

The
**Finance
Transformation
Magazine**

For Finance Leaders

Q2 2022

**BE THE
BEST YOU.**
WHY WAIT?

**Leading
Transformation**
Brad Burton



Finance Transformation Magazine

Featuring:



Jason Cobine
Cyber Security



Max Kent
Climate Change



Elias van Herwaarden
Talent Threat



Pierre Botha
South Africa



Vasu Majumdar
Private Equity



Brad Burton
Motivation



Piers Reid
People



Bastiaan de Vries
Freight Audit



Tony Fidler
ERP Corner



Gary Cole
Cost Saving



Ellen Leith
Collaboration



Jamie Radford
Quality Mark



Robert Brooker
Cyber Crime



Michael Ryan
Assurance

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Editorial

Welcome to the Q2 Edition of **Finance Transformation Magazine** and we are delighted to announce the Magazine won the Award for Excellence at the Purchase to Pay Network Annual Conference. A huge thank you for the great work of our team Andy Peat, Martin Kirby and Mark Saywell.

This Edition is headlined by Brad Burton the UK's No.1 business motivational speaker and launches our ERP Corner as Tony Fidler Managing Director of Sansa offers his experience to our readers. Our Sponsor Jason Cobine of Cobine Carmelson tackles the major challenge of Cyber Security and offers his insights.

We have a fascinating article from Elias van Herwaarden as he discusses the Talent Agenda and Pierre Botha of SoluGrowth makes the case for South Africa as a BPO destination.

Compleat face the challenge of Climate Change head on with their Carbon Reporting story and Gary Cole of Lumilinks shows CFOs how to drive down Fleet Maintenance costs with Predictive Maintenance.

As we continue to advance the **Finance Transformation** 'story' we need your help! From Q3 we are creating our **Brand Ambassador** program and if you wish to join and help us find the finest stories for our readers, we are offering a **20% Commission** on all stories published.

Please help us grow the Finance Transformation Family and we can all win together!



Michael Ryan
Editor

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The Finance Transformation Magazine

Editor
Michael Ryan
0203 146 6878
michaelryan@financetransformation.co.uk

Contributors
Jason Cobine
Max Kent
Elias van Herwaarden
Pierre Botha
Vasu Majumdar
Brad Burton
Piers Reid
Bastiaan de Vries
Tony Fidler
Gary Cole
Ellen Leith
Jamie Radford
Robert Brooker

Design and Production
Andy Peat
andy@andypeatdesign.co.uk



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Insure for Cyber Security

Jason Cobine, Managing Director of Cobine Carmelson, protecting Assets, Income and Reputations, discusses how best to insure for Cyber Security.



Before we get started, let's deal with the issue of paying a ransom if hackers get in. I have seen the articles stating that hackers will target companies that have insurance that pays ransom demands. The "risk management" advice was to make sure that your insurance documents were well hidden, so they couldn't hack in and find them. Other advice was not to buy insurance that pays ransoms.

Yet what if the cyber thieves had access to insurance company databases? What if they divided them into those that do and those that don't have cyber insurance? What if one gang targeted those with insurance and another targeted those without it?

Hiding your documents wouldn't work. Not buying the insurance makes you less resilient if you are caught up in an attack. Not only do you not have cover for ransom, you don't get access to the experts in such negotiations which is vital. It will be the organisation paying the

ransom. The insurance policies pay it back to the organisation.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that insurance companies treat their employees so well that they would never imagine stealing data. It is quite the opposite. There are court cases every day about employees being poached. It would be naïve to think they don't take data with them. If a "bad leaver" can access the data, "bad actors" can too.

So if an insurance company has a problem with data security, make sure it remains their problem. Don't pay too much attention to those that come up with reasons why you shouldn't buy insurance for ransoms. Or at least think about their motivation for making such statements.

Taking the moral high ground could prove to be an expensive mistake.

Assess the risk! Yet make sure your risk assessment covers the

intangibles such as intellectual property and culture.

Keep in mind that France has banned the sale of insurance that pays ransoms, so we'll keep an eye on them and see how it pans out. If it works out well, we can all stop buying insurance for ransoms.

CISOs Under Pressure

At a recent conference for CISOs (Chief Information Security Officers) it became clear that there is a conflict between IT/data security and insurance. Over the last few years, CISOs have found it increasingly difficult to carry out their role.

CISOs do their absolute best to make sure the IT is secure, and then insurance companies dictate standards that are unnecessary and, in some cases, make no sense.

Yet insurers still insist that the organisation must meet these standards. The fact that these

standards may have been built by banks or other sectors is lost on the underwriters.

There are even cases where companies have received 60 page questionnaires from insurers, such antics act as a barrier to doing business together, it certainly does not remove friction.

So how can the road be smoothed and gaps between IT security and insurance be narrowed?

Insurance companies will listen, if they are motivated to do so. IT teams and CISOs will make better decisions about insurance if they think insurers are listening and making sense. The underwriters at insurers must be motivated to listen. They do that when they see profitable opportunities. What they often feel is "I'll get sacked if this one goes wrong".

"Taking the moral high ground could prove to be an expensive mistake"

The relationship has to be built with bridges of trust and grey areas have to be made black and white. You can do that by highlighting risks (instead of hiding them) and reflecting what you have done about it.

If you did all you could to reduce risk and presented that clearly, an underwriter would give you a better deal.

When you assess the risks to your organisation, it cannot be too generic so don't forget the intangibles. Work out which ones you can cope with, insure the unmanageable and accept an excess on your insurance. An underwriter will love it if you're sharing the risk with them voluntarily.

Where do we Draw the Line?

Never an easy thing to decide, yet you should only insure the things that you can't afford and definitely not be trying to cover the things that you can.

Insurance must be seen as a last resort. The fact that insurers provide services in the event of a digital interruption, rather than purely cash, shows that cash is often useless without support.

A risk assessment will determine what is most important, yet don't forget the intangibles. For example, a lot of risk assessments end up requiring "more security" or "more insurance" yet they are 4th and 2nd on the list of methods of reducing risk. There are other ways of reducing risk and they must be investigated.

The risk that will cost you the most is the one to concentrate on. Why are your most valuable assets not in the safest place that you know about? When you're at home, you don't leave cash, devices or other forms of currency in the open?

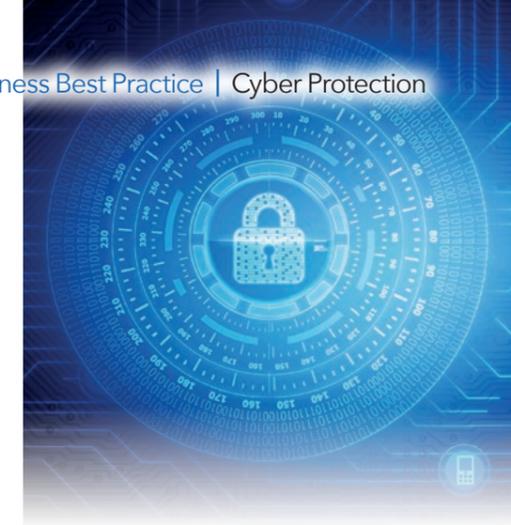
If you can't move it to the safest place on the planet, can you move it to somewhere safer than it is?

You can't 100% stop people getting in, yet you can make it more difficult. Please don't "bury" your back up. You might need it. Insurers preference is that you have a backup that is kept nowhere near your systems. Yet it must be accessible and retrievable, I've lost count of the amount of untested backups

The Culture of Risk

If people don't use the controls, is adding more going to work? Or do the people need more encouragement to take action?

Before you add controls, you really should find out why the existing controls are not being used. And please listen. Don't behave like Insurance companies, they ask us for feedback daily yet they never, ever seem to act upon it.



Have you asked your marketing department to get involved in your data security communications? People do need strong messaging and reinforcement yet that must be tested and measured. Like all your marketing activities. Test and measure your messaging before adding more layers.

We need to stop applying more rules to those that are not working. IT security can go unused or switched off if staff are "unengaged". Getting the culture right is so very important.

Keep in mind, no matter what level of security and insurance is in place, we do leave our assets exposed if our company culture is not right. Organisations waste a lot of money on security and insurance when it is their culture that has to change. There are tools to assess this risk too. 🛡️



About the author:
Jason Cobine

Jason Cobine is an Insurance Broker working with Managing Directors, Partners, Business Owners and Founders who are not 100% certain they have the right cover for claims they want to make (or defend). For more than 25 years Jason has been helping organisations mitigate exposure of their assets, income streams and reputations, in essence, protecting their organisation against the unthinkable.



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Climate Change drives Carbon Tracking

Max Kent, VP of Global Procurement and ESG at Compleat, explains how Compleat are helping Clients Face the challenges brought on by Climate Change and address their Carbon Reporting requirements.



Digital Procurement, the area I've been leading at Compleat Software for the past four years, is becoming an increasingly important aspect of financial software transformation for businesses.

When we think Business to Business (B2B) rather than Business to Consumer (B2C) it is easy to forget that the way we order things in our personal lives, and in our business lives, is becoming increasingly closer.

Often, staff order items for their organisations using their own personal accounts, bypassing agreed purchasing processes, as they feel it is faster, cheaper, and easier. However, technology has advanced for businesses.

