

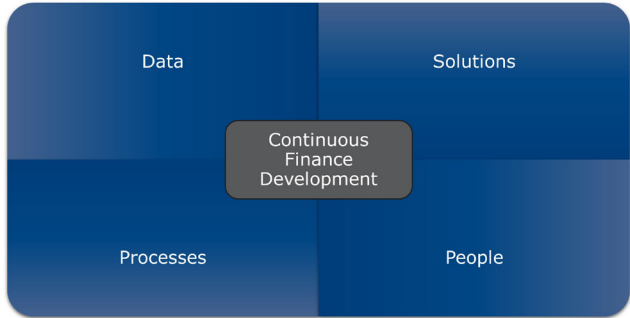


The Role and Position of Continuous Finance Development in Modern Organisations

What’s the role of finance continuous development today and in the future as part of finance and corporate functions? Is there a need for finance development, and how does it live and breathe within the organisation?

We’ve introduced earlier a [Point of View about high-performing finance functions](#) and the value pyramid, including the ingredients of a high-performing unit. Running Finance towards a high performing unit, or keeping Finance as a high performer, requires constant change and continuous development. How to become a high performing unit:

- Via large scale transformation or an ERP project
- With continuous development
 - o Solutions
 - o Data
 - o Processes and cross processes
 - o Competences



In this Point of View, we focus on continuous finance development, discuss its purpose, how to embrace it, and how to embed and glue it to the heart of finance and other activities in the organisation.

Whatever Finance does, efficiency is the key factor in its own operations and development, as well as in cross-functional operations and development. Finance never stands separately in the organisation, no matter if the organisation operates in an integrated ERP or if operations are conducted across multiple solutions. All the activities generate financial transactions, and therefore, developing finance on its own island would not bring the highest value. Cross-process connections and efficiency are the key, but in Finance, transparency, quality, and legal requirements bring additional elements in organising, operating, and developing the whole chain.

There’s no straight answer if an organisation should have a dedicated function for Finance development or if the continuous development should be embedded as part of the daily activities. In this Point of View, we don’t recommend any specific direction as it should be considered e.g. based on:

- Organisation’s size and complexity
- Business model
- Geographical spread
- Finance team size and sourcing model
- Maturity and competence level of the finance organisation
- Development culture

However, agreeing a model of how continuous development works, defining roles and responsibilities and ensuring coordination across finance as well as cross-process collaboration is crucial to succeed. In any case, as Finance is related to all organisations’ operations and activities, fit for purpose coordination of development activities is recommended, both with Business and IT.

From Strategy and Vision to Catalyst for Transformation

Continuous development in general is vital in every company across functions and operations. Any development activity should be based on the organisation's strategy and vision and be built on the culture of the organisation. Development is not immune to external factors, and top-notch Finance development understands the business, its status, its end-to-end processes, as well as how data and solutions are designed across the company. Gaining this understanding originates from close collaboration with all the functions and operations.



Finance development is anchored to the company's strategy and vision. Finance development enables and supports the Finance function to meet expectations to be the true business partner: driver of strategic initiatives and translator of strategy. The basis for Finance development lies in continuity; to perform the function needs to transform – day in, day out.

Not everything can be transformed simultaneously or immediately, but by following the company's strategic priorities, regulatory requirements and operational efficiency, Finance development can

- Facilitate the roadmap creation
- Evaluate and prioritise the development items and
- Schedule the development and go live with Business and IT

So, Finance development supports in finding the best ways to help finance and the company to meet the strategic objectives, and to be a high performing finance unit.

Finance development is a catalyst for financial transformation and enables the organisation to navigate change programs

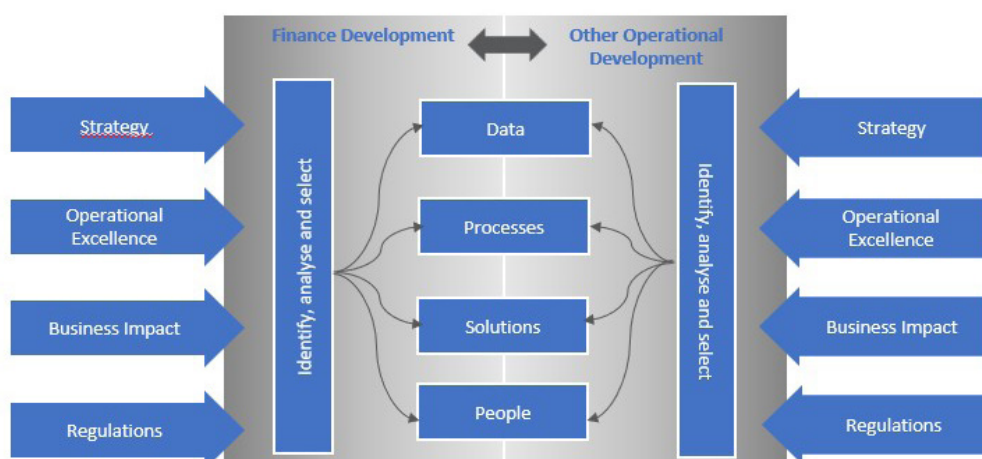
of varying scale. Whether the roadmap work results in a large-scale ERP implementation, digital transformation, or smaller process harmonisation, finance development provides the structure, expertise, and leadership needed to drive successful outcomes. A well-oiled Finance function enables running the finance activities efficiently, keeping up with the rapid technological change, staying current with the regulations, and meeting and exceeding customer satisfaction.

Development Landscape in the Organisation

When building a roadmap and prioritising the development activities, it's important to identify the source of the challenge, evaluate the strategic and operational importance, assess the impact on the business or financial outcomes, understand what it takes to develop, select what to develop and then execute and measure the results. The value of continuous development lies in repeating these activities. If you identify the challenge, conduct the evaluation only once, and conduct development without follow-up and measuring, you may base the next selected development activities on false assumptions. There may be big or small leaps in between, but as the word continuous indicates, the development should not stop, and to keep it moving in the right direction, repetition is needed in steering the ship; the topics may change, and proper follow-up ensures the right course continuously.

Many times, Finance's continuous development is not Finance-specific. The identified item may have to be fixed in other processes; first steps need to be taken in upstream processes; or development in other processes also requires changes in Finance. When processes change, most of the times also solution or data needs a change. Therefore, to keep all parties aware and able to contribute to the development, a suitable level of coordination, planning and close cooperation across teams are a must.

Continuous finance development, like any other transformation, offers an excellent opportunity to improve organisational skills and increase learning about the business and operations across the company; both for Finance as well as for non-Finance teams. People are the ones who conduct the development, but people can also be developed on a day-to-day development journey; and that's what makes the continuous development so rewarding to anyone involved.



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