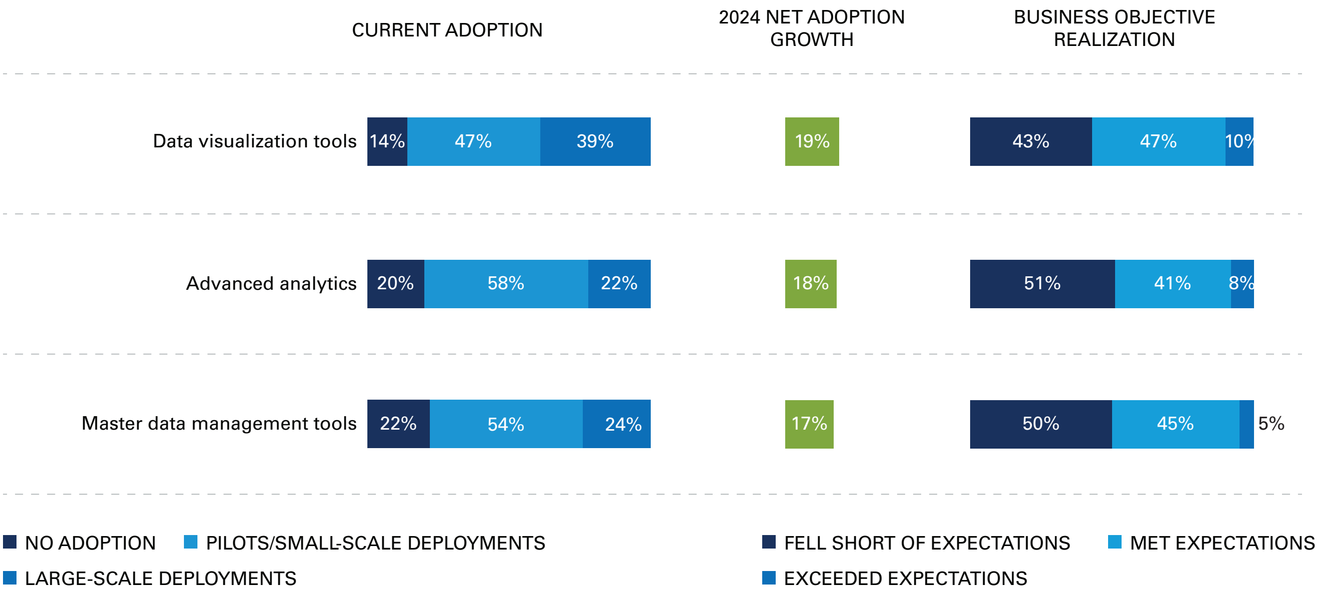
It is notable that these technologies fall short of expectations for many companies. In fact, the percentage of executives who feel these technologies meet or exceed expectations is down relative to last year's study. Effectiveness depends on data quality; however, many organizations have not yet mastered MDM. Additionally, the complexity associated with implementing these technologies prevents some organizations from realizing the benefits they expected to at this point.

FIG. 5 2024 actions for improving and expanding finance analytics capabilities

PEOPLE	PROCESSES	TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS
Train and upskill staff	Define finance data strategy and common data models to support reporting and analytics	Provide greater access to self-service and data-discovery tools
Update competency models and skills requirements	Establish data stewardship and governance	Implement modern data sourcing, integration and/or blending tools
Hire data scientists and/or other data management experts	Evolve and mature information analysis techniques	Invest in new purpose-built enterprise performance management tools (financial planning and forecasting tools)
	Move beyond financial analysis to deliver analytics to other parts of the organization	Implement advanced analytics tools (e.g., AI-enabled analytics automation)
	Establish an analytics/reporting COE	

Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

FIG. 6 Technology adoption and business objective realization – finance analytics



Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

priority

4 Profitability goals, including margin expansion

Most western economies avoided a recession in 2023, but the baseline forecast for global growth is expected to slow from 3% in 2023 to 2.9% in 2024.[2] In the Key Issues Study, 57% of executives across business functions said they are concerned about a recession in 2024. This sentiment is reflected in finance's shift in focus – from supporting enterprise growth in 2023 to achieving profitability goals in 2024.

Finance can be a catalyst for achieving both profitability and growth goals by modeling and evaluating portfolio choices, investment opportunities or impacts of pricing strategy, maintaining ongoing financial operating discipline, and ensuring there is financial capacity to fund growth. The ability to achieve other finance objectives, including enhancing data capabilities and business partnering, will be key to delivering on this objective.