We have taken these advancements, indeed even created them, and distilled it down into the technology solution we offer at Compleat Software.

Now you have access to incredibly powerful software tools. Aimed at creating a smooth, simple yet

feature rich and professional cloud-based interface with which to run the entire Procurement, Ordering, Cost Management and Accounts Payable functions.

Let's look at some of the new technology we are launching this year, and this is where it gets exciting:

Integrated Online Buying

This feature allows you to integrate with ANY online supplier website that you wish your business to buy from, into Compleat's purchasing controls. All your staff do is login and select the supplier they need. The software will then launch the website of that supplier, without laborious punch-out tools or catalogues.

This is important, as it means that:

- **From an end user perspective**, it is simple and easy to use – they may well be buying from a similar supplier than that which they use in their personal lives.
- **From a business perspective**, it creates a 'controlled choice', giving access to all necessary

products and services to any staff that need to order them, in a way that can be recorded, tracked, analysed, and managed.

This really is the future for businesses buying process, the point being that you can essentially build and control your own 'shop window' or 'marketplace' of preferred suppliers that you allow your staff to order from.

Even simpler is the latest Punch IN tool we developed with Amazon Business, where users of the two platforms no longer need to even log in to Compleat, they start their journey on Amazon, just like we would do at home!

The benefits of controlling expenditure are vast. In fact 8-12% of a business' outgoings can be saved simply by controlling how its staff bought from the suppliers they are ALREADY using. For many businesses, just being able to now access the kind of software technology that can facilitate this will be a major step forward in their digital evolution.

Compleat Analytics

Integrated online buying and the use of approval and invoice capture software tools in iCompleat, provides us with a rich and accurate source of consistently fed data – from order to invoice and then into our cloud Datalake, allowing our end users to analyse, monitor and refine expenditure in a way like never before.

Business Intelligence reporting tools have been around for years, however the issue in this area has always been a split between the novice users with a bit of Excel knowledge and the solutions that the largest companies need, and had the budgets to invest in.

Over the past three years I've been heavily involved in developing the brand new **Advanced Spend Analytics** and **Carbon Tracking** software tools, which we launched globally in April this year.



down costs, merge suppliers of the same products and understand where the business has overpaid or could use an alternative.

We now have many of our customers using ASA and provide additional services around this to support how their Procurement teams get the best results from our tools and data.

Carbon Tracking

Carbon Tracking takes on the technology of ASA and uses the

CO2 emissions and will lead to better performing supplier relationships.

There is a growing realisation that any business that doesn't have a handle on this will be at a competitive disadvantage – and rightly so, given the context.

In Summary

The vision we collectively hold at Compleat is that by understanding the journey of an order, from requisition to payment and re-order is something that can be greatly enhanced by technology.

Harnessing the power of Digital Procurement and Spend Management technology and making it accessible and easy to use whilst keeping ultimate functionality means that we are now at an extremely exciting time in the evolution of digital transformation and I'm proud to be a part of it.

"Provide reporting on the carbon emissions produced for every unit of expenditure"

Both tools address these problems as Compleat can now combine the rich and consistent source of header and line-item detail from purchase orders and invoices we receive, with pre-built, powerful enterprise grade cloud-based business intelligence and reporting tools.

Advanced Spend Analytics (ASA)

ASA is the culmination of three years' worth of development work, customer feedback and fact finding to get to the stage where we have a fully cloud-based tool designed to give staff in Procurement or Finance the reporting and visibility, they need to view expenditure by Spend Category, Nominal Code, Site, User, Supplier, Date or Product.

Having thousands of lines of data in a constantly updating format gives the customer the information to drive

rich source of pre-existing supplier invoice data combined with updated supplier carbon intensity ratios, calculated by our CO2 supply chain tracking data specialist using approved and widely recognised methods to provide reporting on the carbon emissions produced for every unit of expenditure.

The tool provides the ability to view Carbon Emissions by Scope 1-3 (Business Travel, Energy & Utilities and Procurement / Supply Chain respectively) and by site, supplier, expenditure category and by time, date and by volume of invoices and deliveries.

This means that having the ability to view and work with suppliers to reduce carbon emissions will have the biggest single impact on reduction of the businesses own



About the author:
Max Kent

Max Kent is Vice President of Global Procurement & Business Development at Compleat Software. With 25 years' experience in Commercial and Public Sector Procurement, alongside Global Sales within Supply Chain and Outsourced / Digital Procurement industries. Max has a long track record of building strong partnerships with both key clients and suppliers and taking new digital procurement products and services to market.



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Talent Threat: Great Resignation or ESG?

Elias van Herwaarden, Head of Location Strategy at Colliers, explains why he thinks the 'Great Resignation' is not going to be that 'Great' after all and why he thinks Finance Leaders should think ESG when addressing Talent Acquisition and Retention challenges!



For Finance teams across the Globe the pandemic-triggered remote working either from home or indeed anywhere that suited the employee. It has shaken the too-dated concept that most work must be done from corporate premises. Finance teams are responding to this as many now reposition their floorplates as collaboration spaces, as venues to foster team culture, as platforms to promulgate corporate values.

Admittedly, not having all resources at arms-length on a daily basis does require Finance Leaders to develop new management styles and this is a challenge the majority seems to struggle with. In the US for example Finance staff are resigning in droves as they are drawn to opportunities for gig-work and freelancing, They seek more recognition for their work and crave for more independence in deciding how and from where it should be conducted.

Yet, while conducting client research across Europe and Asia recently, I found little evidence that the Great Resignation is as truly Global storm as some would have it. Though in some Central European countries it clearly rages.

Maybe the world still needs to catch up with the United States and the freelancing Tsunami could still hit European shores. However, let me put it to you that the United States has a culture that strongly promotes individualism and entrepreneurialism, which not all countries can or will follow. Nor will Finance Departments, certainly not overnight nor across all operations.

Just ask yourself the question, 'how would you conduct business critical processes based on resources that phase-in and out in a somewhat unpredictable manner?'

Therefore, the amount of work available to the today's "Great Resigners" will be limited for the time being. Meanwhile, both in the United States and abroad, mortgages still need to be paid.

Given a 90% failure rate of start-ups, the Great Resignation is likely to be great just for a lucky few. The others will have little choice but to trade their temporarily gained independence for the steady income stream associated with more traditional employment contracts. And this is not just me pondering a hypothesis. In April

2022 the Times of India reported on so-called "boomerang employees" returning to the companies they had quit during the pandemic.

My take on it: In Europe and Asia Finance Leaders should not have their heads spinning because of the Great Resignation. It is bound to blow over and there is a far more fundamental and overriding topic when it comes to Talent Acquisition and Management – ESG!

Environmental, Social and Governance

In essence, ESG is all about doing the right thing. Preserving the Environment through climate policies, natural resource conservation and treatment of animals. For the Social acting in high regard for stakeholder relationships including employees, customers and (local) communities. For Governance ensuring accurate and transparent accounting methods, pursuing integrity and diversity leadership, and accountability to shareholders.

Equity investors have been applying ESG criteria to rate countries and companies alike, with solid reason. Financial Times Adviser research

showed that high-rated European ESG corporate stock outperforms the market by 12 per cent annually.

But ESG is about more than analysts' ratings. Just consider that as of 2019, both the US Security and Exchange Commission and EU authorities have issued non-financial, ESG-related reporting directives for publicly traded companies. So ESG has become a regulative matter. It will not blow over!

The cost of ESG Failure: On May 23rd the SEC fined BNY Mellon \$1.5 million. The US financial regulator had found that the bank did not go through a quality review of environmental, social or governance factors on some mutual funds it managed from July 2018 to September 2021.

With ESG regulations gradually becoming more stringent the data set that companies need to report on for their ESG performance rapidly expands. As corporate "data-master" Finance already sits on a stack of data that could be used for ESG reporting purposes. Just think of the need for corporations to report on the ESG performance of their suppliers.

Yet as ESG regulations are rapidly evolving, there is no fixed template that corporations can draw on. Unsurprisingly, most companies struggle with what to report, and on how to do so. Through the last 4 years an increasing number of Finance Leaders have been tasked with managing Business Intelligence processes. Would it not take a small step to extend such capabilities to the field of ESG intelligence and reporting?

But there is an additional reason why Finance leaders should make



ESG their business and it is all about Employer Value Proposition. Even before the Covid-pandemic, Finance employees started becoming more aware, and vocal, about Corporate Social Responsibility (the S in ESG).

HR specialists and real estate experts agree that employees favor working for favor Businesses that opt for carbon-neutral buildings.

for their own and corporate front line operations Finance will help not just themselves to attract talent but also investors' confidence.

Beyond the Box

To be clear, I understand perfectly that the Great Resignation worries many Finance leaders have. For too long they have had to deal with managing business continuity

"Maybe the world still needs to catch up with the United States and the freelancing Tsunami could still hit European shores"

To illustrate this, Skanska Central Europe a leading office developer in the region, achieved 90% of its buildings as environmentally friendly and applies rigid criteria to tenant and supplier selection (the E in ESG).

