



ASSOCIATION FOR FINANCIAL PROFESSIONALS

AFP® 2022 FP&A Survey: **MEASURING AGILITY IN FP&A** Comprehensive Report





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As a leading provider of enterprise cloud applications for finance, planning, and HR, Workday is proud to sponsor the AFP® *2022 FP&A Survey: Measuring Agility in FP&A*. This report helps Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) professionals establish benchmarks for the industry, providing insight into how finance, continuous planning, and data are uniquely connected as key drivers of the business.

Agility and flexibility are key for finance to move faster and function as a true business partner. Flexible, cloud-based technology powered by machine learning helps create a more data-driven, agile finance organization where teams drive operational change, guide business strategy, and deliver greater value to the full enterprise.

At Workday, we work with thousands of organizations worldwide to help them embrace this new value partnering mindset, using Workday solutions for the Office of the CFO to automate as much of the data gathering and reporting processes as possible, so that we can focus on continuously planning, forecasting, and advising management at the rapid speed that today's business environment demands.

As you navigate change and look for ways to increase agility, we hope the findings in this report help you build the best path forward for your finance organization.

Muc Mayors

Michael Magaro Senior Vice President, Business Finance and Investor Relations Workday



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OVERVIEW

At the 2019 Association for Financial Professionals[®] (AFP) Annual Conference, a session speaker asked a room of 200 financial planning and analysis practitioners to work in small groups and list 10 risks that could impact their plans in the next year. The risks included recession, regulatory regimes and competitors. No one cited a pandemic such as the world would experience just four months later. Since then, disruptions have kept coming—and are likely to continue.

"The current era is increasingly defined by the interplay of complex disruptions, with their disparate origins and long-term consequences. Institutions are not fully prepared for the new reality, often reacting separately to each disruption," says the World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company¹. Rewards exist for those who respond with agility. Their research shows that more adaptable, resilient companies generated approximately 20 percent more shareholder returns during the 2007-2009 financial crisis, 50 percent more returns in the following two years and 120 percent more from 2011-2017.

What is agility, and what does it mean for an organization's finance function? For the purposes of this research, we define agility as *flexibility in a company's operations, a mindset open to change, and the capability for action to take advantage of changing circumstances*. Agility is generally framed positively around *opportunities,* while resilience is a complementary term often phrased as *the response to negative stimuli,* such as COVID, supply-chain disruptions and instability.

METHODOLOGY

Every year since 2016, the Association for Financial Professionals® (AFP) has conducted a FP&A Survey covering topics relevant to the FP&A function. The research examines the different facets of FP&A and surveys global finance practitioners representing a range of companies from various industries and countries.

Continuing this focus on FP&A, in August/ September 2022 AFP conducted the 2022 AFP[®] *FP&A Survey: Measuring Agility in FP&A*. This year's topic reflects key concerns from the FP&A community about the continuing unsettled business landscape and the need for proactive monitoring, flexible financial operations, available data and open-minded team culture. The survey generated 255 responses from corporate practitioners from organizations of varying sizes representing a broad range of industries. These responses form the basis of the report. Survey respondent demographics are available on page 15.

The goal of this survey was to establish benchmark scores for measures of agility for FP&A practice and to see where leading companies are focusing their efforts. The survey maps to the FP&A Maturity Model, which defines the following three skillsets required for FP&A excellence:

- Finance & Business Acumen; the survey asked about the ability to monitor the internal and external environment, and process flexibility to update models and reallocate capital.
- Technology & Data; the survey focused on data and tools.

 Personal & Team Effectiveness; the survey asked about organizational design and the mindset for cultural agility.

AFP works for the benefit of the corporate finance practitioner, and we hope the findings in this report will provide you with ideas and inspiration to apply to your own team and career. The survey questions are available to download, apply to your own organization and compare against our results.

AFP thanks Workday for its continued underwriting support of the annual *AFP*[®] *FP&A Survey*. Both questionnaire design and the final report, along with its content and conclusions, are the sole responsibility of AFP's Research Department.