As challenging as the coming year may be, managing through a slowdown is a situation that most companies and leaders have experienced. The best companies look proactively for ways to thrive amid uncertainty and position strategically for capitalizing on growth opportunities, regardless of the volatility they may encounter. Leading finance organizations will partner with the business to model the most likely scenarios around recession, geopolitical realities and inflation, and plan accordingly. This enables the agility and readiness to respond to situations as they unfold.

[2] International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook Navigating Global Divergence, October 2023

priority

5

Digital transformation, process improvements and technology modernization

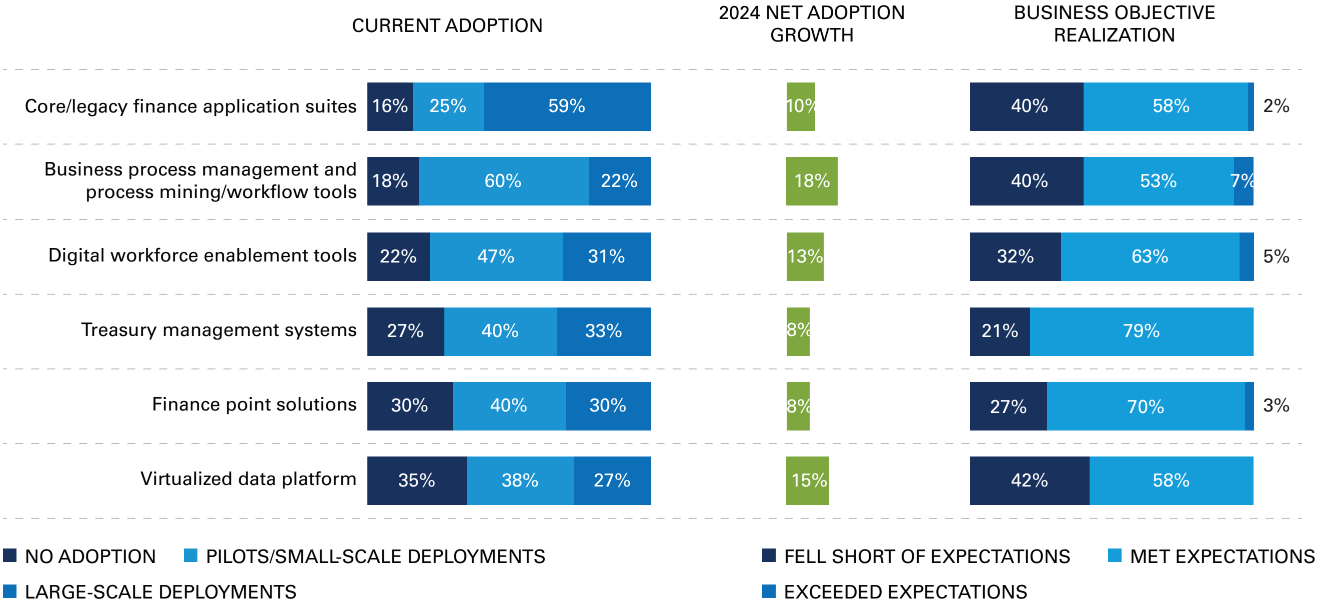
The current environment is putting more pressure on costs, but finance executives still project spending on technology to increase, albeit by a smaller percentage than last year (see page 6).

Finance must continue investing in technology to reduce costs and create new capabilities through aggressive adoption of cloud, finance point solutions, generative AI, analytics, and other tools. But they must also optimize the use of technologies already in place.

As in prior years, the study shows most finance organizations are operating in multiple technology environments simultaneously (**Fig. 7** on page 17). Getting core technologies to scale has a direct impact on process standardization, enterprise capabilities and the ability to better leverage technology, while also reducing reliance on labor.

As with data-related technologies, there is significant opportunity to expand adoption beyond pilot projects or small-scale adoption. For technologies other than core finance application suites, large-scale adoption remains low – with one-third or fewer organizations at that level.

FIG. 7 Technology adoption and business objective realization – core finance technologies



Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

priority 5

Digital transformation (cont.)

