THE 2026 C-SUITE STUDY

Planning for the Unexpected

What the gap between confidence and planning reveals about companies' ability to navigate disruption

Highspring | vaco

A letter from our CEO

The pace of change confronting businesses continues to accelerate. Technology is advancing rapidly, customer expectations are shifting, investors remain disciplined, and disruption has become a persistent part of the business environment. For leaders, the challenge isn't to simply react to change. We must build organizations capable of moving forward while conditions continue to evolve.

Experience matters in that environment, but experience can also create a false sense of preparedness. What worked through the last period of disruption may not be enough for the next. Readiness requires more than confidence in an organization's ability to respond. It requires clear priorities, strong alignment across leadership, and the ability to make informed decisions as circumstances shift.

That distinction is at the center of Planning for the Unexpected: The C-Suite Study. The research reveals organizations that are highly confident in their ability to withstand disruption, but considerably less consistent in taking the steps required to prepare for it. It also highlights important differences in how CEOs, CFOs, CIOs, and other executives perceive the risks facing their businesses.

Those gaps have real implications. Effective preparation depends on leaders having a shared understanding of what creates value, what could put that value at risk, and which investments will strengthen the organization for a variety of outcomes. Finance, technology, and operations cannot develop independent strategies with siloed conversations. The decisions made across each are increasingly interconnected.

In the next era of business, uncertainty will remain a constant. The opportunity is to build organizations that are prepared to make deliberate decisions through it. The findings in this report provide a valuable perspective on where organizations stand today, where leadership teams may be less aligned than they realize, and what stronger preparation can look like as the pace of change continues to accelerate.

Brian Waller
Chief Executive Officer
Highspring

What this means for you

Disruption is becoming the norm, and leaders still have to move critical objectives forward, often doing more with less. Even as the market shifts constantly, the core work still needs to get done: modernizing technology, improving data and AI capabilities, transforming finance, reducing cost, preparing for transactions, and building the teams required to execute.

The findings in this report show why that work gets harder when confidence outpaces planning, pulling focus away from what moves the needle. Leaders may believe their business can handle anything, but that readiness rests on the people, technology, systems, and processes that hold together when conditions change. This C-suite report highlights why planning matters, so organizations can keep their highest priority objectives moving through disruption.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Highspring's view

The report

Planning for the unexpected is what keeps companies moving.

While this report includes themes around risk aversion, backup systems, and continuity planning, the findings go deeper than that. Every company in this study is trying to accomplish a goal in a landscape that's constantly changing, whether that's modernizing a platform, operationalizing AI usage, transforming their finance function, or building a high-performing team. Planning for the unexpected is what lets companies keep moving on critical objectives when markets get unpredictable. It doesn't limit growth; it helps it scale.

Three things to do in the next planning cycle.

Decide what prepared means for the whole company. Every function rated itself ready, however, when zoomed out, the scores exposed a weakness. If you ask the CEO, CFO, and CIO the same two questions, at times, the answers will differ significantly.

Put the unexpected in the next plan.

Every company plans, but they often stop short of the "what if?" If you take the downside scenarios finance already runs and ask each function, "if this happens, what do you do?" How do you action against those answers? Start with the downside scenarios finance already models. Ask each function what would change if one occurred: which commitments would be at risk, what decisions would need to be made, and which other teams would be affected? Then agree on the triggers, owners, and first actions before a disruption forces those decisions.

Build the plan, the people, and the systems together.

Planning for disruption allows companies to continue innovating when conditions change. But your impact depends on whether priorities, people, and systems can continue to move together. Whether you're modernizing your systems, completing a financial transformation, or navigating a transaction, your next plan should define who owns what when disruption hits, so the business can respond as one.

Confidence isn't a plan. Building for what's next is.

At a glance: six insights

01
Nearly every company was disrupted last year.

95% were negatively disrupted by something outside of their control: systems that couldn't scale, tariffs, supplier issues, new competitors, and critical roles they couldn't fill. Most faced more than one.

02
Leaders say every part of their business is ready for the next one.

Across ten areas of business, including operations, finance, technology, and cybersecurity, eight in 10 executives rate every function as prepared.

03
The most confident companies plan the least.

Across revenue segments, leaders are more confident they can handle disruption than their planning would suggest. At $2 billion or more in revenue, 61% are very confident they could handle a major disruption today, yet more than half say their planning rarely or never accounts for unexpected events.