With a war for talent raging, certainly in Europe, Finance Leaders have little choice but to heed the ESG call as it will impact all. From supervision practices, talent management, life/work wellbeing, fostering of gender neutrality and managerial styles to choosing the correct suppliers for such mundane items as coffee beans. Then, by administering ESG compliance

through at times ruthless attrition. But as outlined above, there is a more important play surfacing. The ESG play, which if handled right, may even help to address current worries.

It is just my view but considering that Google results for "ESG" outnumber those for the "Great Resignation" by a factor of 4, I may not necessarily be wrong... 🗨️

About the author:
Elias van Herwaarden

Working across industries and around the world, Elias conducted over 150 location strategy and sourcing projects for SSCs and GBS. His experience includes new location searches, portfolio optimisation, process allocation and talent pool analysis. He leads the Location Strategy service of Colliers.

Work on South African Time!

Pierre Botha, Global Business Executive for Finance and Accounting at SoluGrowth, discusses the Skills shortage challenge facing UK Employers and how South Africa's time has arrived to address this gap in the Financial and Accounting Business Process Outsourcing market.



Even before Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK faced a shortage of Financial and Accounting (F&A) skills. Post-pandemic, the 'Great Resignation' has only increased the demand. Pierre Botha believes Outsourcing F&A support services to South Africa is the answer.

"We are definitely seeing an increase in demand for F&A skills in the UK, US and Australia," Botha says. "We're even seeing an emerging need for skills in the statutory audit space."

The 'Great Resignation' – which has become a global trend following the Pandemic – may well be driving this. While the UK is seeing fewer people exiting the labour force than the United States, resignations have surpassed their pre-pandemic levels in the last quarter of 2021. UK workers are resigning in greater numbers due to the impact of the Pandemic on employee expectations.

"We're seeing the impact in the Banking sector, for example. Tier 1 banks are scooping up great talent, leaving Tier 2 banks with a

very small pool to compete for," Botha says. Financial analytics and reporting capability are especially tough to recruit, as salaries tend to get competitive in a small talent pool. Whether or not employers are offering Hybrid working is a driving force.

South African Pressure Valve

"Outsourcing to South Africa neatly addresses all these challenges," Botha says. "Firstly, South Africa has plenty of talent and skilled resources, but not as many opportunities." South Africa's unemployment rate was 35.3% at the end of the fourth quarter of 2021. "This means that UK companies can access a skilled pool of talent at reasonable rates in South Africa, with the right Partner.

SoluGrowth is a management buy-out from Deloitte South Africa and, since its creation in 2018, has continued to service more than 200 clients across the Globe in 23 countries. One of SoluGrowth's recruitment strategies expands talent in F&A through its **Impact Sourcing** programme. It recruits unemployed

youth with limited access to funding for further education, but with clear potential, for an 18-month internship. This is followed by a 12-month bridging programme, and then full-time employment with SoluGrowth.

"Young South Africans are hungry for work, and our **Impact Sourcing** programme is all about finding talent and developing their potential," Botha explains. "For our UK clients, this means access to skills that are scarce at home, and a diverse pool of dedicated people eager to make a positive impact."

"Secondly," he continues, "South African talent is extremely cost effective, not in small part due to currency exchange. Though more 'expensive' than other popular outsourcing destinations, South Africa offers valuable soft skills – such as communication, collaboration and a closer cultural affinity – in addition to solid technical capabilities. Add to that the similarity in time zones, and South Africans are uniquely suited to fit seamlessly into UK teams."

Finally, F&A skills are prime targets for Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and lend themselves to work-from-anywhere arrangements. "We've found that our people are actually more productive working from home," Botha says. "Young, professional individuals gain two to four hours of productive time, and save as much as 30% of their income, simply by not taking public transport to the office.

"Our people go the extra mile when working from home using a world class communication infrastructure to preserve these lifestyle benefits. So, where our UK clients tell us that their employees average 34 productive hours a week, we are seeing much more than that in South Africa."

The Proof is Quantifiable

The types of F&A roles that lend themselves to BPO are prone to monotony, where in-house employees may find themselves doing the same thing day in and day out with little opportunity to innovate. "In contrast, an outsourced provider has Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and improvement metrics to deliver against," Botha points out.

"This means that innovation, process improvement, digital transformation, quality of work and effective partnering is baked into the Service Level Agreement (SLA), at least from a South African point of view. Bringing these improvements to our clients means we are better able to deliver against our SLAs, and they gain all the operational improvements and cost savings benefits."

Adding additional value to our clients is a key differentiator for SoluGrowth. "We don't just stick to a list of scope items," Botha says. "We aim to truly partner with our clients, offering an agile, flexible solution specific to their needs."

Botha offers quantifiable examples of how his team does this. "One client had a challenge surrounding segregation of duties, and the different types of access that had to



"Africa holds great potential for Shared Services and South Africa stands out. Its ecosystem developed around F&A services and the keys to its success are based on skill pool, cultural and time zone proximity to the UK"

Elias van Herwaarden, Head of Location Strategy, Colliers



be granted to around 10 000 users, on their ERP. Their complete data export and reporting process took a month to complete.

"SoluGrowth developed a custom-built tool that reduced the time to develop the master report from 1 week to less than 2 hours. We later added workflow that facilitated communication around data checks and reporting, and then added a provisioning tool that automatically provided and removed ERP access according to specific rule sets – all with a clear audit trail."

"Our F&A skills embrace AI-powered cloud accounting solutions. This assists us to shift from primarily managing processing and reporting to becoming financial advisors through analytics. With the F&A skillset in South Africa we easily evolve with our customers to ensure we meet their needs."

SoluGrowth's payments team developed another custom tool that doubled their output by freeing up 1,680 hours a year. And for another client, SoluGrowth's team revised

and completed 168 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) on a new standardised template in one year, creating total alignment in processes and identifying 33 Continuous Process Improvements (CPIs) in the same year. These CPI initiatives have saved the client 1,175 work hours thus far.

With local UK F&A talent still difficult to come by, it's clear that South Africa's BPO time has arrived. 🌍

About the contributor:
Pierre Botha



Pierre Botha provides tailor-made solutions to clients that want to co-source / outsource any part of their F&A processes. His experience spans over 19 years and various multinational companies. He specialises in implementing and managing effective, simple solutions to complex financial processes.



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Top Tips to be Exit Ready!

Vasu Majumdar, Senior Adviser Corporate Finance, focussing on Creative Industries and the Consumer Sector, explains his Top Tips for Private Equity Firms to be Exit Ready. It's all about Preparation, Preparation and Preparation...

Before joining the world of Corporate Finance, I worked in the drinks industry which included a time at an owner managed business who were considering an exit for the founder shareholders. I was tasked with preparing and executing a 3-year business plan that focused on maximising the value of the business in the event of a future sale.

The result was that sale was successful, achieving doubling of EBITDA in 3 years and an EV/EBITDA multiple of over 11.5x. Combining my first-hand experience of working on the client side and then advising clients as a Corporate Finance adviser, I believe that preparing a business for a sale is a critical success factor in achieving a successful exit. To that effect, I am pleased to share my top 10 tips for becoming an exit ready business.

1. Don't Do It Yourself

Parallels can be drawn with the world of professional sport, where teams have a group of experts working in tandem with one common goal to compete and win. In the context of the business environment, engaging with specialists in 3 key areas to form a Trusted Adviser team will help through the journey. You will need focus on Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) Corporate Finance, Legal and a Business Mentor.

There is a misconception that if your business is worthy of your customers and suppliers then surely, you don't

need to do anything else to impress a potential suitor. That is of course true if the Buyer has an intricate understanding of your business but 9 out of 10 times, Buyers don't, and Deals fall over during due diligence for a variety of reasons.

Hence, there is an adage that you prepare for the Sale, achieve the highest value during the marketing phase, defend and conserve value during due diligence and legal documentation. In terms of costs, if you can cap your overall Deal Advisory fees within 5% to 7% of the overall Deal value, that's a good benchmark to aim for. This fee can be linked to milestones and will enable you to incentivise the Trusted Adviser team over 18-24 months.

2. Lead by Example

Having a Trusted Adviser team is a good start but staying involved and motivated during the entire M&A process is critical. If the Trusted Adviser team has come up with recommendations, then the onus is on you to implement those initiatives, by your personal involvement and leading the way.

3. Be SMART

Use Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Targets (SMART) to identify the perimeter of the Sale and what a "good" Deal framework looks like for you. Once you have set a timeframe, stick to it, subject to of course to M&A market conditions and the Deal making environment.

Rather than saying that you want to achieve the highest possible value for the business, agreeing a Deal framework based on SMART criteria is an alternative way to focus everyone's efforts in achieving the SMART objectives.

For example, Deal value, Deal structure (day 1 cash versus deferred/earn-out), timing of go to market and achieving a Sale, setting EBITDA or relevant value driver parameters, perimeter of Sale (share sale or trade and assets) is some of the aspects you need to consider incentivising your Trusted Adviser team.

4. Identify Top 5 Strategic Buyers

Starting the journey with the destination in mind is the essence of every M&A process I have undertaken. Personally, I invest a lot of time asking myself the question, which Top 5 buyers would be interested in acquiring my client's business.

