

The Future of Financial Automation

How professional services firms
can move toward financial
digital transformation.

Table of contents

Introduction: Automation Is A Human Goal	3
Chapter 1: The Rise of Financial Automation in Professional Services	4
Chapter 2: Embracing The Inevitable: Shifting To A More Automated Organization	6
Chapter 3: SAP Business Technology Platform: A Catalyst for Financial Automation	11
What are the next steps towards SAP BTP?	15

Automation is a human goal

Automation has always been a cornerstone of human advancement. Across the ages, the quest to simplify tasks and enhance efficiency has propelled civilizations forward. From the invention of the wheel all the way to our current hyper-digital age, the narrative remains consistent – whenever possible, automate.

Historically, automation began as simple tools and evolved into complex systems. The ancient Egyptians automated irrigation, the Greeks developed automata, and the Industrial Revolution introduced machinery that transformed manufacturing. Each automation leap significantly impacted productivity and efficiency, propelling societies forward. The assembly line invented in the early 20th century, for example, revolutionized manufacturing by massively boosting production capabilities.

Our relentless pursuit of efficiency has made life more convenient for sure, but it has also enabled our survival as a species. Similarly, the modern enterprise, driven by advanced tech and complex financial landscapes, is turning to automation for survival and growth. Financial automation, in particular, is promising to redefine how businesses manage their investments, control their costs, and widen their profit margins.

Today, in the professional services industry, automation's role has evolved from a mere facilitator to a strategic imperative. Financial automation goes beyond doing things faster; it's about a transformation in managing financial operations to thrive in an increasingly competitive landscape.

The Rise of Financial Automation in Professional Services

Traditionally marked by manual ledger keeping and labor-intensive accounting processes, the shift towards digital financial management solutions has changed how companies operate. The need for greater accuracy, speed, and efficiency in financial reporting and decision-making has driven this transformation.

Compelling real-world data underscores the transition to financial automation. According to research from Forbes magazine, around 80% of financial processes have a potential for automation.

Professional Services firms are increasingly adopting sophisticated software solutions for tasks that once required hours of manual labor. It just makes sense; embracing automation can represent significant reductions in processing times for financial transactions, enhanced accuracy in financial reporting, and considerable cost savings.

Moreover, automation has opened doors to capabilities previously unattainable. Predictive analytics, for instance, allows firms to forecast financial trends with greater precision, leading to more informed strategic decisions. Additionally, integrating AI and machine learning algorithms into financial systems has transformed data analysis from routine number-crunching exercises into dynamic systems that offer strategic insights that can be leveraged in real time.

The implications of this shift are profound. Companies that embrace financial automation are becoming more resilient to disruption and unpredictability from external factors. The reduction in human error and the enhanced ability to make data-driven decisions set a new standard in financial management.

Future Outlook

Looking ahead, the future of financial automation in professional services is poised for even more groundbreaking advancements. The next decade will likely witness a surge in innovative technologies and approaches that further redefine financial management.

An [Oxford Economics](#) survey found that 73% of finance leaders agreed that automation improved efficiency and gave executive staff more bandwidth to focus on higher-value strategic tasks. However, nearly 90% of the CEOs surveyed said they needed a more agile approach to analyzing financial and performance data. This sets the stage for a race to automation for firms of all sizes as they strive to keep up with their competitors who are already on track.

What can we expect over the next ten years?

- The future of financial automation will be marked by an even **deeper integration of AI and machine learning**, moving beyond basic data processing to more complex and nuanced financial decision-making.
- The trend towards **customization** will likely see a rise in financial automation solutions tailored to the unique needs and nuances of different professional services firms, offering a more personalized and practical approach to financial management.
- **Blockchain technology** is anticipated to significantly enhance financial transparency and security, especially in transactions and record-keeping.
- The expansion of **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)** will likely extend to more sophisticated financial tasks, further reducing the need for manual intervention and allowing finance professionals to focus on strategic aspects of their roles.

Financial automation will likely be deeply integrated into the strategic fabric of professional services firms over the next decade. This will drive efficiency and innovation to unprecedented levels, making automation a business imperative to any company that expects to have a competitive edge.

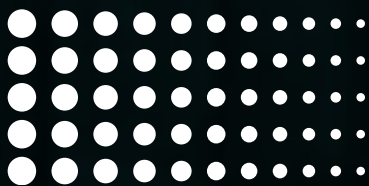
Let's see how professional services firms can make their shift towards financial automation simpler and more straightforward.

Embracing the Inevitable:

Shifting to a more automated organization

The march towards financial automation is best thought of as an inevitability. This shift isn't driven by a preference for nice-to-have solutions but rather by the relentless pace of technological advancement and the increasing complexity of financial operations.

The competitive edge in today's market is defined by a firm's ability to harness technology for efficiency and strategic insight. As competitors and clients alike become more tech-savvy, firms that cling to outdated financial systems risk falling behind. The pressure to keep pace with market expectations drives the inevitability of adopting financial automation.



