Finance Function Priorities Worksheet

Set aside 15 minutes and consider the last three months. Leave choices blank if unsure or a question does not apply. Optional notes can explain why or what to confirm. A blank answer is not automatically a gap. This private worksheet has no score and is not a professional assessment. Identify two priorities to discuss.

Can you trust the monthly numbers?

1. For each of the last three months, did management receive final monthly financial statements by a predictable date?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

2. Before reports went out, were bank, credit-card, debt, payroll, and other material balance-sheet accounts reconciled?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

3. Can someone explain the largest changes in revenue, margin, expenses, and cash without rebuilding the answer in another spreadsheet?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

4. Are unresolved accounting items listed with an owner and a date, rather than carried into the next month without a clear plan?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

Is the work clearly owned and reviewed?

5. Does every critical accounting task have a named preparer, reviewer, deadline, and backup?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

6. Is one person accountable for deciding when the month is closed and the reports are ready for management?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

Finance Function Priorities Worksheet - continued

Is the work clearly owned and reviewed? - continued

7. Does someone other than the person doing the work review new vendors, payments, bank access, and significant accounting changes?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

8. Do the accounting and tax advisers hear about major purchases, financing, ownership changes, and unusual transactions before the decision or deadline?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

Can the business see what is coming?

9. Is there a current cash forecast covering the next major decision, financing need, or period when cash may be tight?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

10. Before committing to a major hire, purchase, location, financing, or distribution, can management see the cash effect and a less favorable case?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

11. Are forecast assumptions written down and owned by the people closest to sales, costs, collections, staffing, and inventory?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

12. When actual results differ from the plan, does management update the forecast and decide what action, if any, should follow?

☐ Yes, consistently ☐ Sometimes or partly ☐ No or not now

Optional note or person to ask:

Turn the worksheet into two priorities

Do not add points. Choose two gaps that recur, affect an important decision or deadline, or create the greatest risk of surprise. A useful priority is specific enough for someone to own the next step.

Priority 1

What is happening:

Decision, deadline, or risk affected:

Who owns the next step:

What can be done in the next 30 days:

Priority 2

What is happening:

Decision, deadline, or risk affected:

Who owns the next step:

What can be done in the next 30 days:

What do the gaps point to?

- Recurring gaps in questions 1-4: discuss the close, reconciliations, and reporting through Outsourced Accounting & Controller Services.
- Ownership or review gaps in questions 5-7: discuss responsibilities and whether Controller oversight would help.
- Coordination gaps in question 8: discuss how accounting and business-tax advisers stay informed about upcoming decisions.
- Questions 9-12: discuss targeted CFO Advisory only if a specific cash need or planning decision calls for it and the accounting is dependable.
- Several connected gaps with unclear causes or priorities: consider an Accounting Operations Assessment before choosing the service mix.

The pattern is a discussion prompt, not an automatic recommendation. Keep the worksheet private and bring the two priorities to the conversation.

Want an outside perspective? Bring your two priorities to an introductory conversation. Discuss your accounting setup at johnwhalloran.com/contact/ or call (631) 677-1344.