Your M&A Adviser should be able to act as an independent party to keep track of the Top 5 buyer pool and stay abreast with their Deal activities. This should provide you with good insight on what the buyers interested in and then depending on how strategic that buyer pool is, your M&A Adviser should be able to send some soft feelers out to gauge their appetite. This of course needs to be handled sensitively and this is where a good M&A practitioner is critical.

4. Quarterly Financial Health Check

Create a Template that is tailored specifically to an M&A process and review Quarterly. For my clients, I use a "Critical Check List" to track progress. The areas that I cover as part of exit readiness include strategic, commercial, financial, operational, contracts – employees, customers, and suppliers, and tax amongst others. If your business is well managed with information well organised, then in my experience a 12 to 18 month timeframe is sufficient for an exit readiness process.

some considered steps such as EMI option pool or EOTs (Employee Ownership Trusts) may help you articulate your plans in a cohesive manner without explicitly stating that you are preparing the business for an exit.

8. Maintain Momentum

Selling a business is an emotional process and can be testing at times, but one key advantage of being a seller is that you have control of driving the Sale process, as fast or slow as you want. However, exit readiness is actually not starting

number of moving parts on a deal and tax is an area which is often neglected and causes problems down the line.

10. Working Capital

Last but certainly not least, get on top of Working Capital (WC management) and keep it in check. A Buyer would expect a Seller to leave sufficient cash on the balance sheet at the date of completion to satisfy the ongoing day to day obligations of the business.

A normalised capital mechanism is typically used to determine the working capital requirements of the business. I have seen value (in cash terms) lost during the final stages of a transaction and often it's a function of mathematics and formulaic, therefore, being a seller, you have control over how you manage your customer and supplier payments.

"Engaging with specialists in 3 key areas to form a Trusted Adviser team will help through the journey"

6. Legal Contracts

Keep your legal contracts up to date and check change in control provisions are not onerous. For all Contracts I would advise revisiting them and use your Trusted Adviser team to identify contentious areas so that you can address those concerns before you embark on a Sale process. A common one that I have seen over the years is certain onerous provisions on change of control as in what happens if the business ownership changes, especially whether the contract needs to be discontinued on change in ownership or not.

an M&A process but it is a precursor to a potential Sale. It's a bit like "kicking the tyres" and that's where a disconnect often takes place, where I have seen business owners becoming disinterested in an exit ready initiative and losing momentum.

9. Tax

Have good tax planning in place and stay on top of your tax obligations. If you are a taxpayer in the UK and your business registered in the UK, then there are several taxation incentives available to entrepreneurs in the UK. As part of establishing Deal Framework, it is a worthwhile exercise to determine post tax cash proceeds from the Sale. In my experience, there could be unforeseen value leakage due to lack of tax planning.

From a Buyers perspective, a clean acquisition, involving minimal contingent liabilities, such as unresolved tax matters, could be a value detractor during the final negotiations phase. The point being that it is essential to minimise the

Conclusion

It may sound controversial, but in my opinion an entrepreneur is not an entrepreneur until the business is worthy in someone else's ownership. To achieve this surround yourself with a Trusted Adviser team who can help you prepare well, know your suitors, articulate your proposition factually and help you defend the rebuttals with robust information that is clean and not tainted. ☺

About the author:
Vasu Majumdar



Vasu has completed over 35 corporate finance deals with a combined deal value of over £5bn. His experience has included Williamson Magor, the world's largest tea producer and Rubicon Drinks, the UK's first exotic juice drinks brand. Followed by corporate finance advisory career at NM Rothschild & Sons Ltd and Grant Thornton UK LLP. He is currently working in a Senior Adviser role for Fortus Business Advisors and Accountants; and Collingwood Advisory in London. Contact him on +44 7890 528 996.



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The Magic Formula for Public Speaking

Brad Burton is the UK's No.1 Motivational Business Speaker, a four times best selling business book author and has been public speaking for over 10 years. Brad shares with you his magic formula to becoming a better Public Speaker.



If you could simply press a magic button and become an expert public speaker, would you press it? Anything you want is probably on the other side of fear.

In my early days as a motivational speaker, I'd be back stage absolutely petrified, feeling sick, sick ahead of a 30-minute seminar that I'd somehow talked myself into... best idea ever... now the WORST idea ever.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, you're gonna absolutely love him, prepared to be inspired, fired up and motivated, it's MR BRAD BURTON..."

Game face on, the curtain would come back and I'd bound onto stage, with seemingly limitless energy, supreme confidence and stage presence, pointing at imaginary people in the audience, just as you'd expect a motivational speaker

to do! And then a couple of tried and tested autopilot gags and I'd magically forget how terrified I was just minutes before.

When I first started professional speaking over a decade ago this is how it was, is and how it had to be. I've been motivating audiences for over 10 years now.

During that time I've headlined at Xerocon, Accountex, Generation CFO and I'm delighted to be asked to open the Accounts Payable Association annual conference later this year.

I haven't written that to show how clever I am, but for you to understand that all the speakers you admire had to start somewhere. In my case I recall doing a 500 mile round trip to Manchester addressing an audience of 3 and 77 empty chairs. But each

time you speak you learn something, something about yourself, the industry, people.

I've honed and perfected my talent since then, and I've also learnt that no-one can see your nerves. Like no one. Yet you can absolutely feel them.

The first person you have to convince of your brilliance is you. It all starts with belief, believing that you can do it. You'll never outperform your self-image. I also used to think it was just me that was blagging it. Just like you think it's just you. Nope. Dragons from the Den. Blagging it. Pop stars with No.1 hits. Blagging it.

Trust me I have spoken privately to many people who you seemingly would have NO idea that they had any kind of self-doubt.



I remember being on a speaker line up once with a World Champion boxer. Backstage he told me his heart was always pounding before a title defence fight... but he just couldn't show fear, after all 10's

fear. We can't all be Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Brad Burton!

But we can all be a better version of our self. It's all about finding your level, and pushing just beyond your

into rooms full of total strangers and leaving with a room of friends, I'm NO longer blagging it!

If public speaking is one of things you are actively avoiding but would love to be more confident in – here's 10 pro speaker tips from someone who has seen and done it all:

"It's all about finding your level, and pushing just beyond your fear mode, and into the learning zone"

of millions of people globally were tuned in watching, as was his opponent, in the opposite corner who had trained equally hard and truth be known, probably also had his heart pounding. In that world, show fear and you lose.

Anything you want is probably on the other side of blagging it, other side of

fear mode, and into the learning zone. That's where we all find our growth.

No one is born an expert, and this will also apply to your peers within your industry, and at some point, the expert you may look up to, was blagging it.

Everyone is. Until of course they reach the point when they are not!

So, my advice for anytime you question why you are doing something is to keep going, keep on doing it, whatever it is, and every opportunity you have to learn, take it. And above all, when it gets tough, and it will, remember why you started.

I promise you this, it DOES get easier, trust me. I'm a motivational business speaker, who I think it's fair to say, after a decade of walking

1. Nobody can see your nerves. You have about 2 minutes before we begin to leak the truth
2. It's not what you say, it's also how you say it
3. When you move, move with purpose
4. Be you, avoid putting on your telephone / Radio 4 voice
5. Don't get it perfect, just get it going
6. Don't tell people you are funny, make them laugh
7. Invest in some speaker training.
8. Start strong, this sets the pace for the entire speech
9. The best way to learn how not to die on stage, is by dying on stage!
10. If nerves are getting the better of you before you step onto the stage, run cold water over your wrists. Until it hurts. Believe me, it works. ☺

About the author:
Brad Burton

Brad is the Founder of Network Central, the largest joined up business network in the UK, four times best selling business author on Amazon and the UK's No.1 Motivational Business Speaker.



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People Drive Digital Transformation

Piers Reid, SystemsAccountants Group CEO, discusses challenges facing CFOs driving technology-enabled transformations in 2022.



Here we go again! Inflation nearing 10%, wages spiralling, global supply chains fragile and a rising cost of borrowing. Yet finance organisations are still expected to optimise working capital by providing insights that fuel growth, systems, controls and processes.

No wonder a majority of finance leaders are looking to technology to manage an ever-increasing workload and improve their analytical, modelling and reporting capabilities. A scenario mirroring the post-Credit Crunch market in 2008 where everyone (mostly banks) realised they didn't have the data to back up their business assumptions.

But how do you manage a technology project, let alone a digital transformation programme, when your staff are stretched and your budgets are based on questionable data?

The key to success? Gaining end user adoption. If it's a tactical initiative like deploying AP automation or expense management application, the most practical approach is adopting a super user model, with team members participating on a part-time basis, with software vendor and internal IT organisation support as needed.

That said, over the years, we've seen many such projects overrun and/or fail to deliver due to lack of discipline. It's critical to appoint a fully-accountable business-side Project Manager, and post project, evaluate whether business case benefits have been realised and if not, have a clearly defined set of remedial actions.

Many enterprise-scale organisations have internal business project teams, but often with generalist skills and lack of finance process and

systems expertise. What's more, scale-ups may well have none of this even established.

Embracing the introduction of new digital tools requires confidence in leadership. Does the Project Manager have a deep knowledge of the processes being automated or improved? Or the domain knowledge to explain how technology will empower users to undertake more value-adding work?