AFP would also like to thank the members of the FP&A Advisory Council for their support in designing the survey and analyzing the results:

- Frank Chou, FPAC, CTP, Senior Manager, FP&A, EVgo
- Catherine Jirak, Principal and Chief Operating Officer, QueBIT Consulting
- Raja Ramachandran, FPAC, CTP, Director, Global FP&A, Owens & Minor
- Hector Rubalcava, FPAC, Director of Finance, Options Clearing Corporation (OCC)
- Mario Vasquez, FPAC, Financial Director, The E.W. Scripps Company
- Jenn Zinschlag, Partner, Artemis Executive Search

¹ "Resilience for Sustainable, Inclusive Growth." World Economic Forum in collaboration with McKinsey & Company, May 2022

KEY FINDINGS

Insight 1:

Agile Leaders reforecast faster, are more likely to use scenario planning than Core Respondents

Insight 2:

Agile Leaders rank "agility" as a higher priority than do Core Respondents

Insight 3:

Practitioners have conflicting scores around organizational design

Insight 4:

The highest scores are for cultural mindset for agility





At a summary level, FP&A practitioners rate their overall agility at 3.6 on a 1-to-5 scale, with high scores for operational and cultural agility but low scores for agility in organizational structure. Digging deeper reveals several insights and actions available to practitioners.

Figure 1

Survey Summary Results, Overall and by FP&A Skill Area

(Respondents' Mean Scores, 1-to-5 scale)



Throughout this research, we examined data in various cross-tabulations to discern subtler signals from the survey results. Where relevant, we provide data breakouts:

- Geographical View: Survey participants from Asia-Pacific and Middle East & Africa (APAC+MEA) account for 21 percent of respondents overall, compared to 69 percent for the U.S. and Canada, and the balance scored as rest of the world. APAC+MEA scores are higher than the global averages in all categories. The difference is most notable for Monitoring: the score for APAC+MEA is 4.1 while the global average is 3.7.
- Size: Smaller companies, defined as those with annual revenue under \$500 million, have an agility score of 3.8 on the 1-5 scale, slightly higher than mid- and large-sized companies

which have scores roughly equal at 3.6. Midsized organizations are those with annual revenue of \$500 million to \$5 billion; largesized companies are those with annual revenue of more than \$5 billion. The smaller companies score higher in categories related to the ability to reforecast on demand, to reallocate budgets and to utilize rapid planning tools.

"I am not surprised at all by that," says Raja Ramachandran. "They are nimbler, they have less bureaucracy and more freedom to make choices. They are not bound by older planning tools and less data to work with. And since smaller teams likely have their hands directly on the tools, they are empowered to manage changes quickly!"

Frank Chou also notes that increased specialization, especially in areas of monitoring vendors or managing data, might be managed by specialized procurement or IT units rather than FP&A. "For example, when I worked for large companies like GM or Amazon, we had specialized units to track [vendor metrics] so it was being done, just not by FP&A specifically."

Agile Leaders and Core Respondents: For respondents who completed all sections of the survey, we calculated scores for each of three sections, then added together the scores. The responses from "Agile Leaders" account for the top 20 percent of these scores and are compared against those from "Core Respondents" that comprise the remaining 80 percent. The Agile Leaders responses are higher in each category and for each question (with one exception, as discussed in Insight 3), with scores ranging from 21 to 31 percent higher for each segment.



Figure 2

Insight 1: Agile Leaders reforecast faster, are more likely to use scenario planning than Core Respondents

As noted in the summary, the Agile Leaders responses are higher in each category with scores ranging from 21 to 31 percent higher for each segment, and for all questions but one. (See figure 2).



Agile Leaders score higher in two important outputs that should matter most to finance leaders:

- Agile Leaders reforecast more than 50 percent faster than do Core Respondents, requiring 9.4 days compared to 14.5 days, respectively.
- Agile Leaders are more likely than Core Respondents to use multiple scenarios in their planning process. Ninety-four percent of

Agile Leaders agree or strongly agree with the statement, "*FP&A uses multiple scenarios.*" This result is significantly higher than the 56 percent of Core Respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement. Going a step further, a higher percentage of Agile Leaders make "playbooks" of actions ready to put in play based on scenarios: 38 percent compared to 24 percent of Core Respondents. There is no significant difference

between the groups in terms of the number of scenarios used, with 61 percent and 58 percent of Agile Leaders and Core Respondents, respectively, using three scenarios.

