

Reduce planning effort by up to 75%



Optimized financial planning in 4 steps

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Introduction

How to stop the Excel cycle

The planning and budgeting phase is becoming more complex in many companies every year. New requirements arising from dynamic economic developments constantly clash with solutions and processes that have evolved over time. This has serious consequences for controlling:

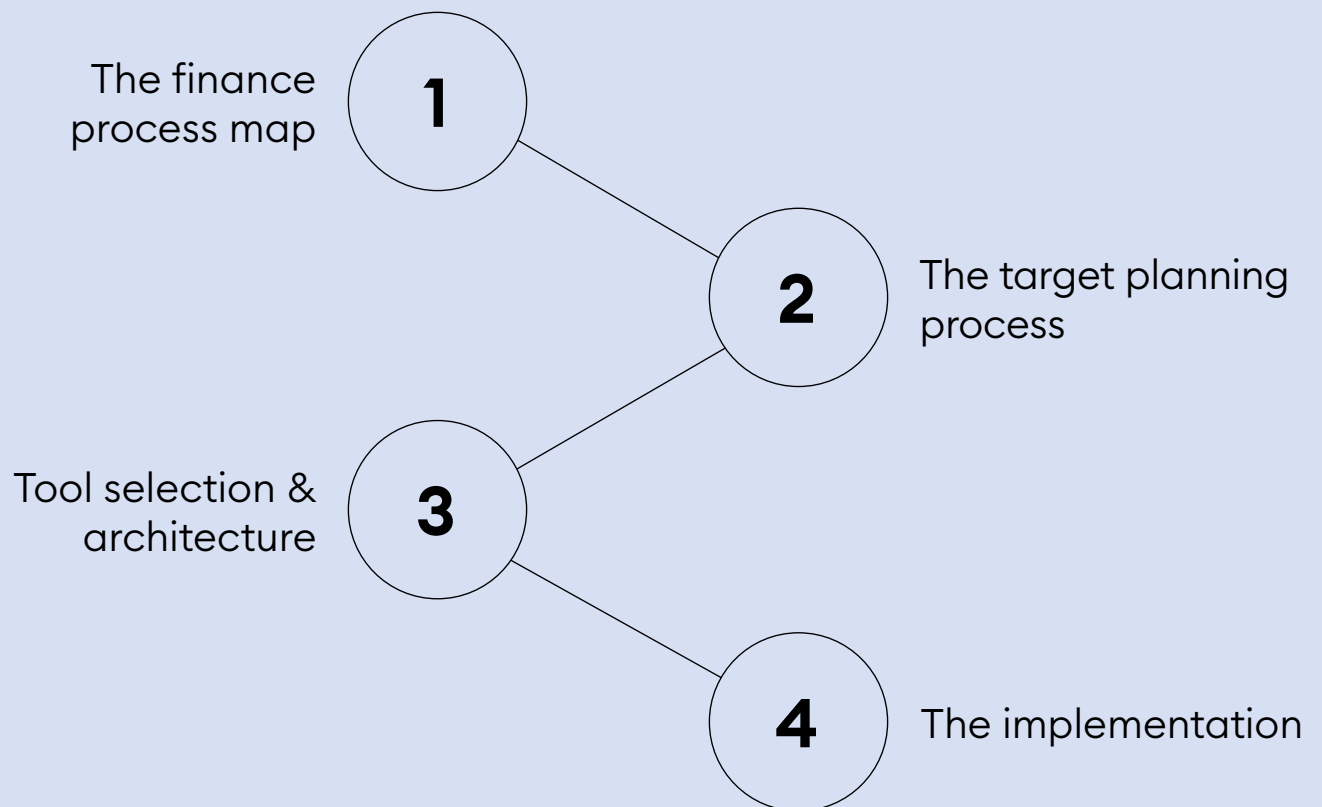
- **High complexity:** Solutions and processes that have evolved over time are no longer up to date and, due to a lack of flexibility, cost a lot of time and coordination.
- **Manual data preparation:** Data is collected from different sources and is not automatically validated.
- **Enormous resource expenditure:** Many people from different departments are involved and cannot concentrate on their core tasks.
- **High error rate:** The extensive need for manual adjustments leads to errors and inconsistencies.
- **Lack of traceability:** Different versions of plans make it difficult to trace and trust the data.

