

Finance Operations Executives See Importance of Digital Technologies but Still Struggle to Harness Real Impact, Says Genpact Research Institute and HfS Research

Study reveals disconnect between senior and middle management; robotics process automation and cognitive computing expected to increase significantly

NEW YORK, April 14, 2016 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Nearly half (48 percent) of finance and accounting (F&A) executives are not satisfied with the impact of digital technologies, and only 9 percent believe they achieve optimal performance from their current processes, according to a [study released jointly today](#) from the Genpact Research Institute and industry analyst firm HfS Research.

The key obstacles preventing companies from achieving greater impact from digital technologies on their finance operations include a lack of budget, process standardization, and coordination between technology and business functions. While a large majority (76 percent) of respondents agrees that digital technologies are fundamentally changing the finance function, and even more (84 percent) believe such digital technologies will enable organizations to outperform their competitors in the next two years, many companies still struggle to achieve real transformation.

Disconnect Between Senior and Middle Management Hints at Operationalization Challenges

The study revealed a significant disconnect between senior executives' satisfaction with digital technologies and those professionals on the front line running day-to-day F&A processes.

- Senior finance executives are far more content with the current digital environment; 18 percent vs. just 3 percent of middle management are very satisfied.
- Middle managers have a much stronger need for operational efficiency and a data-driven business; 45 percent cite operational efficiency to free up staff for more complex tasks as a huge importance vs. only 27 percent of senior management.

Interviews with survey respondents also found that the biggest sources of disappointment at the operational level are the lack of data quality and readiness within disparate F&A processes. The study shows that finance professionals will face challenges in achieving efficiencies in their processes without data alignment across financial systems and enterprise resource planning systems, paperless document processing, and a move away from manual spreadsheets and emails.

"Digital technology has immense potential to reimagine F&A operations—but only when implemented through a clear strategy of process transformation leveraging deep domain expertise and focused on business outcomes," **said Shantanu Ghosh, senior vice president, CFO Services and Consulting at Genpact.** "This study underscores the importance of a fresh approach to digital transformation—one that leverages a true understanding of the business and process nuances, Lean principles, and design thinking for solution development aimed at delivering a superior user experience. Such a Lean Digital approach can help organizations put digital to real work and avoid a lot of wasted investment and disillusionment with digital impact."

Robotics Process Automation and Cognitive Computing on the Rise

When comparing the impact of specific digital technologies on F&A processes now and during the next two years, the study found the biggest increases expected from robotic process automation applications and cognitive computing platforms.

- The anticipated impact of robotic process automation in two years almost doubles from today: 58 percent compared to only 34 percent who see impact now.
- More than two thirds (67 percent) of respondents project that cognitive computing will have some or a major impact on their F&A processes in two years, compared to only 43 percent who say so now.

"Unprecedented pressures are being piled on finance leaders to reach new thresholds of productivity from their operating models with digital technologies and automation as the new value levers," **said Phil Fersht, chief executive officer and industry analyst at HfS Research**. "However, many CFOs are clearly struggling to break free of the shackles imposed by legacy ERP systems and obsolete processes. The key is for CFOs to foster a mindset for writing off legacy by evaluating the tradeoffs between digital and automation investments versus continuing to maintain the status quo. Ambitious service providers are becoming critical in helping their clients evaluate these tradeoffs effectively."

Genpact and HfS will present a webinar on the study on **April 21 at 11 a.m. EDT**. For more information, [click here](#).

About the Study

The study, "Finance in the Digital Age," was commissioned by the Genpact Research Institute and conducted by HfS Research via a survey of 160 F&A professionals, as well as related advisors and service providers, for a total sample of 380 respondents. The research examined their perceptions about bringing this business function into the digital age, their key challenges in driving organizational change, and the investments and alliances they are making toward digital reimagination in F&A. Results reported in this press release represent responses from the F&A professionals. The full report is available at <http://www.genpact.com/about-us/finance-in-the-digital-age>.

About HfS Research

[HfS Research](#) is the leading analyst authority and global community for IT services and business operations, helping enterprises validate their global operating models with world-class research and peer networking. HfS Research coined the term "[The As-a-Service Economy](#)" to describe the challenges and opportunities facing enterprises to re-architect their operations in order to survive in these times of digital disruption and increasingly complex global business environment and macroeconomic volatility. With specific focus on transformative business operating models, the technology-enablement of business processes, autonomics and outsourcing, HfS has deep industry focus in healthcare and life sciences, retail and manufacturing, energy, utilities and financial services. HfS has been named [Analyst Firm of the Year for 2016](#), alongside Gartner and Forrester, by leading analyst observer InfluencerRelations.

About the Genpact Research Institute

The Genpact Research Institute is a specialized think tank harnessing the collective intelligence of Genpact – as the leading business process services provider worldwide – its ecosystem of clients and partners, and thousands of process operations experts. The Institute examines new trends that influence the evolution of strategically important operating models, helping our client's business. The Institute combines Genpact's deep expertise in process management, analytics, and technology with the insights of our research partners and clients. Projects are led by leaders and subject matter experts from Genpact's offices around the world. These teams also draw on a global network of external partners and industry experts, and benefit from our extensive connection with hundreds of large clients globally. For more information, see <http://www.genpact.com/home/about-us/research-institute>.

About Genpact

Genpact (NYSE: G) stands for "**generating business impact.**" We are a global leader in digitally-powered business process management and services. We architect the **Lean DigitalSM** enterprise through our patented Smart Enterprise Processes (SEPSM) framework that reimagines our clients' operating model end-to-end, including the middle and back offices. This creates Intelligent OperationsSM that we help design, transform, and run. The impact on our clients is a high return on transformation investments through growth, efficiency, and business agility. For two decades, first as a General Electric division and later as an independent company, we have been passionately serving our clients. Today, we generate impact for a few hundred strategic clients, including approximately one-fifth of the Fortune Global 500, and have grown to over 70,000 people in 25 countries, with key offices in New York City. The resulting business process and industry domain expertise and experience running complex operations are a unique heritage and focus that help us drive the best choices across technology, analytics, and organizational design. For additional information, visit www.genpact.com. Follow Genpact on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

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