

A New Approach to Getting the Job Done

Flexible solutions to an inflexible problem

BY DAVID LEWIS

Finance Departments are being asked to do more with less, making longer, harder workdays inevitable. This has led to a decline in morale; difficulties in meeting departmental performance objectives, and rising turnover rates.

This phenomenon is partially attributable to substantial increases in regulatory compliance requirements (Sarbanes Oxley), which leave less time for value added analytical and planning work. But new external forces aren't the only reason for the squeeze. The bigger problem may rest within the finance function itself and the way finance departments are structured.

Finance departments have traditionally been organized using a rigid pyramid-shaped org chart, with each box in the org chart representing a full-time job

with a defined, unchanging set of duties. Often as employees leave, another is hired to fill the precise responsibilities of the departed employee, even if the job functions have become outdated or even pointless.

In this ever-changing work environment finance departments must find innovative ways of accomplishing tasks and implementing process improvement strategies. Departments are being asked to run leaner, automate where possible, and continue to deal with their normal day to day responsibilities. They need adaptable employees who can respond to rapidly changing demands, who have the ability to think out of the "org chart box", streamlining and automating where possible. This is a quandary as the inherent problems of the traditional org chart; inflexibility, instability and inefficiency, directly oppose this resolution.

As companies seek to resolve these

issues many are turning to innovative ways of completing work including streamlining, automating, outsourcing, and more frequently hiring "flexible" resources on a per project basis.

Flexible resources enable projects to be handled through completion, while implementing efficiencies and analyzing current tasks for process improvement opportunities. The focus shifts away from staffing a position description, which may bear little relationship to the company's longer term requirements, and shifts toward focusing on completion of the most critical and urgent day to day work. This often involves utilizing consultants who have experience "one-step above" the stated level of the position, with the idea that the project will not only be completed, but methods will be developed to accomplish this work more effectively in the future.

If CFO's can hire according to the

specific needs of a project and mundane, repetitive tasks are automated or outsourced then finance departments will have time to contribute more value added work.

The problems confronting companies and finance departments aren't going away anytime soon. Although most companies will not completely throw away the org chart, the judicious application of streamlining, automating, outsourcing and hiring flexible consulting resources will enable organizations to function more effectively in an era of accelerating change.

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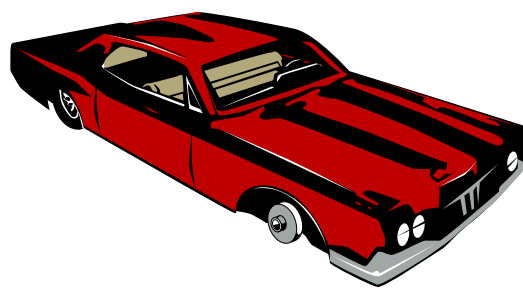


fig. 1 {your company}



fig. 2 {us}

IS YOUR COMPANY GETTING WHERE IT NEEDS TO GO? IF NOT, WE CAN HELP.

DLC is an essential part of getting your finance department in the fast lane again. DLC consultants are CPAs and MBAs with functional financial and accounting experience in Fortune 1000 companies. They're deployed to execute work in areas where shortfall in client internal expertise or time occur. We help you manage and complete the urgent, the important, and the if-only-we could. DLC focuses on executing work in the following areas:

- Financial Planning and Analysis • Financial Accounting and Reporting • Business Process Enhancement
- Financial Systems Implementation • Gap Financial Management

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