



Nearly 40% of CFOs Do Not Completely Trust Their Organization's Financial Data, According to BlackLine Survey

Year-on-year data also shows that confidence in cash flow visibility remains at a staggering low, with just 2% of C-suite and finance and accounting leaders expressing complete confidence

Errors due to manual processing of critical finance and accounting activities identified as key issue negatively impacting trust; as a result, majority automating via AI and other emerging tech

LOS ANGELES and LONDON and SYDNEY and SINGAPORE, Jan. 30, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- New research shows that nearly 40% of CFOs around the world do not completely trust the accuracy of their organization's financial data – creating challenges for strategic decision-making at a time when global business leaders are confronted with a wide range of external challenges. Confidence in cash flow visibility also remains stubbornly low, making it difficult for organizations to respond to unexpected market changes, according to a survey commissioned by digital finance transformation leader [BlackLine, Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: BL).

The survey of over 1,300 C-suite and senior finance and accounting (F&A) professionals in the US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Australia, and Singapore reveals the factors business and F&A leaders globally are worried will disrupt their organization and the broader business and economic environment. More than three-quarters (78%) of overall respondents are concerned about another global financial crisis. Respondents are also worried about the impact of cybersecurity issues (76%) and new disruptive technology (73%) on their business.

Responding to Business and Economic Disruption

When asked what would help their company respond to business disruption, CFOs said one of the most important factors would be the ability to access and analyze financial data in real time. However, 37% admitted they do not completely trust their own data. Levels of trust are even lower for those closer to the numbers, with 50% of senior finance and accounting professionals indicating they do not fully trust the financial data they are working with.

Additionally, for the second year in a row, a staggering 98% of overall respondents confirmed they do not have complete confidence in the visibility their organization has over its cash flow. This is as 37% acknowledge that understanding cash flow in real time will be critical for their company's ability to deal with unpredictable market changes.

Visibility Challenges Undermining Responsiveness

The lack of confidence in cash flow visibility is causing challenges for business responsiveness. Close to half (48%) of overall respondents say this makes it harder to respond to market fluctuations and a similar number (47%) are concerned they are making decisions based on inaccurate or out-of-date information.

Manual processes and the potential for human error are also creating challenges for organizational preparedness and decision-making. Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents stressed that the overwhelming volume of manual day-to-day work leaves little or no time for proper financial planning and analysis. At the same time, more than two-thirds (68%) state that manual work leaves their organization vulnerable to errors that could undermine business decision-making.

Owen Ryan, co-CEO of BlackLine, said: "Trusting the data organizations work with is critical for effective decision-making, not only for the Office of the CFO but for the entire business ecosystem. This is especially important when dealing with external events that are difficult to predict or hard to control. We have been monitoring trust and confidence in financial data over the last five years, and while trust levels have started to improve, the bottom line is that trust is still not nearly as strong as it should be, making it difficult for leaders to make fast, effective, data-driven decisions."

Manual Processes Limiting Trust

When asked why they did not completely trust their organization's data, almost a third (31%) of global respondents said the data comes from too many different sources, meaning they cannot be certain that all data is being accounted for. Other reasons include a reliance on clunky spreadsheets that leave F&A teams in the dark until month-end (27%) and outdated processes, including manual data collection which is prone to human errors (25%).

In acknowledging the myriad of challenges with manual work, C-suite and F&A leaders feel the modern business has to embrace new technologies like AI to streamline their financial operations, with a majority of respondents saying that cloud computing (80%), generative AI (78%), and new kinds of AI (76%) are essential for improving business resiliency in the face of future disruption.

Ryan continued: "When we look at what is undermining confidence in financial data, we repeatedly find that ineffective, manual processes are the problem. Businesses have invested in technology solutions in recent years, including emerging forms of AI, but it's clear that too many are still reliant on manual processes for a significant portion of finance and accounting work. Companies need to embrace modern, next-generation solutions that automate cumbersome processes, such as financial close, consolidation, invoice-to-cash, and intercompany, and give them complete visibility and control over their financial data. These will be indispensable assets in navigating the terrain of the future and building resilience for future success."

A detailed white paper on the survey findings can be found [here](#).

Survey Methodology/Notes for Editors

The research was conducted online by Censuswide, surveying 660 C-level and 679 F&A professionals in seven markets (US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Australia, and Singapore), with minimum annual revenues as follows:

- US: 150m USD

- Canada: 50m CAD
- UK: 50m GBP
- France: 50m EURO
- Germany: 50m EURO
- Australia: 20m AUD
- Singapore: 20m SGD

About BlackLine

Companies come to [BlackLine](#) (Nasdaq: BL) because their traditional manual accounting and finance processes are not sustainable. BlackLine's market-leading cloud platform and customer service help companies move to modern accounting by unifying their data and processes, automating repetitive work, and driving accountability through visibility. BlackLine provides solutions to manage and automate financial close and consolidation, invoice-to-cash, and intercompany accounting processes – inspiring, powering, and guiding large enterprises and midsize businesses on their digital finance transformation journeys.

More than 4,300 customers trust BlackLine to help them close faster with complete and accurate results. The company is the pioneer of the cloud financial close market and is recognized as the leader by customers at leading end-user review sites including G2 and TrustRadius. BlackLine is a global company with operations in major business centers including Los Angeles, New York, the San Francisco Bay area, London, Paris, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Sydney, and Singapore. For more information, visit blackline.com.

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