Strategic Planning and Medium-Term Budget Planning for Finance Directors Course

23 August – 10 September 2027
Milan (Italy)



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Introduction:

Strategic planning and medium-term budget planning for finance directors is the discipline of turning a chosen strategy into financial targets, a three-to-five-year financial plan and budgets that fund it. This three-week course is for finance directors and heads of finance, and for financial controllers, FP&A and budget managers preparing for that role; each delegate leaves with a medium-term strategic financial plan for their organisation. It is taught at intermediate to advanced, practitioner level as an Excel modelling build with cross-sector cases, drawing on the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, a multi-year method of setting spending ceilings around strategic priorities.

Course Objectives:

- Distinguish strategic planning, the medium-term financial plan and the annual budget, and define the decisions each one settles for the organisation
- Apply strategic analysis tools and value driver trees to translate corporate strategy into financial targets and a KPI architecture
- Compare driver-based planning with line-item budgeting, and select the rolling forecast design that fits the organisation's volatility
- Apply the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework approach and capital allocation methods to set multi-year spending ceilings and rank investments
- Interpret funding, liquidity, scenario and stress-test results to judge whether a medium-term plan remains affordable under adverse conditions
- Justify a medium-term strategic financial plan before a board, with governance rules, variance reporting and planning technology to deliver it

Target Audience:

- Finance directors and heads of finance who own the planning cycle, deciding how strategy, the medium-term plan and the budget are tied together
- Financial controllers responsible for budgets, reporting and controls, judging which planning rules and approval thresholds keep spending on strategy
- FP&A and budget managers who build forecasts and models, deciding which drivers, horizons and scenarios the plan should rest on
- Budget and planning analysts preparing multi-year figures, judging how assumptions and initiative costs flow through the three financial statements
- Senior finance professionals preparing for a finance director role, deciding how to present and defend financial plans to executives and boards
- Strategy and corporate development specialists working with finance, judging which strategic initiatives the organisation can fund and when



Course Outline:

Day 1: Foundations: The Finance Director's Role Between Strategy and the Budget

- Strategic Planning vs Budgeting: Long-Term Choices Compared With Annual Resource Plans
- Finance Director Strategic Mandate: Adviser, Challenger and Steward Roles in Strategy
- Planning Horizon Map: Long-Range Plan, Medium-Term Plan and Annual Budget Linked
- Strategy-Finance Disconnect Diagnostic: Symptoms of Budgets That Ignore Strategic Priorities
- Planning Maturity Assessment: Scoring Process, Data, Ownership and Timeliness of Planning

Day 2: Strategic Analysis Tools Used to Test Strategy in Financial Terms

- PESTLE vs Porter's Five Forces: Macro Environment Scan Compared With Industry Structure
- SWOT and TOWS Matrix: Converting Strengths and Threats Into Financial Options
- Value Chain Analysis: Locating Cost and Margin Drivers Across Business Activities
- Ansoff Growth Matrix: Pricing the Financial Risk of Market and Product Moves
- Competitive Benchmarking: Peer Margins, Returns and Cost Ratios as Strategic Evidence

Day 3: Translating Strategy Into Financial Targets and Value Drivers

- Top-Down Targets vs Bottom-Up Plans: Reconciling Ambition With Operational Capacity
- Value Driver Tree: Decomposing Return on Capital Into Operational Levers
- Economic Value Added: Linking Profit Targets to the Cost of Capital Employed
- Weighted Average Cost of Capital: Setting the Hurdle Rate for Strategic Targets
- Strategic Financial Target Statement: Growth, Margin, Return and Leverage Ambitions Defined

Day 4: Strategic Objectives and KPI Architecture for Finance Leaders

- Balanced Scorecard vs OKRs: Two Approaches to Cascading Strategic Objectives Downward
- Strategy Map: Cause-and-Effect Links From Capabilities to Financial Outcomes
- KPI Hierarchy Design: Board Measures, Divisional Indicators and Operational Metrics Aligned
- KPI Definition Card: Formula, Data Source, Owner, Frequency and Target Logic
- Target-Setting Methods: Benchmarks, Stretch Targets and Trend-Based Baselines Compared