04
Everyone is acting. Few are acting together.

Leaders named eight core actions in preparation for disruption, including updated continuity plans, increased cash reserves, improved scenario planning, and strengthened cybersecurity. But even the most common preparation step was taken by fewer than four in ten companies.

05
The biggest opportunity isn't technology. It's people.

Across 21 different areas including AI, data privacy, regulatory compliance, and economic uncertainty, leaders named specialized talent as their companies' top priority.

06
Where you sit changes what you see.

CFOs see twice as much risk as CEOs across every function in the business. CIOs see functions as individually ready, but the company as unprepared as a whole.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

PART ONE

The readiness gap

What **1,137** leaders told us about their companies, and the gap between confidence and planning.

Insight 01

Nearly every company faced disruption last year

Disruption from outside the company isn't the exception anymore. It's the norm.

What we mean by disruption

We defined disruption as something outside a company's control that interferes with running the business. Leaders cited systems that couldn't scale, tariffs, supplier issues, new competitors, and critical roles they couldn't fill as primary disruptions. Nearly every company faced at least one of these disruptions in the past 12 months. Most faced more than one.

The impact

95%

were disrupted by something outside their control in the past 12 months

67%

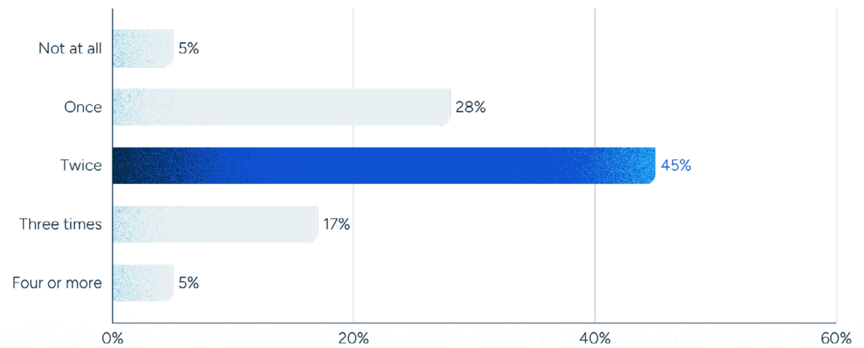
were disrupted more than once

Twice

the most common answer to how many times

The real question is how well a company is built to respond.

Number of times circumstances outside the company's control negatively disrupted operations in the past 12 months.



95% of leaders were disrupted by something outside their control in the past 12 months, and 67% were disrupted more than once.

Key takeaway

↗ **Most of what disrupted companies this year involved everyday scenarios leaders respond to: systems that couldn't scale, tariffs, new competitors, and critical roles they couldn't fill.**

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Insight 02

Leaders say every part of the business is ready

Ask leaders how ready each part of their business is, and the answer is the same everywhere you look.

10 functions, one score

We asked about ten areas across the business, including operations, finance, technology, and cybersecurity. Most leaders said every function was prepared, rating each area similarly.

The impact

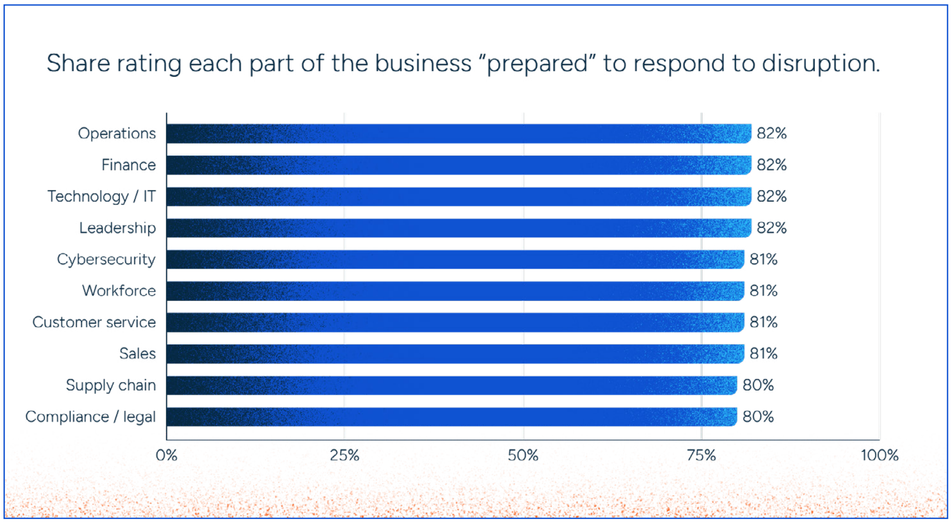
8 in 10

call each function prepared

2 points

separate the highest-rated area from the lowest

On its own, this looks like good news.



