



As Expectations Grow, CFOs Are Ill-Equipped to Thrive

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New study found that despite their desire to be strategic business partners, a majority of finance executives remain bogged down by functional tasks

SAN MATEO, Calif., July 22, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- A study of 500 chief financial officers (CFOs) and senior finance leaders conducted by Wall Street Journal Custom Content* and Dow Jones Intelligence in partnership with Coupa (NASDAQ: COUP), revealed that while **the role of the CFO is shifting dramatically towards strategic decision making and combating business risks, these executives remain bogged down by backward-looking tasks** that threaten their ability to fulfill these evolving responsibilities.



The study, titled, "[The Strategic CFO: Thriving With Risk](#)," takes an in-depth look at the evolving role of the CFO, the challenges he/she faces, and the factors that make leaders not only survive, but thrive with risk. In addition to 500 quantitative insights from CFOs worldwide, five qualitative interviews were completed with finance executives from five major global organizations. **The report also offers a new risk framework from Coupa that CFOs can use to score their organizations across a set of twelve risk factors.**

CFOs face an interesting dichotomy; while 60% say that their role has expanded to have more extensive participation in strategic business decisions, 70% are stymied by functional tasks such as developing budgets and managing financial reporting, audit, and compliance.

As the purview of the CFO expands, respondents cite fraud risk (53%), business environment risk (46%), and operational risk (44%) as their top concerns and priorities for improvement. Yet the relative importance that respondents attach to these top categories does not appear to reflect their current state of organizational readiness. The research shows that about half of finance executives report that they spend the right amount of time managing any given area of risk, and only 4% say they spend the right amount of time managing every area of risk.

"Today's CFO must be able to focus on combating strategic and operational risks to add the most value to their organization and their shareholders," **said Todd Ford, chief financial officer at Coupa.** "This report highlights the gap between where CFOs know they need to be, as true strategic business partners, and where collectively our field is today. Getting there requires the right combination of technology, people, and process that gives CFOs the visibility and control they need to make smart decisions from spend to strategy."

Additional survey findings include:

- Most senior finance executives describe their role as having expanded substantially in the last two years to oversee more diverse types of business and operations risk management (59%) and make more intensive use of data analytics (57%).
- However, senior executives also say they spend most of their time managing financial reporting, audit, and compliance (37%), compared to other listed priorities like managing business risk (29%).
- A majority of executives believe that fraud risk (51%) will increase most in severity in the near future, followed by business environment risk, and operational risk (tied with 41%).
- Large enterprises are under threat from more directions than any other type of organization. Nine-out-of-ten executives say they are "concerned" or "very concerned" about each area of risk in terms of the threat each poses to the success of the organization, from business environment risk (89%) to supplier risk (89%).
- Half of respondents strongly agree that they have the right strategy in place to manage risk overall (50%), and even more express the same level of confidence in their peoples' skills to tackle risk (54%). But that confidence often does not extend to their technology: only 38% strongly agree that they have appropriate technology in place to manage risk.

Download a full copy of the report [here](#).

To learn more about how Coupa can help your company achieve greater visibility into your business spend to improve compliance, risk management, and more, click [here](#).

Methodology

This survey analytics report conducted by Dow Jones Intelligence is based on a survey of 500 senior finance executives conducted in April and May 2019. The sample consists of CFOs, Head of Finance (54%), Chief Risk Officers (CROs) and Risk Directors (10%), and direct reports to each (36%). Sixty percent of respondents are in the United States, 25% in Europe, and 15% in the rest of the world. Forty percent work in organizations with annual incomes between \$250M to \$1B, 28% with \$1B to \$5B, and 32% exceeding \$5B.

About Coupa Software

Coupa Software is a leading provider of BSM solutions. We offer a comprehensive, cloud-based BSM platform that has connected hundreds of organizations with more than five million suppliers globally. Our platform provides greater visibility into and control over how companies spend money. Using our platform, businesses are able to achieve real, measurable value and savings that drive their profitability. Learn more at www.coupa.com. Read more on the [Coupa Blog](#) or follow [@Coupa on Twitter](#).

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Stefanie Gordish, 415-590-9722, stefanie.gordish@coupa.com