As a consequence, a high proportion of requests SystemsAccountants receives, is to provide project resources combining sound project experience, disciplines with deep subject matter expertise as well as prior experience of multiple deployments of tool implementation.

Depending on the scale or nature of the project, we provide full- or

part-time independent project contractors, ensuring our clients benefit from a light touch and cost-effective engagement model, where the contractor is positioned business-side and with a clear objective of gaining user adoption.

For larger scale transformation programmes, such as deployment of cloud ERP, a more formal, structured resourcing model is required.

Fortunately, this doesn't mean darkening the skies with many external consultants. It's not 2005! It does though pay to engage the intellectual capital of a Big 4 or large Systems Integrator to bring application-specific deployment toolkits and yield value through competitively packaged software and service deals.

"The key to success is gaining end-user adoption"

It's important to note that small or large ERP projects handed off in their entirety to external consulting firms often fail to deliver their original goals, precisely because users feel change is being done to them. A variety of ills ensues, ranging from poorly articulated user requirements, non-compliant processes in post-implementation and weak user adoption.

SystemsAccountants has been engaged as a business partner on countless transformative programmes. Often from the earliest phases where CFOs want introductions to people that have done similar and learned lessons they would or wouldn't repeat.

From there, we help give a CFO access to the right resources and ensure they have the confidence a course of action is their business choice. As well as aligning to the business team and delivering small or large scale support.



An SA account management team will work with the client sponsor group to understand objectives and how the transformation programme is tied to these; obtaining a detailed picture of programme scope (business case; operating model; people, process and system selection, desired partner model; budgets, and schedule), to provide an

Whilst budgets are a key factor, the challenge is shaping and executing these initiatives so future needs can be met by finance, rather than success being measured on cost terms alone. Blended project and programme teams, combining internal staff, consulting/vendor resource and carefully selected independent contractors can help smooth out resource peaks and troughs, keep project spend in check and ensure business case benefits are realised.

SystemsAccountants Group is a UK Headquartered Professional Services & Recruitment business operating from hub offices across the USA and Europe. The group includes UK Oracle NetSuite Partner SANSAs Solutions. SystemsAccountants recruitment supports organisations of all sizes with access to people with hybrid IT and Finance skills in ERP, EPM, BI and Data to design, deliver and run their Business System landscape.

informed analysis of skills availability to enable a client to engage the optimal resource blend.

SA has the most extensive, pre-screened network of Finance Transformation and ERP contractors in the market. Many have completed multiple client assignments and are highly referenceable. Typically costing around 60% of SI/B4 charge rates, these independent contractors offer significant VFM as they're often better experienced than their consultancy counterparts.

Furthermore, they wear the badge of the business, helping users and the business team question and challenge, ensuring they feel empowered and likely to adopt new working methods.

If they haven't already, transferring core ERP and EPM systems to the Cloud is on the agenda of most CFOs with many using this and a range of digital tools to do better with less.

About the author: Piers Reid



Piers Reid is the CEO of SystemsAccountants group who deliver Recruitment, Finance Systems and ERP Consulting Services to a global client base from hub offices in the US and Europe. Piers has 20 years experience in Finance and Systems Recruitment and technology enabled transformation.



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Reclaiming Your Freight Overspend

Bastiaan de Vries, General Manager of EM6 Worldwide and a global Freight Audit specialist, talks to Finance Transformation's **Mark Saywell** about a service offering that should be of interest to all companies with a significant freight overhead.



What is freight audit? How does it differ from Outsourcing Accounts Payable?

Freight Audit is similar to Accounts Payables outsourcing but focuses solely on Freight bills. This is a specialised field that none of the global Accounts Payable outsourcing providers can perform. Freight payables tend to be highly complex due to the complicated nature of freight tariffs. This complexity leads to frequent overcharges and billing miscalculations by freight carriers.

It is a tailored service that requires a highly complex and customised process from capturing the detailed line items of the freight tariffs, contesting overcharges, facilitating payment to the carrier, and posting the service charges to the client's financial ledgers.

Typically, the average credit notes from identified overcharges are higher value than the fees paid for EM6 service provision, making us a cost neutral, high value add supply chain service.

So who are EM6?

EM6 was initially founded as Europe Management in Brussels in 2004 offering worldwide freight audit and payment services. It extended its reach and footprint in 2019 with the purchase of IPS Worldwide.

EM6 boasts an enviable pool of senior management talent including former heads of third-party logistics, IT and industry companies, consolidating their knowledge, experience and freight services remediation wish lists to provide a market leading Freight Audit service.

What sort of clients would utilise a freight audit service?

We process for clients with annual turnovers from \$100m up to multiple billions of dollars. Typical clients have sizable primary and secondary freight commonly seen in manufacturing, distribution, and retail sectors. With so many shipments, and complex, multi-charge bills, there is significant propensity for overcharges and duplicate billings.

Why do freight carriers produce so many overcharges with the presence of dedicated Audit services?

In our 20 years+ experience we can say that no carrier knowingly overcharges. Invoicing errors come from ambiguity in rates, distances travelled, dimensional

weight and changes in tariffs entered incorrectly on billing platforms. There can be several months of accurate invoicing by a carrier and then a proliferation of overcharges due to the reasons stated above or from challenges with their billing systems.

So the higher volume and value of overcharges, the more value a Freight Audit provider can add?

True, however EM6's role is not simply to show higher 'savings' to the client but to help their carriers rectify their programs and bill accurately. Errors are not intentional but are a reality of complex invoicing across all modes of global freight transport.

EM6's objective is to make the bill payment process efficient, compliant and to enable carrier payments in a timely fashion.

"Freight payables tend to be highly complex due to the complicated nature of freight tariffs"

Freight Audit seems to be big business in North America, why does it seem so comparatively under used in Europe?

Over 200 providers have been serving the US market for decades, but the concept and benefits are not so well-known in Europe. With only 4 or 5 service providers on the continent there's less marketing and social media presence.

Freight billing in Europe is complex for a multitude of reasons, not least the decentralised nature of carriers leading to multiple contracts managed on a federated basis. Intangible Freight Audit benefits are potentially even higher for European clients given the significant opportunity for error.

Audit processing costs per bill have historically been prohibitive in



Europe. Since 2016, EM6 has brought European processing costs down to the same level as the US without compromising on compliance and quality, making the service a more attractive prospect.

What services do EM6 provide?

EM6's primary focus is on 'pre-Audit', managing the receipt, audit, and payment of bills to freight carriers. We also provide 'post-Audit' services, reviewing historic freight bills that clients have already paid to their

EM6 do not profess to provide the cheapest rates in the market but we do consider ourselves to be the most competitive. Our audit catches more overcharges than our competitors and facilitates more cash back to the client's bottom-line. This has been confirmed in Post-Audit exercises.

EM6 responsiveness to frequently changing business rules without compromising prompt payment to carriers is our real unique selling point. This strength is highlighted in our ability to deliver a client on-boarding in 6-15 weeks, the shortest in the industry.

EM6's experience managing the complexities of tax regulation and compliance in EMEA and APAC is also a distinct competitive advantage in these regions.

Enquiries can be made to EM6 through their website www.em6logistics.com/contact and filling out their contact form or by emailing them at contact@em6logistics.com.

suppliers. We have helped our clients reclaim significant overpayments with our services paid on a gain share basis.

Alongside providing these services directly to our clients, we have also provided our services as 'white label' offerings through global advisory businesses and as a value adding extension to Accounts Payable outsource providers.

EM6 can provide benchmarking services to our clients including comparing their rates across the industry, within the legal limits of benchmarking. Except for a minor fee for specific benchmark assignments, we provide these services free of charge to our clients.

What would be the unique key strength of EM6 in the Freight Audit Payables industry?

About the interviewee: **Bastiaan de Vries**



Bastiaan de Vries rose through the ranks from Auditor to Account Manager at US Bank managing their largest clients, before transitioning to General Manager at EM6 covering Freight Audit clients across EMEA & APAC. Fluent in French, German, English and Dutch, Bastiaan plays a key role building and maintaining EM6 Worldwide relationships for UK and European clients and prospects.



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Hitting the NetSuite Spot!

Tony Fidler, Managing Director of SANSA, discusses why fast-growing companies should consider upgrading their ERP System to Oracle NetSuite.



Oracle NetSuite is widely regarded as the number one Cloud ERP system in the world offering a truly integrated finance solution for fast medium-sized companies experiencing hypergrowth. Their ERP functions apply to a wide range of geographies and industries, which positions them uniquely in the market to deliver against their mantra of 'Run, Scale, Grow'. The core, out-of-the-box solution is aligned to growth companies.

Navigating an ERP selection process can be challenging with many providers and systems to choose from. In my role, I'm regularly engaging with CFOs and Transformation Leaders about their pain points and through my network and background in accountancy and finance transformation. I can guide them through these difficult decisions. Over the last few years, we've seen a shift towards Oracle NetSuite as they continue to push the boundaries of the traditional ERP systems and disrupt the market. Here are the common

reasons my clients choose to adopt NetSuite and what drives their decision making:

1. More Visibility

Senior Leadership and Sales teams are constantly asking Finance for ad hoc, up to date to reporting so that can make better informed commercial decisions. Each request requires an accounting professional to run bespoke reports which take days to produce and are often out of date by the time it's interpreted and acted on by the recipient. Oracle NetSuite allows teams to build order processing, quality reassurance and compliance reporting, plus more reports in real-time dashboards and present core business metrics in an intuitive way. The accessibility of data allows teams to view and act on real-time information, which was the case for one of my Commercial Real Estate clients who through their single unified view were able to run accurate reports which helped define international expansion plans. A core strength of NetSuite is its inbuilt capability around multicurrency and

multicurrency. This enables access to real-time information across a Group from anywhere at anytime.