Every one of 10 functions is rated prepared by 80% to 82% of leaders.

Key takeaway

10 functions named as ready for disruption. Nobody points to a potential risk.

Insight 03

The most confident companies plan the least

The bigger the company, the readier every part of it looks, and the less it plans for what it can't see coming next.

Confidence outpaces planning at every company size

Across revenue segments, leaders are more confident they can handle disruption than their planning would suggest. The contrast is sharpest among companies with $2 billion or more in revenue: 61% are very confident they could handle a major disruption today, yet more than half say their planning rarely or never accounts for unexpected events. These companies review known risks more often than any other group, but show the clearest gap in turning that awareness into a plan the business can act on when disruptions happen.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

The impact

61%

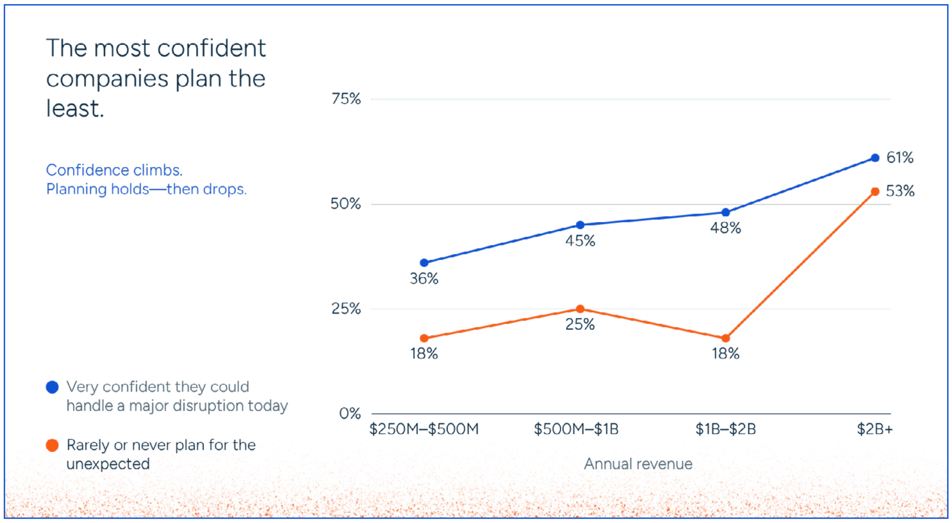
of leaders at $2B+ companies are very confident they could handle a major disruption today

53%

of the same companies rarely or never plan for the unexpected

3x

the rate at which they rarely or never plan, compared with the smallest companies



As revenue rises, the share who are very confident climbs from 36% to 61%. The share who rarely or never plan for the unexpected holds between 18% and 25%, then jumps to 53% at $2 billion and above.

Planning that can't keep pace

More than half of the largest companies said their planning rarely or never accounts for the unexpected, compared to 18% of the smallest companies responding to the same question. Confidence climbs steadily as organizations scale. Planning remains consistent, then decreases as companies begin to enter top revenue segments. But company size doesn't reflect an organization's ability to move through the unexpected: the largest companies were disrupted this year at the same rate as all other respondents.

Identifying the gap

The largest companies review their known risks more often than anyone: 37% of $2 billion-plus companies do it at least weekly, against 25% of the smallest. But reviewing the risks you've already identified can't create the same readiness as planning for the ones you haven't.

As businesses scale, confidence and planning move in opposing directions. The companies most sure they could handle a disruption plan for one the least.

Key takeaways

- **As companies grow, confidence rises and planning for the unexpected slows down.**
- **Reviewing the risks you've identified isn't the same as planning for the ones you haven't.**

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Insight 04

Everyone is acting. Few are acting together.

Companies did plenty this year to become more resilient. The question is whether it adds up.

Eight preparation actions for resilience

Across industries and segments, we asked companies a key question: What steps did you take over the last year to prepare for disruptions? Leaders named eight core actions, including updated continuity plans, increased cash reserves, improved scenario planning, and strengthened cybersecurity. But even the most common preparation step was taken by fewer than four in ten companies.