The ability to churn out forecasts faster and to run scenarios faster are both *output* metrics, and reflects the advantages that Agile Leaders have over Core Respondents in the technology and data component of the benchmark.



Analysis:

Agile Leaders score higher on the question, "FP&A has tools required for rapid planning and analysis," than do Core Respondents: 4.6 versus 3.2, respectively.

"I watch the scores around the ability to reforecast," notes Mario Vasquez. "You definitely want to have systems with as much automation as you can to quickly reforecast. We do a lot of that in our company...what if this happens or based on that, how quickly can you get us a new forecast?"

Catherine Jirak sees the correlation between good systems and increased use of scenarios. "When you have a system that has multiple scenarios planned out, you can flow actuals or assumption changes through all scenarios or run sensitivities on key factors." Jirak continues by explaining the difference between pre-positioned agility and reactionary agility for FP&A. "Scenario planning is usually done with some internal foresight in mind. 'How will investments impact cash? How does closing a manufacturing plant and shifting production impact costs and profitability?' By contrast, external changes and unforeseen events can trigger 'What-ifs' and reforecasts. This enables an organization to understand the future impact of an unforeseen event or change." Effective systems and connections to data support both.

Additionally—or perhaps implied—in the idea of the right tools is populating the tools with good, accessible data. In responding to the question, "*FP&A has access to trusted data on a timely basis with minimal curation*," Agile Leaders hold a substantive advantage over Core Respondents, with scores of 4.5 versus 3.4, respectively. The survey asked for qualitative responses to the question, "*What tools are needed for rapid planning & analysis*," and 52 percent responded with a need for a version of this response: "Better planning and enterprise resource planning software. Most planning and analysis are manually manipulated in spreadsheets."





Insight 2: Agile Leaders rank "agility" as a higher priority than Core Respondents

When asked about their priorities, most FP&A respondents understandably put company financial metrics at the top of the list; three of the top four responses are managing costs, revenue growth and cash management. Agility as a discrete goal is ranked sixth of the seven items on this list. (See figure 3).





For Agile Leaders, the ranking of agility below financial performance items and at the top of the operational list indicates a prioritization: first manage the financials with a primary emphasis on revenue growth; after that, agility is key to operations!

Figure 4

Themes/Sentiments Important to FP&A Teams

(Agile Leaders versus Core Respondents)

AGILE LEADERS			CORE RESPONDENTS
Revenue growth	42%	38%	Performance management
Managing costs	33%	37%	Managing costs
Cash management	33%	31%	Revenue growth
Agility/resiliency	28%	30%	Expanding capacity
Performance management	22%	27%	Cash management
Expanding capacity	19%	23%	Agility/resiliency
Risk management	19%	13%	Risk management

Hector Rubalcava sees operation agility as a competitive advantage and a theme that should be classified as one of the top three most important topics for FP&A. "An agile environment will help drive and generate solutions to better manage costs, cash and risk; increase performance results; identify revenue optimization projects and strategically assess resource utilization. In summary, if firms better prioritize and create a sustainable agile culture, they will have better opportunities to effectively address the other 6 important topics listed in this question."

It is also interesting that Agile Leaders place greater emphasis on revenue growth than do Core Respondents. This shows a higher focus on the external customer and marketplace versus a focus on internal consumers of that data. Looking beyond finance operations, this finding aligns with broader agile management trends in other parts of an organization.

Breakouts:

- Geographical View: Respondents from the U.S./Canada focus on managing costs and performance management with agility ranking seventh; those from APAC + MEA focus on revenue and (tie) cash management and performance; agility again ranks seventh.
- Size: Smaller companies focus on revenue and cash; mid- and large-sized organizations are focused more on costs, capabilities and performance.



