BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Spreadsheet Skills for Planning, Forecasting & Budgeting

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Washington (USA)

UK Traininig
PARTNER



Spreadsheet Skills for Planning, Forecasting & Budgeting

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Introduction

Organizations increasingly rely on effective budgeting, financial planning, forecasting, and financial modelling to support decision-making, improve financial performance, and achieve strategic objectives. In today's dynamic business environment, finance professionals are expected to move beyond traditional budgeting practices and develop integrated financial planning approaches that support organizational growth, financial accountability, and operational efficiency.

Modern financial management requires the ability to develop comprehensive budgets, generate reliable forecasts, build dynamic financial models, analyze alternative scenarios, and evaluate financial performance using data-driven methodologies. Financial modelling, forecasting, sensitivity analysis, and scenario planning have become essential tools for supporting management decisions and improving organizational agility in changing market conditions.

This course provides participants with a practical framework for budgeting, forecasting, financial planning, financial modelling, financial analysis, and management reporting using spreadsheet tools. It focuses on building integrated financial models, applying forecasting techniques, conducting scenario and sensitivity analysis, utilizing advanced spreadsheet functions, and creating management dashboards that support informed decision-making.

By integrating budgeting, forecasting, financial modelling, financial analysis, and performance monitoring into a unified framework, participants will strengthen their ability to support planning processes, evaluate financial performance, and improve organizational decision-making.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:



- Develop comprehensive operating budgets using spreadsheet tools.
- Apply financial planning methodologies to support organizational objectives.
- Use forecasting techniques to project revenues, costs, and cash flows.
- Build dynamic financial models using assumptions, formulas, and linked worksheets.
- Develop financial models that support planning and decision-making.
- Apply scenario analysis, sensitivity analysis, and what-if analysis techniques.
- Utilize advanced spreadsheet functions and analytical tools.
- Organize and analyze financial data using Pivot Tables and reporting tools.
- Create management dashboards and financial reports.
- Analyze financial performance using key performance indicators and ratio analysis.
- Evaluate budget variances and financial results.
- Recommend corrective actions based on financial analysis findings.
- Apply financial control and budget monitoring practices.
- Integrate planning, budgeting, forecasting, and financial analysis into a unified model.
- Support management decision-making through financial analysis and predictive insights.

Course Outlines

Day 1: Budgeting, Financial Planning and Integrated Model Foundations

- The role of budgeting and financial planning in organizational performance.
- Budgeting principles and financial planning methodologies.
- Types of budgets and their applications.
- Operating budgets, capital budgets, and cash budgets.
- Budget assumptions and planning parameters.
- Structuring budgeting models using spreadsheet tools.
- Organizing and preparing financial data.
- Using spreadsheet formulas and functions for budgeting.
- Budget controls and financial accountability practices.
- Developing a comprehensive operating budget model.
- Understanding the relationship between budgeting, forecasting, and financial planning.
- Establishing financial assumptions and key planning drivers.
- Linking operational drivers with financial outputs.
- Structuring integrated planning and budgeting models.
- Aligning financial planning with organizational objectives.



Day 2: Forecasting, Financial Modelling and Scenario Analysis

- The role of forecasting in financial planning and decision-making.
- Forecasting principles and methodologies.
- Using historical data for financial forecasting.
- Revenue, expense, and cash flow forecasting techniques.
- Qualitative and quantitative forecasting approaches.
- Trend analysis and predictive financial analysis.
- Building spreadsheet-based forecasting models.
- Developing and managing forecasting assumptions.
- Comparing forecast results with actual performance.
- Supporting planning decisions through predictive analysis.
- Financial modelling principles and best practices.
- Building dynamic and flexible financial models.
- Designing linked financial models.
- Managing assumptions and key financial drivers.
- Testing and validating financial models.

