

# Empowered Finance Planning

Return on Experience with  
Unit4 Business World Milestone 5

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The Finance Office can occupy a unique position. No other team can make such clear connections between business activities and their financial impact. No other team can be as effective in stopping profits falling between operational cracks. No other team can empower colleagues with the business intelligence they need to deliver success.

But too often these abilities are blunted. Unless they are empowered with the tools to gather and share insights, Finance surrenders this position. Finance professionals working without collaborative, cloud and mobile-enabled technology, with in-memory analytics and intuitive UIs are condemned to manually perform repetitive tasks, when they could be focused on the high-value activities explained above.

This paper shows how the technology we demand in our personal lives can be deployed to:

- Improve your data quality
- Speed up analysis
- Empower business teams

### The Digital Revolution Harnessed in Milestone 5

Our expectations of software are radically different than they were before smartphones emerged. For the first time in history technological advances are being driven by personal, not business, technology. The computing power we all carry with us, connected to vast cloud databases, accessible via intelligent UIs that learn our behavior and predict our choices has changed what we demand from technology.

The emergence of web-interfaces, flexible cloud deployment options, mobile apps, in-memory analytics and in-context communities offer a huge opportunity for finance teams to embrace modern ways of working. Instead of being overloaded with cost pressures, growth expectations and market dynamics, they can work smart by automating processes and focus on high-value tasks.

But the solutions millions, perhaps billions, of us use at work have failed to keep up. A major reason for this digital downgrade is that business systems often pre-date the Digital Revolution. Even many of those installed after the arrival of iPads that offer millions of user-friendly, function-rich apps via the Cloud, don't harness those technologies.

This leaves users to battle with solutions that were built primarily for functions, not for ease of use and access. A solution exists today that can still perform the key functions businesses need them to, but that also put the user at the heart of the process – wherever they are and whatever platform they choose to access the system with.

Unit4 Business World's latest upgrade – Milestone 5 – is that solution. Designed for a mobile future, and supporting a suite of separately installed and upgraded, task-focused Experience Packs, it empowers your finance teams to provide the insight and strategic support that your organization relies on.

## How Empowered Finance Planning Should Work

Management is about taking active control of your business. To achieve this, you need a clear and accurate understanding of your situation, as well as access to the right tools to implement your plans – when you need them and wherever you are.

Your key people's time is costly and should be spent on business improvement, not manual data gathering, error handling or collating versions of files. To enjoy the benefits of a fact-based management approach, it is vital to have the right data easily available in the right format and quality. The integrated analysis, budgeting and reporting components in Milestone 5, support the whole management cycle and ensure maximum efficiency and quality.

### Financial reporting and planning go hand in hand

Empowered financial planning needs a central reporting environment for the whole financial business model – from topline results to granular detail. Unit4 Financial Information Center offers a single place to track and analyze financial performance, including individual dashboards and standard financial reports, complemented by rich visual analytic capabilities.

A proper understanding of today's performance in relation to your business goals is a great basis for your budgeting process. Unit4 Budget Books provides this within a flexible, modern budgeting application combining the efficiency and data governance of an integrated solution. It offers a single place to store and manage all budget-related information, budgeting rules and versions and related communication. This saves significant time in each budgeting round and ensures data consistency and efficient budget distribution and communication.

The smart templates give you the agility to make changes to the budgeting processes as needed and only once – not multiple times in locally saved Excel sheets. That means people can focus on high-value tasks instead of handling infrastructure, data quality and file versions.

With Unit4 Financial Information Center you can close the management loop by following up and analyzing overall financial performance as the basis for the next planning round.

An integrated analytic component like Unit4 Analyzer is a great complement to this process. It provides agile access to all financial and operational data in the system, so you can answer any question at any time. It can analyze all new and existing business reports, always provides up-to-date information and can be accessed by everybody involved in the process.

When you use a single system to support the whole management loop, you always work with accurate and up-to-date data and the whole process remains transparent and agile.

## Experience Packs to Empower Finance Planning

Unit4's Experience Packs offer targeted functionality combined with the usability and collaborative features you expect from the tech in your personal life. They complement the existing Business World platform and deliver complex information in useful and actionable formats. Individually they deal with specific business tasks but can be used together to ensure your teams work in the smartest way possible.

The stream to empower finance teams includes:

### Analyzer

With Analyzer, you've got an easy option to get more insight into your Unit4 Business World information, by generating a fresh and graphic perspective on problem points. It's a faster way to grasp the big picture.

Its powerful, flexible and extremely rapid visualizations are a great way to get more insight into your business, whether you are tackling a particular problem or just focusing on the bigger picture.

Analyzer puts your data into memory in order to visualize it – in ways you can choose by selecting from the various filter options. Analyzer generates multiple visualizations, comparing regional or supplier-centric views for example, in order to get a quick overview of the matter at hand. In just seconds, you've got a fresh perspective that you can save or share with colleagues.

## **Budget Books**

Budget Books is one-stop, flexible solution for all your budgeting requirements. It is a single, central place to keep all your budget-related information, collaborate with colleagues and manage the whole process.

A simple book format allocates pages to all your budget elements, e.g. cost, resource and revenue plans. If you make a change in one of the book templates, it will recur in all future books. So now there's no need to change countless Excel sheets to modify a single calculation or add a new department.

You can define the content and layout of every page, choosing exactly what to include – whether that's last year's numbers, KPIs, charts or relevant instructions. You can also add your comments to pages, or discuss the report in real time with your colleagues. This means that everyone in the budget process will be able to complete the required actions instantly and correctly, reducing time to completion and increasing the quality of your plans.

## **Financial Information Center**

Financial Information Center makes sense of the why, as well as the what, of your company's finances, with a central hub that unites powerful financial reporting and analytic capabilities, for users and senior managers alike.

It offers a rapid and flexible solution for financial reporting and analysis, starting with your personalized home page – a place for your most important reports, graphs and related information. The home page makes fast work of regular reporting tasks, while an integrated search function gives you a detailed view, right down to individual transactions.

You can use the filters to zoom in on the aspects that interest you. Or browse through your data using chart types to find the best representation for the issue in question. Look at development over time, or distribution between accounts. And it's simple to discuss the results with colleagues.

You can set new structures up to be actioned on a future go-live date, giving you unrivaled agility to upcoming business changes.

Learn more about how Unit4's Experience Packs, such as People and Project Planner and Task Management, support successful people management at [erp.unit.com](http://erp.unit.com).



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## About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue north of 500M Euro and more than 4000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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