2. Cloud-based

The world has become a more connected place post Covid with teams operating remotely both nationally and internationally. Today, cloud computing enables companies to adapt to changing business models, both strategically and operationally. Generally, companies with a cloud-first strategy can adjust their way of working much quicker and encounter fewer technology challenges. It's widely recognised that a cloud platform reduces complexity, increases reliability, and enables faster development changes, all whilst decreasing risk.

Oracle NetSuite often refers to itself as the No.1 Cloud ERP system on the market, well it's true! Since Oracle acquired NetSuite system development has been paramount and through biannual updates, they continue to maintain their position in the market.

I've worked with companies across eCommerce throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to implement global incidences of NetSuite. They'd recognised that to grow efficiently and globally a switch to a cloud-based provider was essential, legacy ERPs system and worst still spreadsheets saved locally was impacting growth and efficiencies. Investing in a cloud-based solution not only helped their operational finance teams but it allowed remote working to flourish.

smarter, more efficient processes. Plus faster implementations, reduced the time to value meaning the days of long, protracted and, expensive ERP implementation projects are over.

4. Cost Efficiencies

The initial outlay and ongoing licensing costs are often at the back of a CFOs mind when embarking on an ERP transformation project – and rightly so. Like with any systems project you look through the list of available features and map how your

"One of my eCommerce clients has seen a 25% reduction in task across their purchase ledger"

3. A Strive for Best Practice - SuiteSuccess

SuiteSuccess is engineered to solve unique industry challenges that historically have limited a company's ability to grow, scale and adapt to change. Most ERP vendors have tried to solve the industry solution problem with templates, rapid implementation methodologies and custom code.

NetSuite took a holistic approach to the problem and productised domain knowledge, leading practices, KPIs and an agile approach to product adoption. The benefits of this are faster time to value, increased business efficiency, flexibility and greater customer success.

SuiteSuccess is based on leading, industry verticals and is designed to accelerate your return on investment, whilst reducing the risk sometimes associated with technology projects. At SANSA we are SuiteSuccess enabled and the most accredited Alliance Partner in EMEA – we overlay our knowledge, experience, and consulting skills to personalise NetSuite for customer specific requirements. Clients are often surprised how their desired process flows can be overlaid with Oracle NetSuite's functionality to produce

team can utilise what's available, but the reality is there are many features you could be paying for that you won't use from the get go. With NetSuite you don't need to procure the whole platform from day one, simply buy the functionality you need so you only pay for what you use, and when you need to unlock new features it's simple. With SANSA's consultants will assist you in building a stairway of functionality and benefits meaning you won't try to boil the ocean on day 1.

5. Focus on Tasks that Add Value

Every CFO or Finance Leader is being pulled in every direction but knows their team must complete the basic day-to-day tasks in order for the business to function. With pressures on headcount due to wage inflation and economic uncertainty, being more efficient is one way of realigning your team and delivering value back to the business. NetSuite's finance and accounting capabilities allow our clients to deliver primary business tasks more efficiently, whether it's bank reconciliations, purchase orders, re-order notifications, customer profitability reports or forecasting. By reducing the amount of time spent on repetitive BAU tasks, we've seen



significant reductions in month end and year reporting allowing Finance teams to work on more valuable tasks to help grow the business. One of my eCommerce clients has seen a 25% reduction in task across their purchase ledger which has allowed them to redeploy staff to focus on redefining processes and automation.

All of that said buying the software simply isn't enough, it needs to be configured for your business. At SANSA we enable businesses to unlock the true potential of NetSuite. We specialise in maximising the value of our client's investment through consulting, implementation, optimisation and support services. We offer unrivalled efficiencies in building teams of the best Oracle NetSuite certified professionals in the market. And as a certified NetSuite Alliance partner, we are a trusted and recognised partner by Oracle.

Our unique operating model, focussed on people and technology, separates us from our competitors – we are partners, not providers.



About the author: Tony Fidler

Tony Fidler is the founder and Managing Director of SANSA Solutions – an Oracle NetSuite Alliance Partner. Tony is CIMA qualified and a leader in the Finance System and ERP space. Tony has a track record in building successful teams and delivering change through ERP.



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ORACLE
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Predictive Maintenance Delivers Savings

Gary Cole, CEO of Lumilinks, explains how tapping into existing data can allow you to predict, prioritise and pre-empt maintenance on your systems and equipment. So, you can reduce repairs and cut costs. You already have the data you need; you just need to know how to use it.



Increasingly, organisations understand the value of data in informing customer relationships, guiding effective marketing campaigns, and driving sales. But, data can supercharge internal processes too. There is money to be saved in how you handle equipment repairs and maintenance, and predictive maintenance is the key.

Predictive maintenance is a familiar concept: data analysis to get ahead of repairs. It's a technique that detects anomalies in your operation, possible defects in equipment and processes, and future maintenance requirements, so you can fix issues before they result in failure. Also know the ideal time to retain or sell an asset.

Ideally, the predictive method keeps maintenance to a minimum because it prevents unplanned reactive maintenance and makes expensive preventive maintenance redundant.

You may be familiar with predictive maintenance systems that utilise a

network of Internet of Things (IoT) devices to paint a real-time picture of your system's health. Monitors and sensors attached to all parts of an asset produce a constant stream of data, which is then processed using machine learning and AI techniques to make predictions of future maintenance needs.

Predictive maintenance of this kind is expensive to set up and run. Its output is powerful and accurate, but it requires costly IoT devices, large data storage infrastructure, high computing power, and a time-intensive program of modernisation before you can begin to access useful data. At Lumilinks, we have a solution that realises ROI faster.

The question surrounding predictive maintenance is, 'Can you harness the benefits without incurring the costs?' At Lumilinks, we believe the answer is 'Yes.' In response, we have developed a predictive

maintenance model that produces similar results without the set-up and maintenance costs.

Our technique uses statistical analysis to build a proportional hazards model for your assets using the maintenance data you already have. The technique produces predictions about which parts will break next, the proportional risk posed to the entire asset, and the cost of repair in relation to the cost of potential failure. You can then prioritise critical maintenance, reduce downtime of key assets, and discontinue expiring assets before they cause damage.

For businesses with multiple or complex assets, this is a game-changer. It's an opportunity to reduce maintenance costs while increasing maintenance value by drawing up a viable and effective schedule and using it to inform asset management.



What are the Benefits of the Lumilinks Solution?

- Minimise set-up and maintenance costs**
 Predictive maintenance that leverages existing data requires a smaller investment in new data-collecting infrastructure than intensive AI solutions. New monitors, sensors, and IoT devices would also require additional costly maintenance, but with the Lumilinks solution, you keep setup and ongoing costs to a minimum.
- Plan a maintenance schedule**
 With better insights into system and asset behaviour, you can draw up a schedule that reduces costly and overzealous preventive maintenance and means you won't be unwittingly replacing perfectly good parts.
- Adapt pricing models**
 Proper insight into which parts of your business and which clients

against the maintenance needs of everything else.

data to develop a proper preventive maintenance plan will, in the long run, save money and help you plan future asset acquisitions.

Lumilinks is turning data into a Single Source of Truth, making data management accessible to all and encouraging better data hygiene. This is what makes money-saving techniques such as preventive maintenance possible.

To find out more about Lumilinks data services, visit www.lumilinks.com.

"For businesses with multiple or complex assets, this is a game-changer"



About the author: **Gary Cole**

- Realise ROI faster**
 With lower set-up costs and a smaller installation process, the Lumilinks solution lets you access useful data faster, which means a quicker ROI.
- Prioritise maintenance**
 Predictive maintenance allows you to identify which critical assets will need maintenance and when, and balance this

cause the most damage and are the most expensive allows you to devise proactive pricing models that will keep you ahead of future costs and improve your product offerings.

There is value in your business data, and correlating data across your business helps you uncover patterns, learn from experience, and make smart, effective decisions. Using this

Gary Cole founded Lumilinks in 2019 alongside Jo Dudley-Smith and Dr Tim Drye who is a former DataIQ Data Scientist of the Year. On a mission to disrupt the traditional SaaS status quo, Lumilinks offer analytics as a service using A.I. decision-making models to empower users to identify the optimum route to goal, helping organisations to efficiently and strategically achieve their business objectives.



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Client Story - Dawson Group

"The partnership between Dawson Group and Lumilinks has opened our eyes to what is possible. One of the biggest assets within Dawson Group is data, but a recent study revealed that we do not use our 25+ years of historical data in the most effective manner. While we have numerous in-house accountants, we do not regularly analyse the data in any great depth. Ad hoc analysis

takes time, and the important message may be missed due to data overload. This is where the partnership with Lumilinks has been a real benefit.