Insight 3: Practitioners have conflicting scores around organizational design

The Personal & Team Effectiveness component of the survey consisted of two parts: organizational design and cultural openness to agility. They have very different scores, and the results reflect conflicting trends. (For analysis of cultural openness to agility, see Insight 4 below.)

The first question asked here was: "*The FP&A team is adequately staffed*." The responses are generally positive with 54 percent of respondents (strongly) agreeing that the FP&A team is adequately staffed. Of course, this means 46 percent do not agree with the statement. When asked a follow-up question about reasons for understaffing when it occurred, the overwhelming reason cited is low headcount allocation to FP&A (accounting for 89 percent of specific responses); the balance of responses cite turnover and challenges finding skilled candidates.

Another question in this section was: "*The FP&A team is working at or above 100% capacity.*" The group score is 2.3, with 65 percent of respondents indicating they are working at or over 100% of capacity. The results are more discouraging for Agile Leaders: 86 percent of this group indicate say they are working at/ over 100% capacity. This is, by far, the lowest score in the survey overall.

Figure 5

Sub-scores for Personal & Team Effectiveness

(Respondents' Mean Scores, 1-to-5 scale)





Analysis:

This finding is discouraging in general, and especially if efforts are being made to ensure the function is agile! Working at or above capacity limits one's ability to join exploratory projects, meet with business partners, have the ability to think strategically, consider the marketplace or respond to unforeseen events or fire drills. Several members of the Advisory Council weigh in.

Hector Rubalcava was surprised by these results. "I feel that most FP&A units are over capacity and understaffed. We are so busy just meeting our current demands and being reactive rather than proactive. Operating in an overcapacity environment doesn't allow the opportunity to build a culture of learning and continuous improvement. Change management takes time and to be innovative as well as creative requires exploration time, a growth mindset and motivation to challenge the status quo. From my experience a substantial amount of Finance's time is spent on addressing fire drills. We don't have the opportunity to really disrupt when we're over capacity and we don't prioritize learning and development initiatives."

Mario Vasquez agrees. "I am surprised over half the people think they are adequately staffed. I always feel that FP&A is understaffed. Doing the regular monthly work, sure, we can do that. But 80-90% of my job is new stuff that comes up all the time."

Frank Chou sums up the group view. "I think it's like a badge of honor that we're here to support the team, and if you need something, we're here for you. You can count on FP&A to at least make the attempt. We might not get everything perfect, and on the day you want it. But we're going to give it our all. Nobody wants to say no on the team, because if you say no, then you're

the one that looks bad, that this person is not a team player."

This belief that FP&A professionals are working on too many different initiatives is corroborated by results of a poll from the AFP webinar, "The Who, What and Why of FP&A," held in August 2022. In a discussion of challenges facing FP&A, the attendees ranked "having too many priorities" as the most significant challenge facing FP&A. (See figure 6).

The second-most highest ranking inhibitor from this webinar, "data challenges," includes the modern tools and platform that provide access to data and capabilities to act that data as discussed in Insight 1. "There is a major need for finance units to allocate more time to the 'A' for Analysis and generate more actionable insights," says Rubalcava, and spending less time wrangling data would improve capacity challenges and address the priorities.



Figure 6 Factors Inhibiting FP&A's Success

(Percent of Respondents)



Insight 4: The highest scores are for cultural mindset for agility

Whereas Insight 3 focuses on the structure of work and the team within Personal & Team Effectiveness, the focus of Insight 4 is on cultural mindset of agility. The group score for this cultural agility is 3.9, the highest of any segment in the survey, and the category also boasts the two highest scoring responses in the entire survey:

Analysis:

The past few years have been tumultuous, and survey respondents have found a way to adapt, adopt and persevere which has given the group confidence that it can do so again. Responding to the question, "*Culturally, FP&A has the ability to adapt well to changing circumstances,*" the average score is 4.0 score, with 79 percent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. "FP&A has had to pivot and be creative" to keep their work and companies on-track over the past few years, says Catherine Jirak.