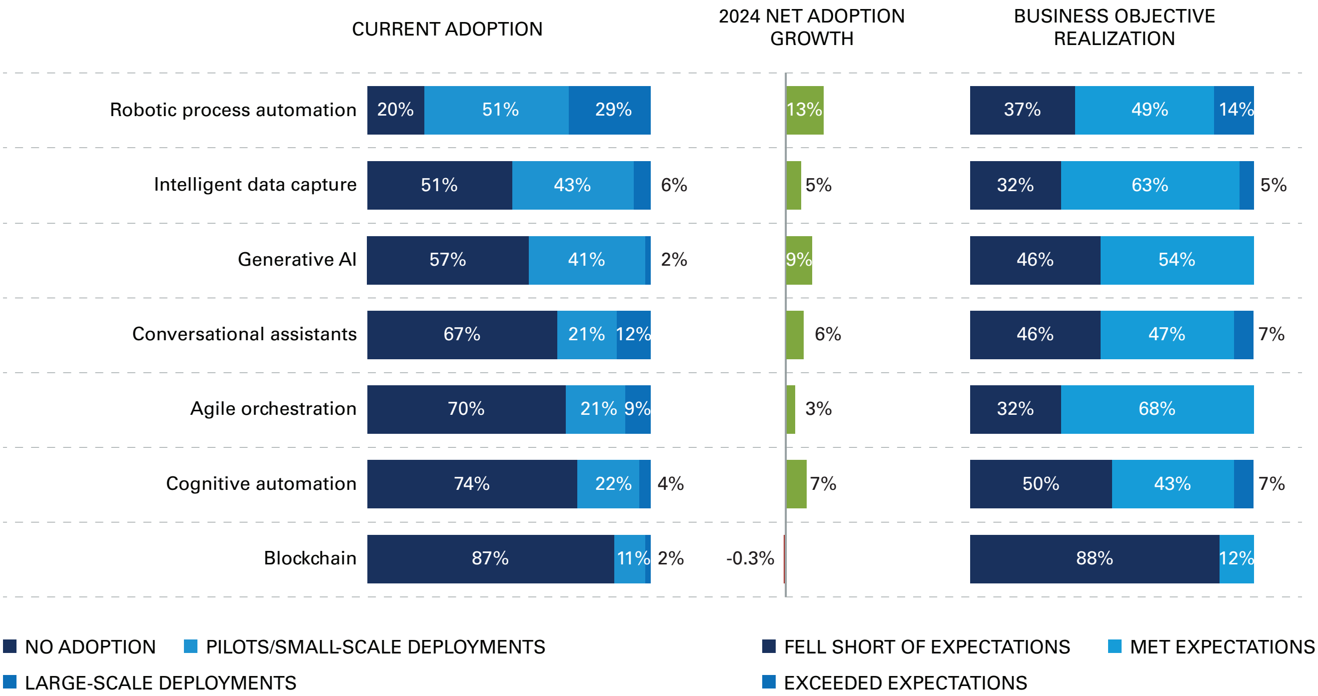
Projected growth in adoption is moderate across the board, with executives expecting the greatest increases in business process management (BPM) and process mining/workflow tools. This is in line with an emphasis on elevating process efficiency and managing costs.

Here again, some technologies fall short of expectations for a significant percentage of companies. Lack of mature data and change management capabilities are key factors. Furthermore, it is hard to meet high expectations when adoption remains at a small scale. A prime example is BPM and process mining/workflow tools, which only 22% of finance organizations have adopted on a large scale.

The story is similar with emerging technologies – but to a greater degree (**Fig. 8** on page 19). More than one-half of finance organizations have not adopted any of these technologies other than robotic process automation (RPA). Only two emerging technologies – RPA and conversational assistants – have large-scale adoption in the double digits. Projections for adoption growth also lag those for other mainstream finance technologies and data tools.

Emerging technologies fall short of expectations for many. Often, we see these technologies piloted in environments where process redesign and optimization have yet to occur, yet organizations are still evaluating the technological efficacy.

