As Economic Outlooks Shift, **IT Leaders Act Decisively with New Priorities**

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Executive Overview

Your IT budget may be holding steady or tightening this year, but business expectations for technology-enabled processes and work experiences continue to grow. One area of interest for this level of transformation is the optimization of travel and expense management.

According to StrategicCFO360 and SAP research, three-quarters of surveyed CFOs cite automation of resource-intensive and manual tasks and leverage of finance and risk capabilities in the cloud as the main elements of a "modern finance platform."[1] Respondents also ranked workflow and predictive analytics as the two types of automation with the highest potential for enabling the most value-added use cases.

How can your IT team lead far-reaching and strategic digital transformation efforts that your business needs despite organizational challenges? While concerns over expenses and resource availability influence technology decisions, IT leaders should redirect the conversation toward finance process optimization.

By focusing on travel and expense management processes, you can check all the boxes of critical privacy, data protection, and application security to meet global standards without overburdening your IT staff. Integrating data sources and applications with a combination of connectors and APIs, proven partner support, and à la carte services can turn users into loyal supporters – from initial go-live and throughout the solution lifecycle.

1. "How New Technologies Are Innovating Finance," StrategicCFO360 and SAP, 2022.

Your IT organization can develop the right strategy for itself and the rest of the business by focusing on four core strategies:

- Security
- Integration
- Sustainability
- Continuous Support.

" **The lines between technology and business strategy are blurring.** Every new technology and user experience introduced by CIOs and their organization must not only enable but also accelerate the company's vision."

– Debra Moss, Partner, Acquis Consulting Group

Prioritize the Security of People, Systems, and Data

Over the past year, approximately two-thirds of CFOs say their influence in technology decisions has increased.[2]

But IT organizations still play an essential role in ensuring that digital investments meet cybersecurity requirements and fit the broader business application strategy while identifying resources to support implementation, integration, and extension. Most importantly, they are responsible for keeping people, systems, and data secure across the digital landscape.

A trusted technology partner helps you deliver peace of mind and confidence to your company with solutions and expertise that answer your security needs.

2. "How New Technologies Are Innovating Finance," StrategicCFO360 and SAP, 2022.

When it comes to investments in foundational architecture and the applications running on it, long-term support for protecting and auditing your information, applications, and business is essential – especially:

BS10012:2017: Set a best-practice framework for developing processes for collecting, handling, storing, and deleting personal data and following local privacy laws

ISO 9001: Demonstrate a quality standard for consistently providing products and services that meet customer and regulatory requirements

ISO 27001: Focus IT security management practices on addressing people, processes, and technology

ISO 22301: Implement and maintain effective business continuity plans, systems, and processes during a major incident or disaster

Payment card industry data security standard (PCI DSS): Help qualified security assessors navigate an on-site inspection and evaluation of a cardholder data environment for compliance and document proof

System and organization controls (SOC), type I and type II: Establish an audit reporting standard for documenting compliance of financial control, data availability, systems security, processing integrity, and confidentiality and privacy

Moreover, requirements of the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and PCI DSS must be aligned with the overall digital transformation strategy. Doing so helps secure application code, authentication, session management, access controls and authorization, event logging, and data validation.

IT Leaders play a distinctly supportive role in helping finance leaders steer the business through moments of high inflation. By delivering the right combination of data integration, advanced analytics, and AI, they build up front- and back-office resiliency, as well as transparency and efficiency. As a result, finance organizations and the rest of the business can standardize and automate processes, strengthen compliance with increasingly challenging financial requirements, and deliver insights to the entire enterprise when needed.

Simplify Integration to Refocus on Higher-Value Work

Traditional approaches to integration can consume a considerable amount of time, money, and resources. However, it doesn't have to be that way. Instead, integrations can happen behind the scenes of an operational IT landscape – achieved within a reasonable timeline and without disrupting business continuity.

IT leaders can deliver on that promise without overwhelming their team by leveraging technologies built to connect with finance, HR, or other business systems. For instance, prebuilt connectors can integrate with popular accounting and ERP systems, such as Intuit QuickBooks, Oracle NetSuite, Microsoft Dynamics, and SAP S/4HANA®. In addition, connectors from SAP partner iData can link those systems with Ellucian platforms, including Banner and Colleague.