The ability to voice opinions is also an important bellwether for practitioners, and this question specifically targeted that requirement: "Culturally, FP&A has safety to voice opinions/suggestions without fear of the negative." The average score for this question is 4.0, with 77 percent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. The idea of psychological safety has been researched extensively, most notably in Google's Project Aristotle work² which examined the traits of highperforming teams. Psychological safety, as defined in the survey question, proves to be the most important determinant.

Agile Leaders score higher on all questions in this section. The largest difference from Core Respondents is to this question: "*Culturally, FP&A has a team ethos of continual improvement (e.g., experimentation, new methods, disruptive ideas).*" Agile Leaders score 4.7 with 100 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing; this compares to a score of 3.5 for Core Respondents. At its heart, agility is the ability to react to change. Sometimes change is forced upon the team, and sometimes it needs to be self-generated and anticipatory. The most agile teams seem to seek it out.

In their own words

The survey results point to clear benefits of being an Agile Leader, and show leaders build agility into their monitoring, finance operations, technology stack and personal and team effectiveness. The survey also asked what tools, attitudes and approaches to managing the FP&A supported agility; here is the response, edited into a single view:

- Change needs to be part of the plan, and that requires staff and systems that are flexible enough to
 pivot as the business adjusts to challenges that can come from any arena. Start with your people and the
 mindset of not being attached to the status quo, but instead seek out and adjust to new circumstances.
 The rest of the tools will be of little use without the proper mindset.
- Combining a continuous improvement mindset with evolving technology is crucial. Continuing to add staff because you are managing your work with old tools and methods does not scale nor react quickly. Invest in the data and tools to free your people—your most important asset—to focus on higher value work. "Agility" is limited by personal imaginations and mindsets; it is a strength of the team and is most important during uncertain times. FP&A staff often don't realize how much they can influence the company.

² Why Psychological Safety Is Key for FP&A



The individual qualitative responses also lay out an implementation roadmap for how to be agile. In the figure below, they are shortened for brevity and fit into the framework of the FP&A Maturity Model:³

	INTEGRATED PLANNING	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	FINANCIAL ANALYSIS	GROWING FP&A
FINANCE & BUSINESS ACUMEN	 Reallocate spending Scenario planning with contingencies and playbooks Rolling forecast Cash management and working capital accounts 	 Monitor risks and opportunities, keep abreast of changes in business, economic and political landscapes Develop insightful KPIs and set triggers to understand when to take action 	 Modeling skills: few people know how to do this well Statistics - probabilistic models Sensitivity analysis 	
TECHNOLOGY & DATA	 An end-to-end planning tool that is robust, flexible and easy to use, cloud-based, collaborative, and flexible (independent of IT) Spreadsheets 	 Automate data collection and reporting A good software for consolidation and financial reporting 	 Ingest and process new data quickly into a model Version controls for change comparison 	 Access to timely, accurate and organized data Data management Get comfortable with next generation tools, including predictive machine learning tools, artificial intelligence and data science
PERSONAL & TEAM EFFECTIVENESS	 Communication. Continuous review, co administrative managers) builds rappo seat to the decision makers, and makers Beware of "shadow" finance performed decisions based on incorrect data assist 	 Mindset of continuous improvement A network of colleagues with FP&A expertise Living with ambiguity Appropriate staffing for the workload 		

³ Unfortunately, the maturity model does not have a place in the framework for all responses to the question, "What is the most effective tool FP&A has or should have to effectively plan during economic uncertainty," such as, "a crystal ball" or "a rational CEO."



DEMOGRAPHICS

In August 2022, the Research Department of the Association for Financial Professionals® (AFP) conducted the *2022 AFP® FP&A Survey: Measuring Agility in FP&A* survey. The survey was sent to FP&A practitioners (AFP members and prospects) from around the world. Responses from 255 professionals form the basis for this report.