FIG. 8 Technology adoption and business objective realization – emerging finance technologies

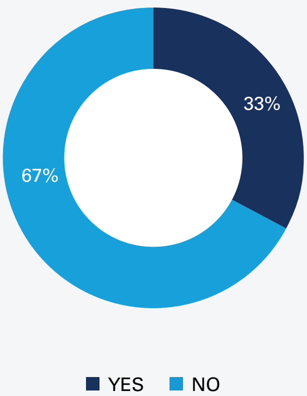


Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

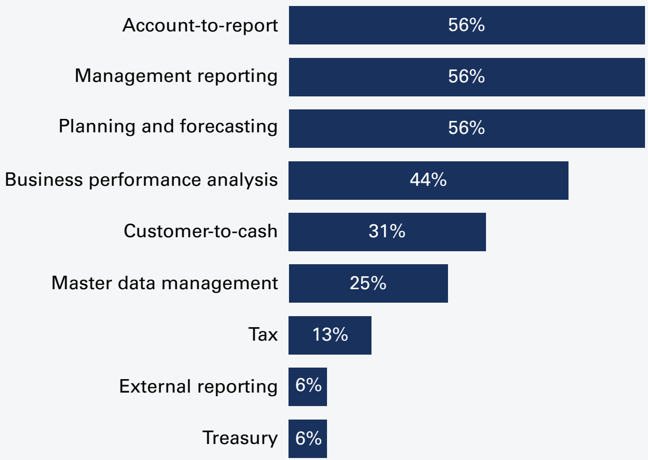
Opportunities for using generative AI in finance

Generative AI is in its early days in finance, with only one-third of finance organizations currently evaluating the technology – however, we do expect more organizations to begin doing so. Those that are evaluating generative AI consider the most promising opportunities to be in account-to-report, management reporting, and planning and forecasting processes – areas where easy access to accurate data can greatly enhance the effectiveness of personnel. Many also see an opportunity for using generative AI in business performance analysis.

Evaluating generative AI in finance



Evaluating generative AI in parts of finance



Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

priority

6

Reliable forecasting

Effective and meaningful improvements in forecasting are necessary as interest rates rise and geopolitical/economic uncertainties add to the cost of doing business. Finance must identify business risks and environmental shifts in order to properly address them. While new to the top 10 this year, forecasting is similar in theme to last year's priority around accelerating preparedness for uncontrollable issues.

The Hackett Group's 2023 benchmarking analysis revealed a significant opportunity to improve forecasting. That analysis found that management is 28% more confident in the reliability of annual forecasts produced by Digital World Class® finance organizations (versus forecasts prepared by the peer group). Furthermore, 82% of organizations with Digital World Class finance functions place a high degree of reliability on the annual forecast – up from 74% in 2022. The peer group, on the other hand, backtracked, with a high degree of confidence – dropping six percentage points from 2022. This illustrates the difficulty in handling multiple uncontrollable uncertainties – geopolitical, supply chain, interest rates and inflation – simultaneously.

Our analysis showed how Digital World Class finance organizations produce more accurate forecasts: They master what they can control. They are more likely to use one version of the truth, generating 61% more business performance reports from a central repository. They are 94% more likely to equip cost center managers to enter budgets online. And they have far less complexity in reporting, with 89% fewer business performance reports per billion of revenue.

priority

7

Upskilling of existing talent

In the Key Issues Study, nearly one-half of executives across all business functions said they are concerned about skills and worker shortages, but only 41% of companies have a formal mitigation program planned or in place for disruptions due to persistent, structural skills gaps that prevent them from executing on digital transformation. Many respondents believe freezing hiring or reducing staff due to budget pressures is not out of the question. This may be prudent financially but could risk further exacerbating skills gaps.

Finance executives know people and skills are critical to success – but this is a case where words and action conflict. Only 28% of respondents said they have a major 2024 initiative in place to support this objective. Upskilling is critical if finance organizations want to capture the value of investments in becoming digital. Just as relevant, though, is the set of demographic trends that see many finance staff reaching retirement age and fewer people coming into the profession. This is why the low percentage of organizations committed to addressing this priority is so concerning.

priority

7

Upskilling of existing talent (cont.)

Many studies have shown that it is more efficient to reskill/upskill current workers than to hire new talent. In a 2023 analysis,[3] The Hackett Group found that Digital World Class® organizations (across business functions) invest more in training their people across the enterprise – they spend 38% more compared to the peer group. With this extra investment, they are able to deliver 45% more training hours, elevating staff development at a rate greater than the investment. Further, their investment in talent development also contributes to a significant cost advantage, with 49% lower recruiting and staffing process costs. They achieve this advantage, in part, by investing in individualized development plans based on skills assessments. This allows them to target training investments so the right people develop the right skills for their roles at the right time.

Instilling a long-term view of talent development is critical – ensuring that stakeholders understand the central role it plays in enabling major investments in technology and digital transformation. While training is often an easy target for short-term financial wins, this can backfire down the road.

