

YOUR FIRST

100

DAYS

**The New CFO &
Finance Director Checklist**

HEADSTAR 

CONNECTING GOOD FINANCE PEOPLE

Hit the Ground Running

Your First 100 Days as CFO or FD



Your first 100 days in a new CFO or Finance Director role are crucial.

How you start sets the tone for everything that follows.

That's why we've put together this practical checklist to help you take control, build credibility, and make an impact right from day one.

- ✓ **Start strong.**
- ✓ **Strengthen your team.**
- ✓ **Lead with confidence.**

1. Understand the Business



Getting to grips with the business is your first priority.

Start by learning the full story – the strategy, the financials, the people who drive the business forward and where any current challenges lie.

Review company strategy, vision, and goals.

Assess financial health – review latest financial statements and KPIs.

Understand revenue streams, cost drivers, and profitability levers.

Meet with key stakeholders (CEO, board, investors, senior leadership).

Identify current challenges and opportunities.

2. Assess the Finance Function



Before setting direction, take stock.

Review the current finance team, systems and processes to see what's working – and what isn't. Identify any future improvements required and any quick wins you can act on straight away.

Review finance team structure, capabilities, and gaps

Evaluate existing financial systems, processes, and reporting

Assess cash flow management, budgeting, and forecasting processes

Review internal controls, risk management, and compliance

Identify quick wins for process improvements

3. Key Financial Priorities



Get the essentials in order.

Start with the fundamentals - cash, reporting, debt, tax, and cost control. Get these right, and you build credibility fast.

Ensure accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting

Understand working capital position and cash flow dynamics

Review debt, funding, and capital structure

Assess tax strategy and obligations

Review cost efficiency and potential savings

4. People & Leadership



Strong teams drive strong results.

Take time to get to know the wider senior leadership team, understand their needs, set clear expectations, and establish yourself as a trusted leader.

Meet with all members of the senior leadership team

Help the leadership team understand how you and the finance team can help them to meet their objectives

Outline any collaboration required from other departments

Establish credibility and build strong internal relationships

Set clear expectations and key priorities for the team

5. Systems, Technology & Data



An effective finance function runs on good data and efficient systems.

Assess what technology is already in place and where upgrades could make a real difference.

Evaluate financial systems, ERP, and automation opportunities

Ensure data integrity and reporting accuracy

Identify areas where technology can enhance efficiency

6. Compliance & Risk Management



Get ahead of risks before they get ahead of you.

Make sure you have a clear view of legal obligations, audit issues, compliance requirements and key risks right from the start.

Understand regulatory requirements and industry-specific risks

Ensure audit readiness and review any outstanding audit issues

Assess legal obligations, contracts, and liabilities

7. Strategy & Future Planning



Finance doesn't just report the past - it should also help to shape the future.

Once you have the basics in hand, set your sights beyond the day-to-day. Align finance with business strategy that supports the company's growth ambitions.

Align financial strategy with business growth plans

Develop a roadmap for finance transformation (if needed)

Establish regular reporting cadence with the board & leadership team

8. Quick Wins & Long-Term Goals



Balance early wins with long-term vision.

Identify the improvements you can make straight away, while laying the groundwork for the bigger goals ahead.

Identify short-term improvements for immediate impact

Set key milestones for long-term strategic goals

Communicate a clear plan for the finance function

Those first three months fly by.

But with the right approach, you'll be able to establish focus, pace, and build credibility. A clear plan and well-defined priorities will put you in a strong position to lead the finance team with confidence and deliver lasting impact across the entire company.

Ready to build the right team around you?

Download our FREE comprehensive guide, ***How to Build a World-Class Finance Team*** — packed with practical advice to help you create a high-performing finance team that is fit for the future.



[!\[\]\(ab4e2b3fc7e7887b7a72f548aa6f5e60_img.jpg\) **Click here to download your free guide**](#)

Need a sounding board?

Our **CFO/FD Mentoring Programme** pairs you with an experienced CFO/FD to offer real-world advice, guidance, and tailored support. Our UK-wide network of FDs have decades of experience working in finance leadership roles in a wide range of company sizes across multiple industries. They've seen it all – so can help you navigate any challenges ahead and accelerate your success in your new role.

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