The Consequences of Delaying Transformation

Hesitating to adopt automation can lead to a cascade of operational and strategic setbacks, impacting a firm's market position and growth potential. They may struggle with inefficiencies and errors prone to manual processes, leading to higher operational costs and reduced profitability. Additionally, they risk losing clients to more technologically advanced competitors and may find it challenging to comply with evolving regulatory requirements.

Among the many risks of waiting until it is too late, professional services companies expose themselves to:



- **Loss of Competitive Edge:** Lagging in adopting automation can result in being outperformed by more technologically agile competitors.
- **Operational Inefficiencies:** Continued reliance on manual processes can lead to higher operating costs and inefficiencies.
- **Compliance Risks:** Failing to keep up with changing regulatory requirements due to outdated systems.
- **Decreased Client Satisfaction:** Inability to provide the efficient, accurate services that clients increasingly expect.
- **Reduced Decision-Making Capability:** Slower and less accurate financial reporting hinders effective decision-making.
- **Employee Dissatisfaction:** High-performing employees may seek more innovative work environments.

Adoption Challenges and Strategies to Face Them

So, you've decided that adopting financial automation is a strategic imperative for your company.

While holding off from the transition can bring a wealth of issues, the adoption process involves navigating through a series of challenges that can impact the success of your transformation efforts.



Cultural Resistance to Change

Adopting new technologies can be met with resistance, stemming from a reluctance to alter established workflows and a fear of the unknown. In professional services, where traditional methods are often deeply ingrained, this resistance can hinder the adoption of innovative solutions.

- **Strategic action to take:** Implementing comprehensive change management initiatives and learning programs can demonstrate automation's tangible benefits, helping shift the organizational culture towards embracing technological advancements.

Integration with Existing Systems

Professional services firms often have legacy systems in place. Integrating new automation technologies with these existing systems can be complex, potentially disrupting ongoing operations.

- **Strategic action to take:** A phased approach to integration, focusing on interoperability and compatibility, can smooth the transition, ensuring minimal disruption and continuity of operations.

Data Security and Privacy Concerns

With the increased reliance on digital solutions, safeguarding sensitive financial data becomes paramount. Professional services firms face the dual challenge of protecting client information and complying with stringent data protection regulations.

- **Strategic action to take:** Prioritizing automation solutions with robust security features and ensuring compliance with data protection laws can mitigate these risks, safeguarding both client trust and regulatory compliance.

Cost of Implementation

The initial investment in financial automation technologies can be significant. Firms must balance the cost of implementation against the expected benefits, ensuring a positive return on investment.

- **Strategic action to take:** Conducting a thorough cost-benefit analysis and exploring scalable solutions can help firms make informed decisions, aligning their investment with expected long-term gains.

Skills Gap

Introducing advanced automation technologies often requires skills that current employees may not possess. This gap can impede the effective utilization of new systems.

- **Strategic action to take:** Investing in training programs and considering hiring or partnering with experts in automation technologies can address this gap, empowering staff with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Ensuring Data Quality

The effectiveness of automated systems heavily relies on the quality of the underlying data. Inaccurate or incomplete data can lead to flawed insights and decisions.

- **Strategic action to take:** Implementing data governance policies and utilizing tools for data validation and cleansing can ensure the integrity and reliability of the data used in automated systems.





With the certainty of transformation on the horizon, professional services firms must have a rational strategy for implementing and adopting the technologies necessary to enable financial automation.

Let's explore what we at Syntara consider a game-changing solution for this.

SAP Business Technology Platform:

A Catalyst for Financial Automation



SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) is a pivotal innovation that seamlessly blends advanced data management, analytics, and application development tools into one cohesive environment. It enables companies to streamline and enhance financial operations with a highly customizable and scalable solution.

What is SAP BTP?



SAP BTP is a versatile platform that provides a unified, comprehensive suite of services and tools designed to streamline business operations and drive digital transformation. It combines database and data management, analytics, application development, and integration capabilities in a single platform, enabling businesses to build and extend innovative applications with agility.



The reason it stands out is its capability to tailor financial automation solutions to the unique requirements of each firm, ensuring that the transition to automated processes is both smooth and aligned with the firm's specific business objectives. This allows for a transformation journey that is less disruptive and with a faster adoption rate than other solutions.

What financial automation features does SAP BTP enable?

SAP BTP empowers organizations to achieve a higher level of financial automation, agility, compliance, and strategic insight in their financial operations through features including:

- **Data Management and Analytics:** Tools for handling large volumes of financial data and deriving actionable insights.
- **Advanced AI and Machine Learning Capabilities:** Enhancing predictive analytics and decision-making processes.
- **Robust Integration Framework:** Seamless integration with various financial applications and systems.
- **Blockchain Services:** For secure and transparent financial transactions.
- **Application Development and Extension Tools:** Allowing for the creation of customized financial applications.
- **Process Automation and Workflow Management:** Streamlining financial processes such as invoicing and expense management.
- **Security and Compliance Tools:** Ensuring data protection and adherence to financial regulations.





What are the main applications of SAP BTP in financial management?