The impact

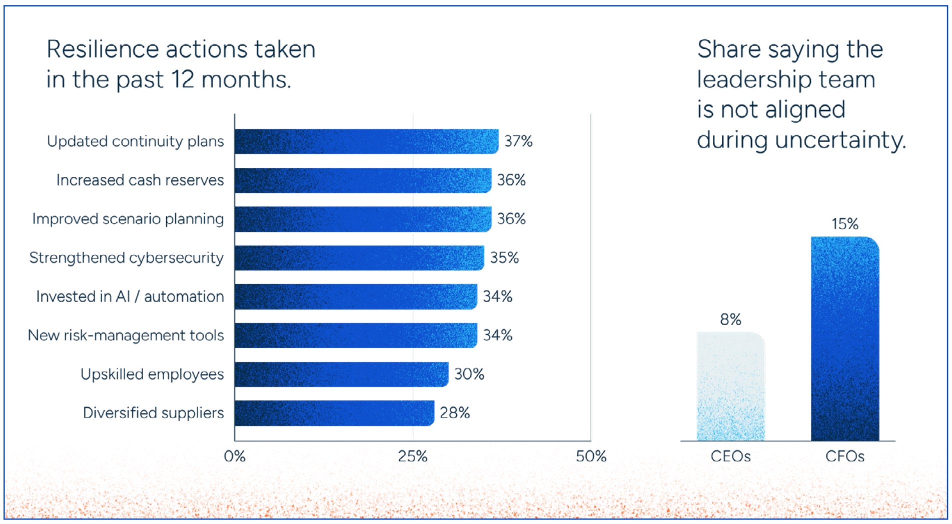
8

actions companies took to prepare this year, none named by more than a third

52%

were starting, finishing, or rewriting a strategic plan at the time of the study

Each of those eight actions can create business impact on their own. But they can only enable companies to keep moving through disruption when these actions are connected. For the next plan, establish a clear, shared direction. Connect each action to a core business objective to ensure your business can navigate the unexpected with resilience.



Eight preparation actions were each taken by 28% to 37% of companies, and CFOs are nearly twice as likely as CEOs to say the leadership team doesn't stay aligned.

Key takeaway

Every company took action to prepare for disruption. Almost none took the same action.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Insight 05

The biggest opportunity is people

In the year AI dominated every boardroom agenda, the issue leaders named most was the specialized talent shortage.

The most-named issue in the study is people

Across 21 different areas including AI, data privacy, regulatory compliance, and economic uncertainty, leaders named specialized talent as their companies' top priority. Employee engagement, retention, and workforce reskilling also ranked in the top six issues for businesses. As technology initiatives continue to scale, leaders need teams that can evolve with their platforms and objectives.

The impact

85%

of leaders ranked the specialized talent shortage and skills gap in the top 3 of 21 issues

27%

of companies with 3,000+ employees, the highest share for any issue in any group

42%

of $2B+ companies upskilled employees this year, their most common resilience action

The talent shortage and skill gap ranked in the top three challenges for 85% of leaders

The largest companies are already taking action

At $2 billion and above, upskilling employees was the most common preparation action of the year, taken by 42% of companies against 30% overall. Companies in this revenue segment are also the most likely of any group to worry about falling behind in AI adoption, and their people and technology initiatives reflect this.

In the year AI led every agenda, the issue leaders named most was people.

Key takeaway

↗ **Specialized talent tops the list of issues and ranks highest at the largest companies.**

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

The argument

Confidence isn't a plan. Building for what's next is.

We put two questions from this study side by side: how confident are leaders that their company could handle a major disruption today? And how often does their planning account for the unexpected? The distance between the two answers highlights an opportunity for companies to improve alignment, preparation, and their ability to navigate the unexpected.

When asked for one word to describe the business environment right now, leaders most often chose competitive, dynamic, volatile, challenging, and uncertain. But 9 in 10 of those same leaders are confident their company is able to navigate through the described landscape and handle a major disruption.

For a team uncovering fragmented systems during a finance transformation, a modernization effort surfacing poor data quality, or a business navigating a transaction identifying SOX readiness gaps, disruptions can prevent critical objectives from moving forward. Across the C-suite, different leaders have visibility into these function-specific risks. But when those perspectives stay separated, companies are unable to accurately measure the risks that can delay growth.

That's where the largest companies in this study sit. They're the most certain they could handle the next disruption, review their known risks the most often, but they're the least likely to plan for the risks they haven't identified.

The impact

+92%

are confident their company could respond effectively to a major unexpected disruption today

47%

say their planning accounts for unexpected circumstances often or always

45

points between the two, the gap

The gap between confidence and planning is 45 points overall, 57 points at companies with $2 billion or more in revenue, and 35 points among CFOs.