"The data analysis undertaken by Lumilinks will enable Dawson Group to manage its fleet more efficiently, reduce costs, increase revenue, and provide better solutions for our customers. As an example, we can now

predict when will be the optimum time to dispose of a vehicle, taking into consideration our own data on ageing repair and maintenance costs, as well as external data such as second-hand market values."

By **Adrian O'Reilly**,
Group Accounting Director



A unique place to Collaborate

Ellen Leith, Editor and Director of the Purchase to Pay Network (PPN) talks about their Annual Conference which took place on the 7th June and why the PPN is a unique collaboration environment.



At Purchase to Pay Network (PPN) we offer something unique – a meeting of minds for people across the different functions of Finance, Accounts Payable and Procurement. Despite many column inches spent talking about collaboration across these areas, sometimes it can still seem a distant goal. But for over a decade we've been connecting people and businesses and helping them to see past silos and into a networked future.

Our aim has always been to provide a platform to raise visibility of what are still sometimes seen as transactional functions, and build a community to share success stories, discuss cultural and technical change and

challenges. Today, that network has grown to over 15,000 professionals attracting Finance Directors, Heads of Purchase to Pay (P2P) and Procurement professionals alike.

P2P Transformation Summit 2022

We were finally face to face again at our 8th annual P2P Transformation Summit at the beautiful Hurlingham Club, London last week. At PPN, we take those Ps seriously. It's not just Pay and it's not just Procurement, but looking at the end-to-end process, and how that can connect. And of course, not forgetting the most important P of all – People.

And why did feel it was important to do that? Well, as we heard at one

of our panel discussions looking at why Finance and Procurement teams should work together, one of the panellists likened it to a football team.

"Imagine;" he asked us "If you invest in a star striker (great Sales and Marketing), but then don't make the same investment into your goalkeeper or defence (Procurement + a progressive CFO) then you're never going to win the Champions League."

We can't profess to be excellent football pundits here at PPN, but we recognise a Beautiful Game when we see one, and that kind of seamless teamwork and integration, is what the organisations in our Network are trying to achieve.



PPN Focus Week: 19-23 September

And it was a wonderful experience to be face-to-face again with our community, sharing insights, stories, and challenges, and finally being able to do so over lunch and some laughter over coffee. Haven't we missed that!

As wonderful as that was, if anything has come out of the pandemic it's our ability to adapt and be flexible in the way that we receive information, which means that we're going to continue with our virtual Focus Week experience, now in its third year, from the 19th to the 23rd September 2022.

One of the highlights is the conversations with our wonderful PPN Award winners and finalists. It's always fantastic to hear in more detail some of the tremendous work that the teams and individuals in our industry have been doing. And of course, to show of their lovely glass awards one more time!

Finance for the Future

Our community is at the forefront of change, often leading their organisations to explore new method of processing, learning how new ideas around corporate culture and compliance regulations will impact them now and in the future. And it's with that in mind that we're hosting the first of our Finance for the Future Lectures on 2nd November at the Soho Hotel in London.

"If anything has come out of the pandemic it's our ability to adapt and be flexible"

Originally conceived out of our regular Friday "snug room" chats, which kept our network connected during the pandemic, the week is now a regular fixture in our calendar. With conversations with research analysts, international supply chain professionals, experts in CSR and the transformation of our finance and P2P worlds, each day offers something special and a particular focus.

A four-hour session packed with speakers from companies such as AstraZeneca on topics as broad as career mapping and working outside of your comfort zone to digitisation and intelligent automation.

Your Network and Your Community

We make it our goal to bring people together and connect them to discuss issues that affect the industry, now and into the future. We look at the rise of technology, connect people with solution providers, provide help in how to manage remote or hybrid teams and how to build our departments so that they feed into the overall strategy of the business.



We connect thousands of professionals every day via news items, our research papers, webinars, masterclasses, virtual roundtables, P2P Live!, the job board and our annual P2P Transformation Summit, our 9th set for next year on Tuesday 6th June 2023.



About the author: **Ellen Leith**

Ellen has built the P2P Network since its creation in 2008, getting to the root of the challenges facing P2P, AP, finance, procurement and issues affecting the wider business community, creating a home for over 15,000 professionals along the way.



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Accounts Payable Hits the Quality Mark!

Jamie Radford, CEO of the Accounts Payable Association (APA), explains why all Accounts Payable Functions should attain the APA Quality Mark and the benefits this will bring them.

Once considered a very transactional back-office function, Accounts Payable (AP) is now becoming a more strategic and valued part of all organisations. But why the sudden change? Well, quite simply, there has been no change, AP teams have been pushed into the limelight as a result of the changing nature of work through recent events.

All industry sectors recognise the difficulty in recruiting, training and retaining good quality individuals within the AP function, and this will only become more challenging as companies seek to meet the changing needs of employees:

- Alongside the shortage of experienced or qualified personnel, the need for flexible working, enhanced salary and benefits packages has led to a candidate driven market emerging
- Candidates are expecting more in terms of their training and development, as well as future career opportunities.

So how do you attract the best quality individuals and, more importantly, retain them to become

stars for the future? After spending over 30 years working with AP/P2P organisations of all sizes, we have looked at all aspects of how to transform this area of your business. There are some non-negotiables for success: making sure your AP department is well structured, controlled and feels valued within your business is essential.

The journey towards developing a team that truly works towards Best Practice then comes down to how much you are prepared to invest in the people, processes and systems that are required to ensure you get the most from your AP function.

We have condensed our knowledge and understanding into the APAQ program, to help companies understand in a very clear way not only what "success" looks like at a team and individual level within AP, but also how to get there from where you may be now...and stay there.

APAQ - What is it?

The APA Quality Programme is the Industry's leading accreditation for Best Practice from the Accounts Payable Association:



- It recognises your team's commitment to quality, continuous improvement and best practice in Accounts Payable/P2P
- It helps you review and improve your AP processes, people development and strategic management.

Successful completion of the programme confirms all of these areas are fit for purpose and aspire to Best Practice. The tailored programme is suitable for AP functions of all organisations and sizes.

Once accredited, your organisation will become part of the "APA Best Practice Network," a peer-to-peer network exclusively for those who have completed the program and are committed to supporting and helping their own businesses and each other to share, learn and develop around Best Practice for their organisations.

How Can my Organisation Achieve APAQ Accreditation?

To gain accreditation, you must successfully complete an online assessment using our purpose-built system, with our dedicated APAQ team to support the entire process.

We then identify areas where improvements can be achieved and support this journey with your team to make sure you are continuously moving towards Best Practice as an organisation.

As well as improving your AP function, and gaining public recognition, the programme can lead to improved staff acquisition and retention, and greater recognition of the value delivered by AP both within the business, but also within your supply chain.

The APAQ programme covers 6 key Pillars:

1. Your Organisation
2. Your People
3. Your AP Function
4. Business Resilience
5. Sustainability
6. Technology

Why Should my Organisation Explore APAQ?

There are many compelling business reasons for looking into the APAQ programme:

"The programme can lead to improved staff acquisition and retention"

- To continuously review and improve AP performance to keep pace with changing business needs and ever more advanced process technologies
- To benchmark against peers in similar industries (ESG/ Compliance etc)
- To reduce the risk of fraud and loss within the business
- To improve visibility and confidence for other stakeholders
- To raise the profile of AP/P2P through greater internal recognition for your AP Team (Internal Stakeholders – Finance – Procurement – Operations)



Jamie at the recent AP Accounts Payable Appreciation Summit event

- To build better working relationships with your suppliers
- To improve staff acquisition and retention
- To raise the profile of your business through recognition for AP team, Manager and Business
- To access industry-leading Best Practice networking and events as an APAQ Accredited organisation within the wider Accounts Payable Association community.



about the overall experience with the Programme, so keep an eye out for that!

To find out more about the APAQ programme please visit our website www.apa-association.com



About the author: **Jamie Radford**

You Will Also be in Very Good Company Achieving APAQ Accreditation

Organisations such as Trust Ford, NHS Wales, Tarmac, Breedon Group and Halfords. Our very first APAQ Accredited Members, LKQ Euro Car Parts Ltd.

Director Philip Spence embarked on our APA Quality Programme in order to improve the AP function within the business and has successfully done so.

There will be plenty more to come from Phil as Chris Sanders FCICM sat down to catch up with him

Jamie is the Founder and CEO of the Accounts Payable Association, the largest UK AP/P2P association representing the interests of professionals working in the industry.



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The APA offers memberships, certification programmes and events plus acts as a support group where like-minded AP/P2P professionals can obtain information on new technologies, procedures, and trends whilst obtaining critical benchmarking statistics on other organisations.

New Legislation Needed to Fight Cyber Crime

Robert Brooker is Head of Fraud & Forensics at PKF GM, Chairman of the London Fraud Forum and nationally recognised expert in Fraud prevention. Robert explains why he believes the Fraud Act of 2006 rapidly needs updating to challenge today's Cyber Crime threat.

Action Fraud saw a reported £9.6million lost by victims of cyber crime in 2020/21 and the UK economy is reported to have lost £2.5billion to fraud and cyber crime in 2021. Increasingly more activity occurs online, and this is a growing trend, so why is fraud so prevalent, and what are the Government doing about it and what can we all do to help, if anything?

