

# Interim VP of Finance Elevates Fledgling FP&A Capability and Promotes Internal Partnerships at Critical Juncture for PE Portfolio Company

Injected much-needed visibility and predictability into a technology company's nascent FP&A structure and established two-way communication to align functional areas to the finance office.

## Our Challenge

A technology company in its second PE run was still in the midst of a major initiative to fully transform itself from offering on-prem software to providing SaaS solutions to compliance-focused professional firms. Its Excel-based FP&A function lagged far behind the overall business transformation. This was significantly slowing down the company's forecasting and planning capabilities.

Additionally, most of the C-suite had only been with the company a short time, a new CFO had been hired to join them but couldn't start immediately, and the three-member FP&A team had been gutted by a hot job market. The PE sponsor sought an FP&A expert with SaaS experience to bridge this interim period by maintaining core reporting, refining financial models and processes, leading the annual planning initiative, and projecting calm in a time of massive change.

## Our Solution

Focus Search Partners' candidate had over 20 years of finance experience in public and private technology companies. This included a long history of helping traditional on-prem firms establish the FP&A infrastructure needed to transition into SaaS entities poised for growth.

Although not onboarded yet, the newly hired CFO participated in the interview process for this engagement to ensure the chosen consultant could position the finance staff for short- and long-term success. His confidence in our finance veteran centered on her deep understanding of the key reporting metrics, operational levers, and FP&A best practices that SaaS businesses need to harness in order to effectively scale within a short timeframe.

## OUR OUTCOME

Our Interim VP of Finance immediately analyzed the finance team's existing Excel-based reporting and forecasting models to understand their inputs and to assess the effectiveness of their outputs. She discovered that their processes didn't prioritize the key insights and metrics the executive team and the PE sponsor needed to make informed business decisions and appropriately plan for the future. Moreover, the existing reporting packages provided little to no analysis of trends and issues or offered insight on how to mitigate them. To address these deficiencies, she focused on these proven practices:

- Established strong relationships with functional business leaders to improve collaboration and support with finance
- Conducted recurring meetings with leaders to discuss priorities/key metrics and provide budget/financial guidance
- Led the efforts to prioritize open headcount and align it with operational and financial objectives
- Effectively led simple, streamlined FY23 annual planning process so all leaders understood process/desired outcomes
- Addressed the cost/benefit imbalance of major software and cloud expenses, spurring more accountability and advantageous negotiations
- Simplified reporting models: Prioritized value-added inputs and eliminated redundant or low-value processes/outputs
- Provided deeper analyses in key metrics, such as customer churn and renewals, for better insight and forecasting
- Helped interview, hire, and mentor key finance team members, and elevated the FP&A team's overall acumen

## KEY RESULTS

 **100%**

finance-team-to-business-leader alignment

 **50%**

approximate reduction in open headcount

 **15-20%**

potential savings via cloud vendor re-negotiations