Where the gap is widest

The gap is widest at the largest companies, 57 points, and narrowest in the CFO's office, 35 points, because finance is already modelling the downside scenarios.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Why the gap exists

Companies measure readiness one function at a time. The leaders who look across functions see more exposure than the people who look at the whole from the top. CFOs see the exposure across outdated systems, budget variance, and the business overall. CIOs recognize the individual functionality of systems across the business, but are key in surfacing how technology may not connect to the greater ecosystem. When leaders aren't aligned and companies act without a shared view on key objectives and prioritization, investment is spread evenly across functions rather than being targeted.

What the number tells you

Confidence is a reasonable response for businesses that have already been able to navigate a disruption over the last year. But to keep critical objectives moving as they scale, leaders need to create a shared plan with key preparation actions. Identify the critical objectives within your finance transformation, modernization, transaction, and hiring efforts and ensure your leaders are aligned on the actions that will continue to protect value and drive growth. Every company writes its next plan within the year. But the ones that account for the unexpected can continue to scale through disruption.

Alignment and preparation create a clear path for businesses to protect value and continue scaling as conditions change.

Key takeaways

- **92% are confident. 47% plan for it. The gap is 45 points.**
- **Confidence describes what leaders think. But a plan describes what their company will do.**

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

PART TWO

Leadership perspectives

What CFOs, CIOs, and CEOs see differently, and why alignment matters.

Insight 01

Where you sit changes what you see

When you ask the CEO, CFO, and CIO of a company the same questions, you don't just get one view of the business. You get three.

The CFO sees more risk than the CEO in every part of the business

When we asked leaders how exposed each function is to disruption, CFOs saw roughly twice as much risk as CEOs across all 10 functions, with no exceptions. It's one of the clearest examples in the study that leaders see the same company differently.

The impact

2x

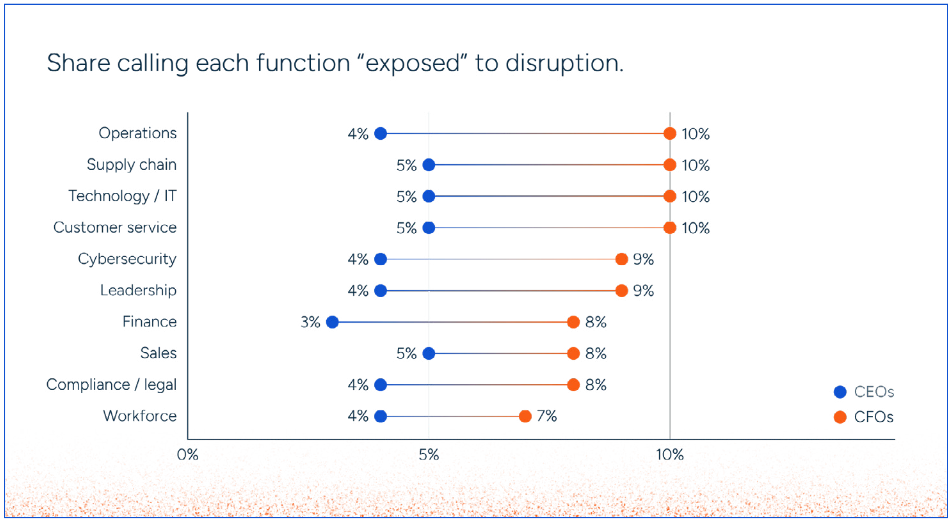
CFOs are nearly twice as likely as CEOs to call a function exposed to disruption

17% vs. 11%

CFOs vs. CIOs naming outdated technology a top issue

72% vs. 50%

CEOs vs. CIOs who review strategic risk at least monthly



CFOs call each function exposed at roughly twice the rate CEOs do across all 10 functions.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

The leaders most worried about outdated technology aren't the ones running it

CFOs name outdated technology infrastructure as their single biggest operational issue. For CIOs, it ranks near the bottom of the list. CEOs also review strategic risk more frequently than CIOs, with 72% doing so at least monthly, compared with 50% of CIOs. Together, those findings show how differently leaders assess the same business challenges.

Each seat has a different perspective on risk within the same business. The CEO believes each function is ready. The CFO identifies more exposure across the organization. The CIO views individual functions as prepared but has less confidence in the company as a whole. The real risk emerges when those perspectives aren't brought together.

Key takeaways

- **CFOs see twice the risk CEOs see in every part of the business.**
- **CFOs and CEOs rank outdated technology as a bigger operational issue than CIOs.**

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

THE CFO

Finance transformation

The first to see what's coming. The one most often asked what happens next.