Technological progress, including the move to additional online business models following the Pandemic, means that many UK businesses now work as hybrids; online and remotely. They may also have international operations supported from offshore hubs. Eventually, advances in the metaverse will have an impact on how fraudsters

perform, however it is too fresh to understand the impact of this yet.

One of the key ways that technology can mitigate these developing risks, is by humanising and encouraging how to keep personal details safe in a digital world. An absence of understanding or awareness exposes individuals to online fraud, victims often have their personal details or money taken because of online fraud and receive little assistance from law enforcement. This is often because the fraudsters are based outside of the UK, making practical and effective law enforcement action difficult.

Technology and the appreciation of online activity enables global

fraudsters to be able to access the UK public with little chance of punishment, and this is only likely to upsurge in future as technology becomes implanted as a way of life.

The obstacles to tackling global fraud are numerous, the most impacting being the complexity of cyber crime. The online fraud that we see often includes a multitude of websites and platforms connected, often based overseas, with various methods of communication used and international groups involved.

Additionally, the use of offshore bank accounts ensuring the money leaves the UK immediately the fraudsters receive it, making it difficult to

recover. The speed at which technology is developing only adds to this complexity, and fraudsters can continue with these trends quicker than law enforcement can trace them.

Consumers today are much better informed around the risks of fraud than ten years ago, but although individuals receive and recognise the big messages around fraud risks and what to look out for, it is not the first thing that they think about. Whilst awareness is greater than ever before, when pressure is applied, individuals do not recognise fraud still, until often it is too late. There continues to be a lack of consistency on where to go for advice or how to report a fraud.

introduced in 2006 as specific legislation defining Fraud and its remedies were greatly needed. It has allowed law enforcement to treat fraud as a criminal offence and the public to recognise fraud.

Unfortunately, due to the ever-changing nature of fraud, we believe the Act at 15 years old, is now outdated, because it does not reflect the issue and complexities of digital fraud or recognise the impact of the Insider Threat. Coupled with the maximum sentence only being 10 years and the

“One of the key ways that technology can mitigate these developing risks, is by humanising and encouraging how to keep personal details safe in a digital world”

Unfortunately, a long-standing perception that fraud is a victimless crime, certainly when it is committed against a business does not help. Whilst this is changing as the issue grows and more individuals are impacted, this perception leads to a less favourable experience for fraud victims, across both public and private sector, as well as within the general neighbourhood.

Fraud is not a victimless crime and the impact is severe in terms of financial loss, the cost of the investigation, replacing staff if an insider fraud, the loss of goods, the reputational damage to a business and subsequent, loss of confidence to the proprietors. All are unseen to the outside world.

The Fraud Act was an excellent and necessary requirement, when

value of fraud dramatically increasing, this seems a little inadequate for £10/20M worth of fraud.

There needs to be legislation which covers the online space and digital fraud – the Online Safety Bill will likely address some of these areas, but digital fraud will need to be defined in legislation. A legislative remedy to encourage the private sector to be more engaged with combatting fraud could be to include a Failure to Prevent section, similar to section 7 of the Bribery Act 2010.

Additionally, the newly introduced Economic Crime Bill will aim to tackle economic crime, including fraud and money laundering, by providing greater protections for consumers and businesses. David Postings, Chief Executive of industry body UK Finance, welcomed the provisions



made in the Bill to tackle fraud and scams, which he described as the “most prevalent type of crime” in the country. “This Bill should focus on measures that prevent fraud happening in the first place and provide greater enforcement powers to tackle those who commit economic crime,”

Fraud continues to breed at a rapid pace with no signs of letting up anytime soon. The fraudsters recognise the weaknesses in recognising victims. The Fraud Act at 15 years old, is now outdated, does not reflect the complexities of digital fraud, or recognise the impact of the Insider Threat. The Online Safety Bill may address some of the voids, but until such time, as legislation may act as a deterrent, fraud will continue to be the crime of choice.

About the author: **Robert Brooker**



Head of Forensics and Fraud PKF GM, Robert has worked in private and public sectors within financial crime for over 20 years. He is also Chair of the London Fraud Forum, (NFP) bringing public/private sectors together to fight fraud, bribery and corruption.



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Assurance Second Opinion!



Our Team have all worked in Global Consulting Firms and are familiar with their approach and the solutions they design in the Finance Transformation space. Combining this with our proven Finance Leadership experience across several industries makes us ideally placed to offer Assurance services to Clients.

The majority of FTSE 100 Finance Transformation programs involving Finance Shared Services, Global Business Services, Cost Reduction, Target Operating Model design and Business Process Outsourcing will be performed by a Global Firm. The programs represent such large-scale investments that they can typically involve more than one Firm.

In many instances the Client Finance teams will not have the same experience of how a Global Consulting team delivers its work. Clients can find this disempowering and that it leaves them exposed to time delay and increased cost.

Therefore, Clients like to have a second opinion.

Assurance is a cost-effective review of the Deliverables of their Finance Transformation program. They want this performed in an efficient and cost-effective manner and this is where a boutique Consultancy like **Finance Transformation UK** adds real value.

We are familiar with the approach, the standard expected of the Deliverables and the alternative Target Operating Model options available to the Client.

We provide an independent, impartial assessment of the Deliverables and the direction of travel the Client is being guided towards.

Our familiarity with the approach of a Global Firm means we can provide Assurance on the Deliverables in less than one third of the time they took to create with less resource. We are finding the need for this type of service is growing as Clients are feeling increasingly disempowered by the fast-paced growth of Technology within which they have limited expertise.

In the last 3 years Clients have asked us to review their Finance Transformation Business Case, Target Operating Model, ERP Strategy and Shared Services Strategy.

Our approach involves:

1. Deliverables Review

We will commence by reviewing the completed or draft Deliverables available. We will offer advice on the approach taken and, on the quality, and depth of the Deliverables.

2. Stakeholder Interviews

We will test the effectiveness of the approach by interviewing Key Stakeholders to gather feedback on their experience with Communication, Workshops, depth of subject matter expertise and the direction of travel.

3. CFO Challenge

Finally, we collate our findings and feedback to the CFO crucially along

“I commissioned Michael Ryan from Finance Transformation UK to review and provide independent validation of our Transformation Business Case and Roadmap. Michael’s experience and network enabled me to stress test the thinking in a safe environment by drawing on his wealth of experience along with access to other members of the Finance Transformation UK Team. This enabled quick response to more technical feature of ERP strategy and support model and collectively led to informed challenge to our plans, suggestions for improvements and advice on a range of opportunities to strengthen my approach. Ultimately this has provided myself and the wider executive team confidence in the final approach adopted. In addition their vast Network has led to many helpful contacts to support deployment and address emerging issues.”



Louise Watson
CFO, University of Greenwich

with our challenges to the proposed Target Operating Model and our proposed alternatives.

When you consider that the investment in a Finance Transformation program with ERP upgrade is a multi-million pound investment then a regular Assurance exercise is a highly cost effective means to manage Risk!

Insurance that does what *You* want it to



Typically, Finance Directors who contacted us initially told us one of three things

- They got so used to bad service in insurance, they thought it was the norm.
- Small issues are not dealt with correctly, what happens if there's a big one?
- There are too many grey areas, "I can't get the answers I need!"

“Cobine Carmelson’s knowledge is second to none. They get to the heart of the matter fast and are completely commercially focused, understanding the complicated environment we trade in. They are not just an insurance broker, ultimately they are an additional member to the team and a flawless one at that.”

Finance Director

To contact us:

Email: jason@cobinecarmelson.com
Website: www.cobinecarmelson.com

To book a curiosity call: calendly.com/jasoncobine



We don't just see location options

We see **location strategies** to help your business outperform

Where to locate operations has far-reaching business implications. From identifying and accessing the markets where the best talent is located, through to retaining and attracting talent, and on to understanding local approaches that impact lease and freehold negotiations and resultant tax implications. Not to mention resilience and risk. At Colliers we advise corporations on these issues and more. Every day. Around the world.

Typical client questions

- Which countries or cities to consider?
- Where is the talent and how to gain it?
- How to optimize our footprint?
- Should we stay or go from our current site?
- Can we get incentives?

Core competencies

- Design and implement location strategies
- Adapt operating models to local circumstances
- Balance operational excellence and cost efficiencies
- Site/building selection and due diligence
- Lease, freehold and incentives negotiation

Our reach

- Global
- Across all industries
- Across all corporate functions:
 - Head offices
 - Shared services & GBS
 - IT delivery centers
 - R&D
 - Manufacturing
 - Logistics and warehousing

Client benefits

- Robust methodologies, tailored to your needs
- 30+ years' experience
- Accuracy, analytics, real-time insights
- Accelerated decision making
- Enhanced stakeholder support
- Reduced risk
- Actionable recommendations
- Seamless end-to-end support

Elias van Herwaarden

Head of Location Strategy
elias.vanherwaarden@colliers.com

Karel Stránský

Head of Corporate Industrial Advisory
karel.stransky@colliers.com

SITE
SELECTORS
GUILD

Our Location Strategy professionals are members of the Site Selectors Guild, the global league of top site selection professionals



Accelerating success.