AFP thanks Workday for once again underwriting the annual AFP FP&A Survey. We would like to thank the members of the FP&A Advisory Council who shared their insight to develop the questionnaire and report. The Research Department of the Association for Financial Professionals[®] is solely responsible for the content of the report. The following tables summarize the characteristics of the survey respondents where organization-level demographics are provided.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Number of Employees in FP&A Department

(Percentage Distribution of Organizations)



Annual Revenue (USD)

(Percentage Distribution of Organizations)



DEMOGRAPHICS



Industry Classification

(Percentage Distribution of Organizations)

Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3%
Banking/Financial Services	7%
Administrative Support/Business Services/Consulting	5%
Construction	3%
E-Commerce	2%
Education	2%
Energy	6%
Government	4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3%
Hospitality/Travel/Food Services	2%
Insurance	2%
Manufacturing	20%
Non-Profit	5%
Petroleum	1%
Professional/Scientific/Technical Services	3%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	4%
Retail Trade	6%
Wholesale Distribution	4%
Software/Technology	5%
Telecommunications/Media	5%
Transportation and Warehousing	4%
Utilities	3%



Survey Summary Results (Respondents' Mean Scores, 1-to-5 scale)





The following are the questions and responses as they relate to Finance & Business Acumen; the questions were divided into a company's ability to monitor events and the agility inherent in their finance operations.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
	FINANCE & BUSINESS ACUMEN	5	4	3	2		Average
	FP&A regularly monitors the external market/environment to detect impactful changes	22%	39%	19%	17%	4%	3.6
Monitor	FP&A regularly monitors internal operations (e.g., supply chain, key facilities) to detect impactful changes	35%	46%	11%	5%	3%	4.1
	FP&A regularly monitors the health of our customers and key suppliers	12%	38%	29%	19%	2%	3.4
rations	FP&A can ingest data quickly into forecast models	22%	45%	18%	14%	3%	3.8
	FP&A can reforecast quickly on-demand	21%	36%	25%	12%	5%	3.5
Finance Operations	FP&A can reallocate budgets/funds as opportunities change	18%	48%	23%	9%	1%	3.7
Finan	FP&A considers a range of decision factors to balance short and long-term investment needs	20%	57%	14%	10%	1%	3.9
	FP&A uses multiple scenarios (note; NOT sensitivity analysis)	20%	42%	17%	19%	2%	3.6
					Section Ave	rage:	3.7



The following are the questions and responses as they relate to Technology & Data.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
TECHNOLOGY & DATA	5	4	3	2	1	Average
FP&A has access to trusted data on a timely basis with minimal curation	16%	48%	23%	7%	6%	3.6
FP&A has tools required for rapid planning & analysis	17%	37%	25%	18%	4%	3.5
FP&A has good skills for the tools we have	22%	56%	18%	3%	1%	4.0
FP&A has an effective process in place to maintain data integrity of systems/applications	19%	49%	23%	7%	2%	3.8
FP&A has systems and tools that can quickly be reconfigured for organizational changes (i.e., consolidation platforms and reporting)	12%	41%	21%	22%	4%	3.4
				Section Ave	3.6	



The following are the questions and responses as they relate to Personal & Team Effectiveness; the questions were divided into a company's organizational design and the cultural mindset.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
	PERSONAL & TEAM EFFECTIVENESS	5	4	3	2	1	Average
nal	The FP&A team is adequately staffed	10%	44%	19%	24%	3%	3.3
Organizational Design	The FP&A team is adequately skilled	16%	55%	19%	9%	1%	3.8
Orga	The FP&A team is working at or above 100% capacity	22%	45%	22%	12%	0%	2.3*
Cultural Mindset	Culturally, FP&A has a team ethos of continual improvement (e.g., experimentation, new methods, disruptive ideas)	20%	49%	17%	12%	2%	3.7
	Culturally, FP&A has safety to voice opinions/suggestions without fear of the negative	31%	46%	17%	5%	1%	4.0
	Culturally, FP&A has comfort with ambiguity	20%	43%	26%	9%	2%	3.7
0	Culturally, FP&A has the ability to adapt well to changing circumstance	23%	56%	14%	8%	0%	4.0
					Section	Average:	3.5

* Since working at or above 100% capacity is the opposite of agile work design, the scoring of this question was reversed relative to the other questions: "5 -strongly agree" responses were given 1 point, and those who answered "1-strongly disagree" were given 5 points

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