[3] Higher Training Investment Contributes to 49% Lower Recruitment and Staffing Process Costs, The Hackett Group, 2023

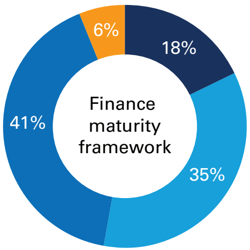
priority

8

Business partnering

As finance looks to mature its capabilities and become a more integral source of intelligent influence, the Key Issues Study found that 53% of finance organizations still operate as either an administrator or efficient operator (**Fig. 9**). Only about one-quarter of finance organizations act as a catalyst for change across the entire organization or as a valued business partner. The ability to elevate stature as a business partner is, to at least some extent, set by the expectations and demands of the C-suite. One way to elevate stature as a valued business partner is to focus on providing meaningful, actionable business insight.

FIG. 9 Finance maturity as a valued business partner and catalyst for enterprise change



- ADMINISTRATOR (LEAST MATURE): Focus on historical financial data, multiple instances of ERP, disaggregated processes and extensive manual work
- EFFICIENT OPERATOR: Standardized, mostly automated processes and optimized operational model (GBS, strong control environment)
- VALUED BUSINESS PARTNER: Embedded business partnership culture, mature digital transformation strategy and finance talent with analytics skills and business acumen
- CATALYST FOR ENTERPRISE CHANGE (MOST MATURE): Focus on enterprise strategy enablement, intelligent automation and integrated data architecture, and advanced design and/or systems thinking

Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

Business partnering (cont.)

The study also looked at alignment relative to other business functions/units and reporting relationships. This analysis showed a growing emphasis on cross-functional business partnering and a broadening of both alignment with other business functions and reporting accountability to those functions as finance organizations improve upon their business partnering maturity and capabilities.

Finance executives' top actions for improving business partnering capabilities will include:

1. Defining clearly why finance business partners are needed, where they should focus, what activities they should perform and how they should interact with their stakeholders
2. Improving finance business partnering influence, impact and communication skills
3. Investing in a COE and/or GBS model to perform the recurring and routine activities (reporting, forecasting, etc.)
4. Ensuring finance business partnering is a core part of standard finance offerings and/or activities
5. Improving finance business partners' business acumen (e.g., through rotational and experiential learning)
6. Redefining the partnering role description and related competencies of the finance business partner role
7. Dedicating full-time finance business partners to business partnering roles

priority 8

Business partnering (cont.)

These are similar to last year's top initiatives, although development of a COE and/or GBS capabilities is new – reflecting the need to both optimize costs and focus finance talent on higher-value activities.

In last year's Key Issues Study, 21% of finance executives said their organization did not have an initiative or plan for improving business partnering. This year, that dropped to just 3% – evidence that finance leaders are taking this seriously. This is encouraging. With the lingering economic uncertainties highlighted earlier, this is finance's opportunity to plan for various scenarios and partner with the business to make informed and timely decisions that maximize enterprise value.

priority

9

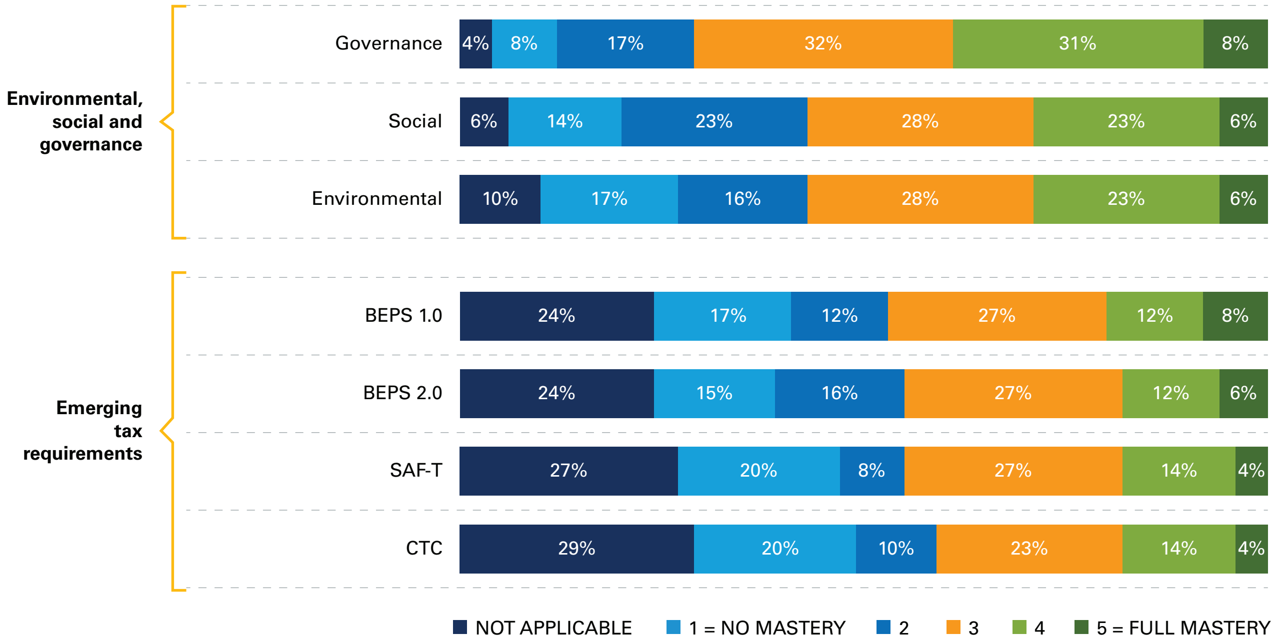
Regulatory compliance, including ESG reporting