As the company grows, the finance function needs to evolve with it. Whether that means modernizing close processes and controls or generating more trusted forecasts, finance does the most planning for potential disruptions. It's also the seat most often asked what happens next when plans stall.

Finance sees the most exposure

CFOs consistently identify more exposure across the business than any other seat. That perspective helps finance understand how disruption could affect the organization's priorities, investments, and plans.

Three numbers

2x

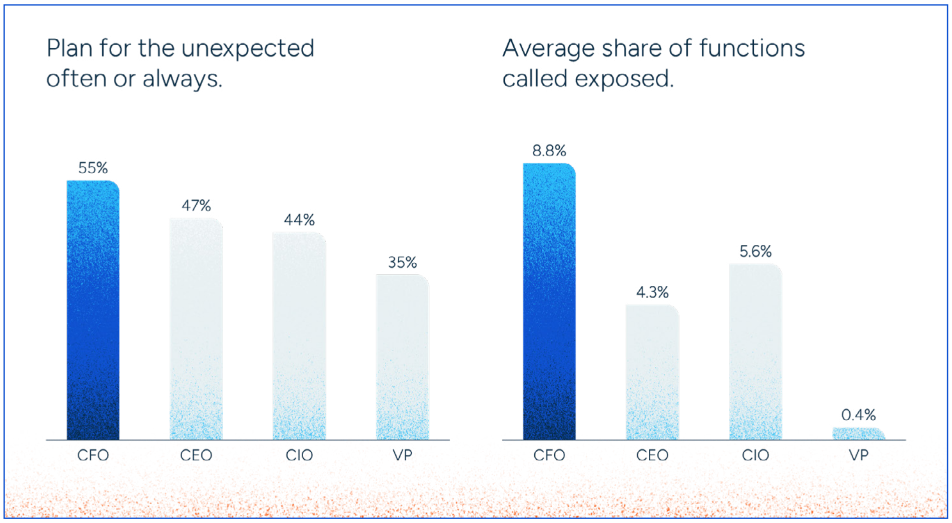
CFOs see roughly twice the exposure CEOs see, in every one of the 10 functions

55%

of CFOs say the company plans for the unexpected often or always, the most of any role

35

points, the smallest gap between confidence and planning of any seat



CFOs are the most likely role to plan for the unexpected at 55% and see the most exposure across functions of any role.

What the numbers say

Risk has increasingly become a priority of the finance function. So, when asked how exposed each part of the business is to disruption, CFOs see more across the business than any other seat.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Finance has insight the leadership team needs

Does the risk appearing in your downside scenario modelling show up to the rest of the leadership team? If not, what steps can you take to make sure that you're connecting that exposure and risk to key objectives across the organization to see around corners.

Finance plans the most

CFOs are the seat most likely to say their company plans for the unexpected, and the gap between their confidence and planning is the smallest of any seat. Finance has a unique opportunity to surface risks across the business to the leadership team.

What this means

Extend finance's scenarios to the rest of the business

Finance already runs forecasting and modeling on downside scenarios. Put them in front of each function and ask what their team would do. This turns a finance effort into the foundation of a company plan.

Compare your read with the CEO and the CIO

Ask the CEO and CIO to rate exposure across each part of the business. Then, compare their answers with yours. The gap between what each seat sees is where your plan should start.

Take the technology case to the CIO

CFOs are more likely than CIOs to name outdated technology as a top issue. Finance sees the business cost, IT sees the system dependencies. By bringing these views together, your case for business planning becomes stronger.

How it looks in practice

A company had grown for 20 years without fundamentally changing how finance operated. Capable employees were spending too much time on manual processing and reconciliation. The board wanted to accelerate AI adoption, but the finance team couldn't get past the close.

The work began by defining a finance operating model and what good should look like. From there, roles and workflows were redesigned, data was cleaned, platforms were modernized, reconciliations were automated, and low-value processing was shifted to lower-cost delivery.

The result? Close time fell by more than 40% and manual work dropped by more than 60%, freeing the team to spend more time on analysis and forecasting.

Two questions

1

NOW

Does the exposure I'm seeing in scenarios show up for the rest of my leadership team and in the company's plan?

2

THE YEAR AHEAD

When finance models a downside scenario, does every function have a plan for it—or only finance?

Key takeaway

↗ **Finance owns the scenario. The company needs to own the response.**

Finance sees the most exposure and does the most planning.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

THE CIO

Technology and data modernization

Every system works on its own, but how they connect is where the risk is

Most companies modernize their technology one system at a time, and while each piece often works in isolation, it can struggle as part of the greater architecture.