IT organizations can also build real-time connectors to travel and expense solutions – such as Concur® Travel and Concur® Expense – with Web services or APIs that support TLS and OAuth authentication.
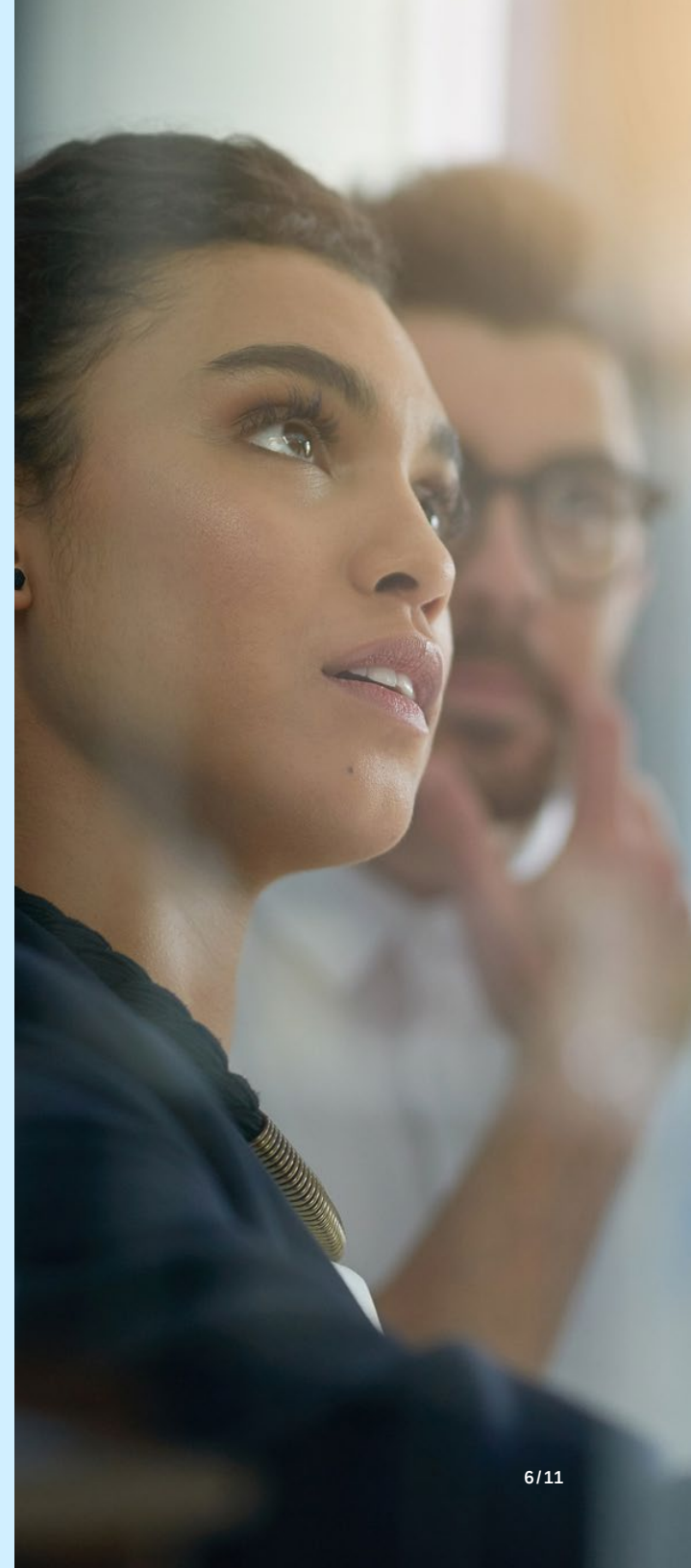
For example, they can enhance data and system security by using file-based integration with SAP Concur solutions and a combination of secure file transfer protocol (SFTP) and secure shell (SSH) key authentication. This setup helps transfer and retrieve files with sophisticated keys, passwords, and IP address filtering.

SAML-based single sign-on (SSO) can further simplify the user experience while moving from one application to another while preserving a high degree of control over user management and authentication through an identity management solution.

Simplifying integration by leveraging the strengths of other organizations that provide pre-built connectors and other integration methods allows your organization to focus on its core business and drive the highest value.

With technology and experience backed by decades of lessons learned, you can support existing processes and user experiences that work well for your business and determine new approaches and tools that can help improve it.

Spend More Responsibly with a Sustainability Mindset

Companies view spending choices through a lens of economic, environmental, and governance policies and expectations that are unique to them. Yet, driving sustainable efficiency and growth remain top goals in every procurement organization.

Consider employees' growing diligence about maintaining green practices during business travel. According to a global SAP Concur Pulse Survey, 94% of participating business travelers plan to take steps toward reducing the environmental impact of their trips.[3]

IT leaders can join this movement by using sustainability as a leading indicator for saving money and controlling expenses in a challenging and ever-evolving environment. As the guardians of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data and the applications collecting and leveraging it, IT organizations are well-positioned to balance digital resilience and ESG accountability that benefits the business and the planet.