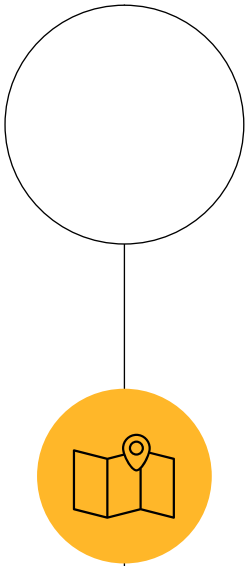
The role of controlling is also evolving. In order to adapt the corporate strategy to the changed parameters, the financial implications must also be precisely understood and accurately assessed. Interdepartmental cooperation and **agile planning and forecasting processes** are becoming increasingly important. For the upcoming planning cycle, modernizing existing solutions is therefore at the top of the agenda for many CFOs.

Where to start with modernization?

There is little debate that planning needs to be optimized. But what is the most sensible way to integrate and automate my processes? How can I stop the Excel cycle, where files are sent back and forth dozens of times? For many companies, choosing the right tools is the next logical step. **But be careful:** don't get lost in "features and functions." Innovative AI or planning functions alone do not solve problems. They only unfold their full potential when embedded in efficient processes. We therefore recommend first defining a clear target planning process – and doing so as independently of tools as possible.

Optimized financial planning in 4 steps



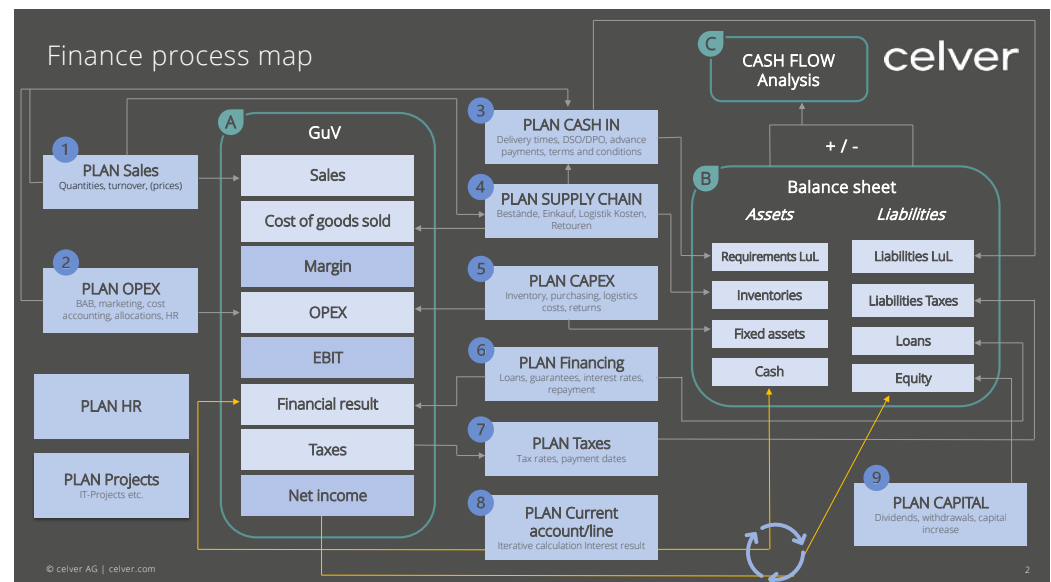


Step 1: The finance process map

The best way to outline your planning process is with a “process map.” By **visualizing** and graphically recording all the main process steps with their current maturity level and noting current challenges, necessary key figures, data sources, workflows, and sub-processes, dependencies, weaknesses, and potential for digital optimization quickly become apparent.

To do this, first identify all relevant stakeholders and involve them in the process at an early stage. Then hold workshops with the main people responsible for the various core processes in your planning. Make sure you don’t go into too much detail at this stage and lose sight of the **overall picture** of the process map. It is important that you lay down the guidelines for the project in this step and do not define the project itself. The aim is to define the framework and objectives of the project, not to define specific solutions or the final design.

You can use the MoSCoW method (Must have, Should have, Could have, Won’t have) to **prioritize** the following phases at this stage. By focusing on the essentials, you ensure the success of the process map creation. The result of this step already provides initial indications of which software solution might be suitable and in which direction the implementation costs are likely to go.



Joint review of the planning process



Step 2: The target planning process

Think carefully about what you want to achieve with the new planning process. Then model the future **target planning process**. Always involve the relevant business users in this process. The sub-processes are then examined together in a proactive workshop. The workshop results should be adequately documented afterwards and prepared in visually appealing software such as Visio. This quickly reveals which sub-processes can remain unchanged and what needs to be changed.

It is important to **go through the processes several times**, as further information may come to light during the various workshops that could not be taken into account at the beginning. These new findings are then incorporated. In addition, the results are gradually coordinated with top management to ensure that the strategic direction is in line with the planning process.

The target process also **clearly shows** where the process has been significantly improved and where there is still room for improvement. The advantages of the newly introduced planning process thus become transparent.