Day 5: Long-Range Planning Compared With Medium-Term Planning

- Long-Range Plan vs Medium-Term Financial Plan: Horizon, Granularity and Decision Use
- Strategic Planning Calendar: Sequencing Strategy Review, Medium-Term Plan and Budget Cycle
- Planning Assumptions Book: Macroeconomic, Market, Price and Cost Assumptions Documented
- Resource Envelope Setting: Allocating Spending Ceilings to Business Units Before Detail
- Strategic Initiative Register: Costing, Timing and Benefit Profiles of Strategic Projects



Day 6: Building the Three-to-Five-Year Medium-Term Financial Plan

- Three-Statement Financial Model: Linking Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow
- Baseline vs Strategic Overlay: Separating Business-as-Usual From New Initiative Funding
- Revenue Build Methods: Volume, Price, Mix and Market Share Projections
- Cost Behaviour Modelling: Fixed, Variable and Step Costs Over a Multi-Year Horizon
- Medium-Term Plan Excel Template: Input Sheets, Calculation Blocks and Output Reports Separated

Day 7: The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework Approach Applied to Organisations

- Medium-Term Expenditure Framework: Multi-Year Spending Ceilings Tied to Strategic Priorities
- Medium-Term Budget Framework vs Incremental Annual Budgeting: Discipline and Flexibility Compared
- Expenditure Prioritisation Matrix: Ranking Spending Proposals by Strategic Fit and Value
- Forward Estimates Mechanism: Rolling Approved Outer-Year Figures Into the Next Budget
- Fiscal Space Analysis: Identifying Room for New Spending Within Resource Ceilings

Day 8: Case Study: Mid-Course Integration of Strategy, Targets and the Medium-Term Plan

- Case Strategy Translation: Converting a Published Corporate Strategy Into Financial Targets
- Case Driver Tree Review: Testing Value Drivers Against Historical Performance Data
- Case Medium-Term Plan Critique: Challenging Assumptions in a Multi-Year Business Unit Plan
- Ambition vs Affordability: Case Decision on Funding Three Competing Strategic Initiatives
- Mid-Course Findings Log: Draft Inputs for the Medium-Term Strategic Financial Plan

Day 9: Driver-Based Planning and Rolling Forecasts

- Driver-Based Planning vs Line-Item Budgeting: Operational Drivers Replacing Account-Level Detail
- Driver Selection Criteria: Materiality, Controllability and Predictability of Business Drivers
- Rolling Forecast Design: Horizon, Frequency, Granularity and Trigger Events Defined
- Beyond Budgeting Principles: Separating Targets, Forecasts and Resource Allocation Decisions
- Excel Driver-Based Forecast Build: Linking Volume Drivers to Revenue and Cost Lines

Day 10: Capital Allocation and Investment Appraisal Within the Medium-Term Plan

- Net Present Value vs Internal Rate of Return: Ranking Conflicts and Their Resolution
- Payback, Discounted Payback and Profitability Index: Supporting Measures Under Capital Rationing
- Capital Allocation Framework: Maintenance, Growth and Strategic Investment Categories Defined
- Real Options Thinking: Valuing Flexibility to Expand, Delay or Abandon Projects
- Post-Investment Review: Comparing Approved Business Cases With Realised Returns



Day 11: Funding, Liquidity and Balance-Sheet Planning

- Debt vs Equity Funding: Cost, Control and Covenant Implications Across the Plan
- Thirteen-Week Cash Forecast vs Medium-Term Cash Plan: Purposes and Detail Compared
- Working Capital Planning: Receivable, Payable and Inventory Days as Cash Levers
- Capital Structure Targets: Leverage, Interest Cover and Credit Rating Thresholds Modelled
- Liquidity Headroom Analysis: Facilities, Covenants and Minimum Cash Buffers Over Time