Three numbers

What the CIO sees that no one else does

When we asked CIOs how prepared each part of the business was, they gave the highest ratings of any seat. Yet those same CIOs were the least confident that the company as a whole could handle a major disruption.

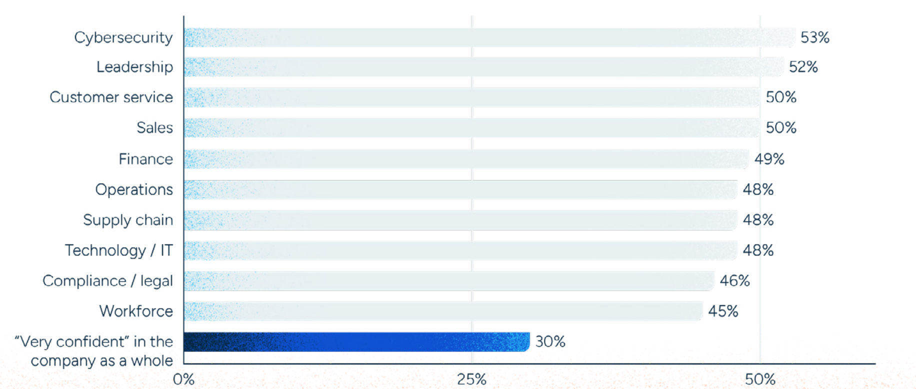
~50%

of CIOs call each function "very prepared," the highest response of any role

30%

of CIOs are very confident in the company, against 52% of CEOs

CIOs rating each function "very prepared" versus CIOs "very confident" that the company as a whole could handle a major disruption.



CIOs call every part of the business prepared but remain less confident in the company as a whole. Each function was rated "very prepared" by 45% to 53%, compared with 30% who were very confident in the organization overall.

The split

Ask CIOs how prepared each part of the business is and they give the highest response of any seat. Ask those same CIOs whether the entire company could handle a major disruption, and they're the least confident.

Why it isn't a contradiction

A foundation built across pieces looks different from the inside. Reliable reporting systems, AI initiatives, and enterprise technology transformation efforts can all move

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

forward within individual functions. Every system passes its own test, but the CIO is often the only person who can see how they operate together. That's why confidence in the parts doesn't always translate to confidence across the whole.

The table already agrees

CIOs have direct visibility into the importance of modernizing outdated systems. By bringing those perspectives together, leaders can make a stronger business case for continued innovation.

What this means

Tell them how ready the technology architecture is, not just the systems

Leadership hears that each system is functioning, because in isolation, each system is. But what they need to hear is whether they're meaningfully connected and working together.

Finance is already on your side

Since CFOs also recognize the challenge of legacy systems and outdated technology, the case for modernization is already there. Now you can begin building that case together. Highspring's Ready Layer One playbook covers the steps you can take to get there.

Ask how often strategic risk gets reviewed

CEOs report reviewing strategic risk more often than CIOs do: 7 in 10 conduct monthly reviews, compared to 5 in 10 CIOs. But the systems and infrastructure risk is the unique perspective that you can surface to other leaders.

How it looks in practice

A private-equity-backed company had outgrown its systems. Data lived in five different places, reporting wasn't trusted, and AI initiatives were out of reach. The work started with the data, not the tools. Teams mapped how information moved through the organization, identified where it broke down, cleaned it, and built a single governed environment using the company's existing technology stack.

Targeted processes ran in a fifth of the time, while manual work and duplication fell by 40%. With a stronger data foundation in place, the company could finally begin building its AI roadmap.

Two questions

1

NOW

Every system has passed its own test. But have I taken the steps to show the leadership team how confident I am in the entire technology ecosystem?

2

THE YEAR AHEAD

Am I in the room when strategic risk is reviewed? How the systems connect within the greater architecture is the risk you need to make sure the other leaders are aware of.

Key takeaways

- **Every system passes its own test. The CIO is the only one who can see how they depend on each other.**
- **CFOs and CEOs rank outdated technology as a bigger operational issue than CIOs.**
- **The systems function across the organization, but the connections are still undergoing modernization. This is an opportunity to keep your organization creating impact and innovating.**

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

THE CEO

The view from the top

The most confident seat, and the one that sets the plan.

CEOs are the most confident leaders throughout the study and review strategic risk more often than anyone. The question this study asked them is whether their plan has kept pace with their confidence.