Benefits of process modeling:

- Quick overview of the planning process
- Cross-departmental coordination and harmonization of requirements
- Clearly defined responsibilities
- Preliminary review of data model and availability
- Identification of benefits and costs for the project team
- Derivation of a meaningful pilot phase is possible
- Derivation of a risk analysis for the project

Step 3: Tool selection & architecture

Only now does it make sense to look at the common software solutions on the market. The clear target vision for the target planning process simplifies the evaluation of the different approaches and functions of the tools and makes the selection according to the **requirements profile** much more effective.

Depending on the individual planning process and the requirements recorded, different tools may make sense – for example, Board, SAP Analytics Cloud, Anaplan, or K4.

Have various tools demonstrated to you and analyze the extent to which they cover your individual use cases. There are professional consultancies that can support you in this process with their technical planning expertise and many years of implementation experience. In addition, you should define the current architecture holistically and align it with the **IT strategy**. This will allow you to estimate the implementation and licensing costs very accurately. Additional tip: Start thinking about change management for the future project at this stage at the latest, because the next phase is when things really get down to business.



Step 4: Implementation

The guidelines have been established. The target process has been defined. The tool selection and architecture definition have been completed. Now plan the final costs and resources for implementation (both internal and external) and validate a **business case** based on the available information to show why the project with the new software and the new process is worthwhile.

We recommend that you measure the efficiency gains (planning effort in terms of time and resources, increase in data acceptance and data quality) so that you can benefit from the significant advantages in your next planning phase.

The effects of a good new target process

With a suitable software solution tailored to the new process, you can successfully take your planning to the next level. This takes into account both the requirements of the business users and technical aspects (from application design to data management). This creates a win-win situation for all areas of the company. In our numerous planning projects, we have achieved the following results with this method:

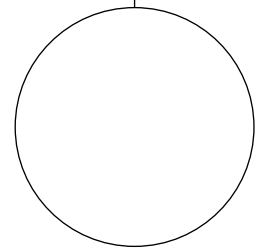
- Up to **95%** less manual data preparation through automation
- Reduction in data entry of up to **75%**
- Reduction of the planning period from 10+ weeks to less than **2 weeks**
- Ability to perform **agile simulation** through driver-based planning

Start determining your maturity level now

We would be happy to support you in modernizing your planning processes with our expertise gained from over 20 years of experience. Experienced consultants will help you discover alternatives, set limits, and develop realistic goals.

We recommend the following approach with our proven workshop structure for **FP&A assessment**:

- **Organizational maturity analysis:** Together, we analyze the development status of your financial processes and planning systems and provide you with insights into best practices from our projects.
- **Roadmap for your future – the process map:** We examine your current planning process and work with you to develop a target vision for your modernized planning processes.
- **Customized software solutions:** Our experts will introduce you to the latest software tools that best suit your requirements and show you the advantages and disadvantages of the solutions available.
- **Effective project marketing basis:** You will receive the final presentation with a shared target vision, including a review of all the advantages of a new process. This enables you to initiate the next steps for project planning and secure management buy-in.



Contact us to make your financial planning more effective next year. Because: After planning is before planning!

ABOUT

For over 20 years, we have been implementing complex planning and analysis solutions based on smart data architectures for renowned customers in a wide range of industries. These solutions are based on innovative concepts and technologies that have evolved from classic on-premises solutions to agile cloud environments incorporating artificial intelligence.

However, our goal remains the same: to work together to build tailor-made solutions that form the basis for data-driven decisions. Our team of experienced, certified experts provides support ranging from technical consulting and process definition to complete implementation and integration into the system landscape, as well as training, rollout, and change management.

As a technology-independent consulting company, we are a member of the UNITY Innovation Alliance.

KEY FACTS

- Over 20 years of experience
- >100 consultants and >100 active clients
- Long-standing client relationships
- Technology-independent
- Industry expertise: retail & consumer goods, fashion & retail, industry & logistics, chemicals & pharmaceuticals
- Member of the UNITY Innovation Alliance

FOCUS

- Target process modeling
- Financial planning
- Profit and loss statement
- Liquidity management
- Management reporting
- Personnel planning & analysis
- ESG reporting

CLIENTS

Diesel Technic SE, Eissmann Automotive Deutschland GmbH, EURONICS Deutschland eG, Hapag Lloyd AG, MEWA Textil-Service AG & Co. Management OHG, Olympus Europa SE & Co. KG, Optibelt GmbH, THOMAS SABO GmbH & Co. KG, VTG AG, Webasto SE, Weber GmbH & Co. KG, and many more.

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Do you have further questions about our services or would you like to contact us directly? Let's get in touch.



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