For example, IT teams can develop capabilities that set baseline sustainability goals and integrate climate impact data in spend analytics, guiding more ESG-responsible decision-making for customers, stakeholders, employees, and senior managers. They can even weigh travel agendas against desired impacts on expenses while reducing the carbon footprint today and reaching global net-zero goals by 2050 or sooner.

3. "New Pulse Surveys Explore Financial Impact of COVID-19 Business Travel Reductions," SAP Concur, 2022.

By giving decision makers the tools to understand the relationship between organizational activities and ESG impacts, IT leaders become a critical partner in the company's commitment to worldwide sustainability.

Help Ensure Continuous Support for the Entire Business

With every business challenge solved, risk mitigated, and strategic priority delivered, IT organizations guide departments on their path to becoming resilient, agile, and valuable. This gradual progression creates strategic differentiators and underpins every expectation and goal achieved throughout the digital transformation journey.

Like the rest of the business, IT teams can also benefit from consistent support provided by knowledgeable experts and proven content and tools. For example, they can pinpoint the right expense, travel, and invoice solutions, implementation and deployment best practices, and updates that advance enterprise strategiesand IT staffing capacity.

Such a comprehensive support experience includes:

- Real-time support for mission-critical processes
- Remote quality checks and assessment services
- Wide-ranging library of self-paced and guided learnings
- On-demand access to experts who provide answers and clarifications
- Application lifecycle management tools that speed adoption and optimize solutions

By tapping into a focused menu of services and support offerings, IT leaders can scale support to cover more employees and languages, new business requirements, and modified policies with enhanced service level agreements. In return, their organization can gain the insight to quickly adapt business processes and applications to business changes and proactively attend to mission-critical issues.

Working together with your finance or travel peers, choose digital investments that fit your needs.

Build a Business That's a Model of Resiliency

No matter the economic condition, IT leaders play a crucial role in every aspect of the business.

They're enhancing corporate performance through advanced technology, driving business transformation, improving results through process automation, and ensuring sustainability with a solid green IT strategy.

While IT organizations are not the only technology decision maker in the business, they are the ones that fully understand the levers of a resilient enterprise.

Using this knowledge, your IT staff can drive relevant transformations based on four critical strategies:

• Prioritize the security of people, systems, and data

• Spend more responsibly with a sustainability mindset

• Simplify integration to refocus on higher-value work

• Help ensure continuous support for the entire business

By acting on these imperatives with rapidly evolving technologies and expert-led best practices, CIOs can influence future business growth with digital resiliency and agility.

To learn how your IT organizations help shape the future of business resiliency with SAP® Concur solutions, visit us online.

A shared commitment to customer success

ACQUIS

With SAP Concur solutions, partners worldwide bring expertise to every step of the T&E process – from pre-trip through reconciliation and reimbursement. One of our partners, Acquis Consulting Group (Acquis), was awarded the 2023 Partner Innovation Award from SAP Concur, recognizing its work in refreshing T&E software configurations and expanding the platform for future scalability and growth. Since 1998, Acquis has supported more than 225 customers across 110 countries have benefited from Acquis' expertise as one of the first certified implementation partners.

To learn more about Acquis, watch the video.

About Acquis Consulting Group

Acquis, repeatedly named one of the 'Best Small Firms to Work For' by Consulting Magazine, is a world-class management consulting firm best known for helping ambitious organizations design strategies and putting those strategies to work. Founded in 1998, Acquis designs innovative solutions leveraging strategy, implementation, and digital services for early start-ups to Fortune 500 companies. Acquis is the first certified implementation partner for SAP® Concur® and has been assisting clients with SAP Concur Expense, Travel, and Invoice implementations for 25 years.

For more information on Acquis, please visit
https://www.acquisconsulting.com/technology-solutions/sap-concur/.

About SAP Concur

SAP® Concur® is the world's leading brand for integrated travel, expense, and invoice management solutions, driven by a relentless pursuit to simplify and automate these everyday processes. The highly-rated SAP® Concur® mobile app guides employees through business trips, charges are directly populated into expense reports, and invoice approvals are automated. By integrating near real-time data and using AI to analyze transactions, businesses can see what they're spending, improve compliance, and avoid possible blind spots in the budget. SAP Concur solutions help eliminate yesterday's tedious tasks, make today's work easier, and support businesses to run at their best.

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