- **Real-Time Financial Reporting and Analysis:** Enabling dynamic financial reporting and deeper financial analysis.
- **Automated Financial Processes:** Automated invoicing, payroll processing, and budget management, among others.
- **Risk Management and Compliance Tracking:** Providing tools for risk analysis and ensuring regulatory compliance.
- **Expense Management and Auditing:** Streamlining expense tracking and auditing processes.
- **Cash Flow and Liquidity Management:** Tools for monitoring and managing cash flow and liquidity positions.
- **Revenue and Profitability Analysis:** Offering insights into revenue streams and profitability metrics.



How does SAP BTP cater to the financial needs of ProfServ companies?

SAP BTP is particularly well-suited to address the financial needs of professional services firms with its flexible and comprehensive toolset. With SAP BTP, finance leaders can empower:

- **Client Billing and Revenue Management:** Efficient management of client accounts and revenue streams.
- **Project Cost Tracking and Profitability Analysis:** Detailed tracking of project costs and project profitability analysis.
- **Resource Allocation and Utilization:** Tools for managing resources and optimizing utilization rates.
- **Contract Management and Compliance:** Managing client contracts and ensuring compliance with industry-specific regulations.
- **Financial Forecasting and Scenario Planning:** Advanced financial forecasting and strategic planning tools based on project pipelines.
- **Automated Invoice Processing and Accounts Receivable:** Streamlining invoice creation and tracking of accounts receivable.

What are the next steps towards SAP BTP?

You are likely considering your next move toward financial automation. Before making a decision, it's crucial to reflect on how SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) fits into the broader strategy for achieving future-ready financial management.

Strategic Alignment

Integrating SAP BTP should be seen as part of a strategic alignment towards more agile, efficient, and data-driven financial operations. It's not merely about adopting a new technology but about embracing a transformational approach that aligns with long-term business goals.

Innovative Edge

SAP BTP offers a platform for innovation, allowing companies to stay ahead of technological trends and competitive pressures. It provides tools and capabilities to adapt to changing market demands, positioning firms to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Tips and Pointers

- Start with a clear vision of your financial management goals and how SAP BTP can support them.
- Engage stakeholders across your organization to ensure alignment and buy-in.
- Leverage SAP BTP's flexibility to customize solutions that meet your specific needs.

GROW with SAP: Simplifying the Adoption Process for Small and Medium- Sized Companies

For growing companies, implementing a solution like SAP BTP can seem a bit intimidating. Fortunately, SAP understands this hesitance and has designed a rapid-adoption package for SAP BTP that simplifies the process for small and medium firms.



GROW with SAP is a comprehensive solution designed to make it easier for growing enterprises to adopt SAP BTP. It provides a streamlined, accessible path to leveraging SAP's powerful technology stack. GROW delivers:

- **Scalability:** Tailored to grow with your business, fitting the needs of SMEs at different stages of their growth journey.
- **User-Friendly Design:** Engineered for ease of use, making the transition smoother for companies new to advanced ERP systems.
- **Comprehensive Support:** Offers a range of support services, from implementation to ongoing maintenance.
- **Accessibility:** It breaks down the complexity of ERP systems, making advanced technology accessible to smaller companies without the need for extensive IT resources.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** GROW with SAP provides a cost-effective entry point, allowing SMEs to adopt cutting-edge technology without prohibitive upfront costs.

How do you get started with GROW with SAP?

Implementing any enterprise solution is a big step and a comprehensive plan to take it on should be put in place. While every company is different and has different needs and ways of working, this is a basic step-by-step of what your implementation journey could look like:

1. Assessment: Begin by assessing your current financial processes and identifying areas where SAP BTP can bring the most value.

2. Planning: Develop a roadmap for implementation, considering factors such as scale, timeline, and resource allocation.

3. Engagement with SAP Partners: Collaborate with SAP-certified partners who can provide expertise and guidance tailored to your business needs.

4. Training and Skill Development: Use the training and educational resources provided by SAP to equip your team with the necessary skills and knowledge.

5. Implementation and Customization: Start with core functionalities and gradually expand, customizing the solution to fit your specific business processes.

6. Review and Adaptation: Continuously review the system's performance and adapt as needed to ensure it aligns with your evolving business objectives.

By following these steps and leveraging the capabilities of GROW with SAP, small and medium-sized companies can embark on a transformative journey towards advanced, efficient, and future-ready financial management.

All of this is achievable with the right partner by your side. We can be that partner!

ABOUT SYNTARA

Syntara Consulting is an SAP Partner specializing in SAP S/4HANA Cloud, public edition and SAP Business Technology Platform. As an All-Cloud SAP focused professional services provider, we pride ourselves in assisting companies in their digital transformation journeys with SAP technology throughout the ERP implementation and beyond.

Syntara combines the power of SAP technology with the mindset of smart talent to optimize processes continuously for our clients.

Whatever we do is outcome-based and consultative. Our goal is to be a long-term partner for companies looking for guidance in digitally transforming their operations and business models.



POWERED BY CXGLOBALS