Day 12: Scenario, Sensitivity and Risk-Adjusted Planning

- Sensitivity Analysis vs Scenario Analysis: Single-Variable Shifts Compared With Combined Futures
- Scenario Design Method: Base, Upside and Downside Cases With Narrative Logic
- Monte Carlo Simulation: Probability Ranges for Cash Flow and Profit Outcomes
- Reverse Stress Testing: Identifying Conditions That Would Break the Medium-Term Plan
- Risk-Adjusted Contingency: Sizing Reserves From Risk Register Exposures and Probabilities

Day 13: Budget Governance, Approval and Board Reporting

- Budget Governance Charter: Roles of Board, Audit Committee, Executives and Budget Holders
- Centralised vs Devolved Budget Authority: Delegation Limits and Approval Thresholds Compared
- Board Plan Approval Pack: Strategic Narrative, Financial Summary and Key Risks
- Budget Reallocation Rules: Virement, Contingency Release and In-Year Change Control
- Planning Compliance Review: Policy Adherence, Audit Trail and Control Testing of Budgets

Day 14: Performance Management, Planning Technology and Leading the Planning Cycle

- Variance Analysis: Price, Volume, Mix and Efficiency Variances Explained to Management
- Budget vs Forecast vs Actual: Three-Way Performance Review for Corrective Action
- Enterprise Performance Management Platforms: Consolidation, Workflow and Scenario Features Assessed
- Planning Cycle Leadership: Engaging Business Unit Heads and Resolving Resource Disputes
- Planning Process Retrospective: Cycle Lessons, Calendar Compression and Improvement Actions Captured

Day 15: Modelling Build: Presenting the Medium-Term Strategic Financial Plan

- Applying Value Driver Targets: Final Calibration of the Organisation's Financial Ambitions
- Applying Scenario Results: Base and Downside Cases Integrated Into the Plan
- Applying Funding Analysis: Financing Structure and Liquidity Headroom Tested for the Plan
- Board Presentation vs Executive Briefing: Tailoring the Plan Narrative to Each Audience
- Medium-Term Strategic Financial Plan: Final Assembly, Board-Style Presentation and Peer Challenge



Skills You Will Gain:

- Value Driver Tree Design
- KPI Architecture Design
- Three-Statement Medium-Term Modelling
- Medium-Term Expenditure Framework Design
- Rolling Forecast Design
- Capital Allocation Appraisal
- Scenario and Stress Testing
- Budget Governance Design

Why Attend This Course:

- From preparing an annual budget that rolls last year forward to building a three-to-five-year plan anchored in strategic targets
- From reporting variances after the event to running driver-based rolling forecasts that flag gaps while there is time to act
- From approving investments one by one to allocating capital across a ranked portfolio within medium-term spending ceilings
- From presenting numbers without a story to defending a medium-term strategic financial plan, tested under downside scenarios, before a board

Conclusion:

Linking corporate strategy to money means deciding, years ahead, which ambitions the organisation can afford, how they will be funded and how progress will be measured. The course makes three distinctions clear: a long-range plan against a medium-term financial plan, driver-based forecasting against line-item budgeting, and scenario analysis against simple sensitivity testing. It suits finance directors and heads of finance, and the controllers, FP&A and budget managers who support them, who already prepare budgets and now need to build and defend a multi-year plan before a board.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should delegates know before a strategic planning and medium-term budget planning course?

Delegates should already prepare or review budgets and read the three financial statements with confidence. Working knowledge of Excel formulas and basic discounting helps, since the course is taught through a modelling build that grows across the three weeks.



How does strategic planning and medium-term budget planning differ from a general budgeting course?

A general budgeting course focuses on preparing and controlling one year's figures. This course starts from corporate strategy, works across a three-to-five-year horizon and adds capital allocation, funding, scenarios and board governance at finance director level.

Why is medium-term budget planning used alongside strategic planning?

Medium-term budget planning sets multi-year spending ceilings that make strategic choices affordable and visible. Without it, annual budgets tend to fund existing activity and push strategic initiatives back, so strategy and money drift apart.

What do delegates take back to work from strategic planning and medium-term budget planning training?

Delegates take back a medium-term strategic financial plan for their own organisation, with a driver-based Excel model, scenario results, a funding view and a board-style presentation that can be adapted for their next planning cycle.