The CEO sees every part as ready

CEOs are the most likely of the three seats to be very confident their company could handle a major disruption, with 52% reporting high confidence compared with 45% of CFOs and 30% of CIOs. They also review strategic risk more often than any other role, with 72% doing so at least monthly. Asked how exposed each function is to disruption, CEOs report the lowest levels of exposure across the business. From the top, every part looks ready.

Three numbers

52%

of CEOs are very confident the company could handle a major disruption, the highest of the three seats

72%

of CEOs review strategic risk at least monthly, against 63% of CFOs and 50% of CIOs

8% vs. **15%**

CEOs vs. CFOs who say the leadership team doesn't stay aligned in uncertain conditions

What the numbers say about the CEO

CEOs are the most confident seat, at 52% very confident against 30% of CIOs. They sit closest to exposure conversations, with 72% of CEOs saying they review strategic risk at least monthly. Yet they see the least exposure across the business, with CFOs reporting two to three times the risk CEOs do. Function by function, every part of the business looks ready from the top. But the question is whether those parts can connect when disruption hits.

Finance and IT are already on your side

The CFO sees roughly twice the exposure across every function. The CIO rates every function highest and the whole company lowest. Neither is contradicting the CEO. Each has unique visibility into a different aspect of the same challenge.

What that makes the CEO's priority

Without the insight from leaders that ensures disruptions don't knock plans off course, CEOs won't be able to set the strategic vision and direction needed to continue moving the organization forward. Make sure the leaders who see exposure differently are building that same plan, together.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

What this means

Ask for the whole-company number

Every function rated itself ready. But what the CEO needs to know is whether the company can move and respond as a whole. Ask the CFO and CIO the same two questions the study asked, then compare their answers with your own.

Ask finance to walk the whole team through its downside cases

The scenarios have already been modeled by finance. The gap is whether the rest of the business is planning for them too and understands how they can apply to their initiatives. Put the scenarios in front of every function's leader and ask how their team would adapt. This turns a plan for finance into one that you can start building for the entire business.

Put the CIO in the room

Half of CIOs aren't involved when strategic risk is reviewed. But their unique perspective on how systems connect highlights a blind spot for potential risk as an organization looks to scale.

Two questions

1

NOW

Does our plan account for the unexpected—not just the risks we've already identified?

2

THE YEAR AHEAD

Growth builds confidence, but only shared, informed perspectives can build a plan. As the company's grown, has the plan continued to grow with it?

Key takeaways

- **The CEO may be right that each business unit is ready. The plan is where all the parts need to add up.**
- **The leaders who see exposure differently need to build the same plan together.**

The CEO could be right that each function is ready. However, the plan takes shape when those functions connect to create a bigger picture.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Appendix

Five sectors. One pattern, five pressure points

These cuts sit outside the argument of the report. The pattern is the same in every sector, with high confidence and lower planning. They're here for readers who want to see their own sector and understand where the pressure points vary.

Sector	Confident	Very confident	Plan often or always	Gap (pts)	Functions called exposed	Most-named issues	n
Aerospace and Defense	93%	61%	52%	41	5–10%	Economic uncertainty (17%), regulatory compliance (16%)	225
Financial Services	96%	48%	46%	50	3–7%	AI-powered cyber threats (25%), talent shortage (22%)	227
Manufacturing	89%	37%	42%	47	1–3%	Talent shortage (21%), data privacy (21%)	238
Retail and Consumer	91%	31%	50%	41	7–10%	Employee engagement and retention (19%), interest rates (19%)	238
Technology	94%	50%	44%	50	3–6%	Workforce reskilling (21%), energy costs (20%)	177

Aerospace and defense leaders are the most likely to be very confident (61%) and the most likely to plan (52%), making their gap the narrowest. Financial services and technology have the widest gaps, at 50 points each, and the most AI-shaped pressures with cyber threats for financial services and reskilling for technology. Manufacturers are the least confident, report the least exposure of any sector, and are the most likely to say they always plan for the unexpected (20%). Retail leaders report the most exposure and the second-highest rate of planning. They're also the least likely to be very confident.

Across every sector, people issues were cited in the top two.

Sector groups range from 177 to 238 respondents. Read the table as directional: the shape is reliable, the exact values will move.

© Highspring. All Rights Reserved.

Highspring is a leading global professional services organization with three integrated service offerings—Consulting, Managed Services, and Talent Solutions.

Get to know us at highspring.com.

© Highspring. All rights reserved.