This objective is new to the top 10 list and reflective of the increasing regulatory requirements that finance must be prepared to support. Finance plays a key role in ensuring the business is meeting both its regulatory and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) mandates by educating and mastering the various compliance areas and asks.

In the study, we asked companies about two areas of regulatory change that have some urgency around them (**Fig. 10** on page 28). For most companies, ESG and emerging tax understanding and mastery represent areas of significant opportunity for finance and tax organizations. In the absence of having internal skills and maturity, we would expect partnering with appropriate third-party service providers to be a critical step for meeting compliance requirements.

It is interesting to note that a relatively higher percentage of European organizations are moving toward mastery, compared to North American counterparts. With California's recent climate disclosure laws and Security and Exchange Commission rulings likely in the near term, North American finance teams should be starting to plan now for upcoming reporting mandates.

FIG. 10 Level of mastery – ESG and emerging tax requirements



Source: Key Issues Study, The Hackett Group, 2024

priority

10

Capital investment allocation and deployment

Capital investment is new to the finance key issues list. This is the sixth core finance discipline represented among the top 10 and very closely related to the priority around cash flow performance, liquidity, and working capital. Both of these reflect the current economic climate.

In times of elevated business uncertainty and environmental threats, optimal deployment of capital provides the investment to outpace the competition. However, the presence of this objective in the top 10 points to heightened attention around where and how organizations are investing. The current environment will require more discipline around allocation and deployment processes – both to increase certainty about the return on new investments and optimize the return on investments already made. The finance technology investment trend noted on the following page is an excellent example of this point. In our experience, organizations that continue to invest in technology tend to outperform those that abandon these projects.

Overall, executives showed high confidence in their ability to achieve this objective, but few (22%) have a major improvement initiative in this area.

Areas of focus for 2024

Although economic uncertainty and geopolitical risk remain prominent features in the 2024 outlook, finance teams have the opportunity to adjust their priorities to ensure that they are agile and able to realize the mandates of both profitability and support for the business. How will you do more with less? How will you use technology to seamlessly enable your finance capabilities? How will you better support strategic business outcomes? We believe most finance teams can make meaningful progress by focusing in five areas:

Maintain and improve profitability through intelligent cost reduction. Finance has rightfully identified this need heading into the uncertainty of 2024. Deploy this discipline, but with a dual eye on growth and broader enterprise support.

Continue digital transformation. Finance must fund and continue digital enablement, recognizing this as an enabler to business partnering and improved decision-making. This requires establishing the right digital portfolio of enterprise resource planning (ERP) technology, point solutions, and intelligent automation to drive success and Digital World Class® capability.

Enable actionable insights and partnering. Finance is a crucial part of securing data that is complete, timely and accurate. This enables delivery of meaningful and actionable insights to the business. Finance must curate this into improved decision-making and analytics – partnering positively to impact the enterprise.

Chart your generative AI road map. Exploring opportunities to harness the potential of generative AI is critical in the coming year, especially in areas such as account-to-report, planning, forecasting and reporting/analytics.

Revisit the finance operating model and talent strategy. Evaluate how to transform the finance operating model to reflect the changing nature of work that will be driven by the dual mandate of cost reduction along with the expanding expectations of business partners. Create a purposeful finance talent strategy for recruitment, retention and development.

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