Day 3: Scenario, Sensitivity and Advanced Spreadsheet Analysis

- Scenario analysis methodologies.
- Developing Best Case, Base Case, and Worst Case scenarios.
- Sensitivity analysis techniques.
- What-if analysis for decision support.
- Evaluating the impact of changing assumptions.
- Applying Goal Seek and optimization techniques where appropriate.
- Developing financial models for strategic planning and decision-making.
- Advanced spreadsheet functions for financial analysis.
- Organizing and analyzing data using Pivot Tables.
- Advanced analytical tools and techniques.
- Financial performance analysis and evaluation.
- Profitability, liquidity, efficiency, and performance indicators.
- Budget variance analysis and interpretation.
- Evaluating alternative financial outcomes.
- Supporting management decisions through scenario-based financial analysis.
- This distribution also aligns well with the assessment requirement to demonstrate forecasting methods, Best/Base/Worst scenarios, sensitivity or optimization analysis, and evidence-based responses to changing financial assumptions.



Day 4: Management Reporting, Financial Control and Integrated Performance Management

- Developing management reports.
- Creating financial dashboards for decision-makers.
- Presenting financial information effectively.
- Supporting management decisions through financial reporting.
- Measuring financial performance using key metrics.
- Evaluating financial results and recommending corrective actions.
- Budget monitoring and financial control processes.
- Financial accountability and control practices.
- Integrating budgeting, forecasting, and financial planning into a unified model.
- Building comprehensive planning and forecasting models.
- Developing integrated planning, budgeting, and forecasting applications.
- Linking financial analysis with organizational performance.
- Applying model validation and financial control techniques.
- Reviewing spreadsheet models for accuracy, reliability, and consistency.
- Building a complete financial planning and performance management framework.
- The assessment design specifically requires participants to demonstrate financial KPIs, variance analysis, dashboards, spreadsheet controls, validation, protection, model auditing, and professional management recommendations, so these subjects remain within the four training days before the final assessment.

Day 5: Final Assessment and Evaluation

- Integrated Budget & Financial Model Build.
- Forecasting, Scenario & Sensitivity Analysis.
- Financial Analysis, Data Model & Dashboard.
- Model Audit, Controls & Professional Commentary.

Why Attend This Course: Wins & Losses!

- Develop advanced budgeting and financial planning capabilities.
- Improve financial forecasting accuracy and effectiveness.
- Strengthen financial modelling skills using spreadsheet tools.
- Enhance scenario analysis and decision-support capabilities.
- Utilize advanced spreadsheet functions and analytical tools effectively.
- Improve financial reporting and dashboard development skills.
- Strengthen budget monitoring and financial control practices.
- Improve financial performance evaluation capabilities.
- Support data-driven management decision-making.
- Build integrated financial planning, budgeting, and forecasting models.
- Improve the quality and reliability of financial information.
- Enhance organizational financial performance management.



Conclusion

Budgeting, forecasting, financial planning, and financial modelling are fundamental components of effective financial management and organizational performance improvement. Organizations increasingly depend on integrated financial planning processes to support strategic decision-making, improve financial accountability, and respond effectively to changing business conditions.

This course provides participants with a structured framework for developing budgets, applying forecasting techniques, building dynamic financial models, conducting scenario and sensitivity analysis, creating management reports and dashboards, and implementing effective financial control practices. It also strengthens participants' ability to utilize advanced spreadsheet tools to support planning, performance evaluation, and management decision-making.

During the four training days, participants progressively develop the technical and analytical capabilities required to move from budgeting and financial planning foundations to forecasting, financial modelling, scenario analysis, advanced spreadsheet analytics, management reporting, and integrated financial control.

The programme also emphasizes the practical application of spreadsheet tools, enabling participants to build dynamic models, evaluate alternative financial scenarios, analyse performance indicators, monitor variances, and transform financial data into meaningful information for management.

The fifth day is dedicated to a structured competency-based assessment in which participants apply the knowledge and practical spreadsheet skills developed throughout the programme. The assessment evaluates their ability to build an integrated budget and financial model, perform forecasting and scenario analysis, develop financial analysis and management dashboards, and demonstrate appropriate model controls and professional financial judgement.

By the end of the programme, participants will be equipped to develop integrated financial planning, budgeting, forecasting, and financial analysis models that enhance financial visibility, improve decision quality, strengthen financial control, support organizational performance, and contribute to long-term business success.

