



**NUCLEUS**  
RESEARCH

# THE VALUE OF FP&A WITH UNIT4

ANALYST

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## THE BOTTOM LINE

Nucleus interviewed organizations that have implemented Unit4 FP&A, identifying key benefits such as enhanced planning and forecasting efficiency, reduced costs, and rapid time-to-value. Notable quantitative benefits include the rapid deployment capability, with one major retailer achieving operational readiness within six months, significantly faster than alternatives. The platform's flexibility and scalability were highlighted, accommodating diverse organizational needs from IT services to major retail, with specific achievements in predicting store hours and managing complex financial schemas like IFRS. These outcomes highlight Unit4 FP&A's capability to streamline financial operations, improve planning accuracy, and support strategic decision-making, making it a valuable tool for organizations aiming to optimize their financial management processes.

## OVERVIEW

Organizations are increasingly adopting comprehensive Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) solutions to improve efficiency and decision-making through accurate forecasting, streamlined reporting, and deeper financial insights. These solutions, including cloud-based tools from providers like Unit4, enhance collaboration, resource management, cash flow optimization, and departmental performance monitoring by offering real-time financial data updates. The trend towards integrated enterprise software suites, which combine FP&A, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), and Human Capital Management (HCM) functionalities, aims to simplify IT, reduce costs, and improve operational agility. This integrated approach facilitates quicker responses to market changes and operational challenges, while automation helps minimize manual errors and optimize resource allocation. The demand for enterprise software that is flexible, customizable, and feature-rich is growing, reflecting the need for tools that can adapt to the diverse requirements of businesses across different sectors. Unit4 emerges as a key provider in this space, offering solutions that meet these aforementioned needs by delivering integrated, customizable, and comprehensive FP&A and within an integrated enterprise software suite.

**Eliminate 50 to 80 percent of manual financial consolidation**

## UNIT4

Unit4, established in 1980 and headquartered in the Netherlands, offers a cloud-based planning and analysis solution tailored for finance and accounting teams. The platform encompasses financial planning and analysis tools designed to enhance planning and forecasting efficiency, streamline financial reporting, and deliver insights into financial data. It facilitates collaboration through a shared workspace, enabling users to exchange information, monitor progress, and engage in budgeting processes collaboratively. The solution supports accurate resource planning, cash flow management, and departmental performance monitoring with its robust forecasting, budgeting, and planning features. Users can create detailed, multi-dimensional budgets that update in real-time, aiding organizations in pinpointing improvement areas and tracking success.

Unit4 FP&A positions itself as a component of a comprehensive enterprise software suite, aiming to reduce IT complexity, bundle costs, and accelerate implementations for organizations looking to improve productivity while controlling spending. The suite

approach, offering a breadth of FP&A functionality, lower costs, and customizability, sets Unit4 apart in a competitive enterprise software suite market, especially among the mid-market and SMBs. The platform's integrated approach for financial data consolidation, analysis, and reporting transcends traditional, siloed financial management methods. It provides a holistic view of financial performance, streamlines processes, and enhances forecasting and budgeting accuracy. Automation features reduce manual errors and free up resources for strategic planning, driving efficiency, strategic insights, and financial agility.

## KEY BENEFITS

Through comprehensive analysis and discussions with customers from various sectors, we have identified significant benefits stemming from the implementation of Unit4 FP&A. These benefits include:

- **Enhanced Financial Planning and Analysis Efficiency.** Unit4 FP&A streamlines the financial planning and forecasting process, enabling organizations to achieve a higher level of accuracy and efficiency. For a major retailer in Switzerland with over 25 billion CHF in revenue, the implementation of Unit4 FP&A facilitated the accurate prediction of store hours across various departments, integrating numerous KPIs into a cohesive forecasting model. This capability allowed the retailer to optimize staffing and operational costs effectively. Another significant benefit was observed in the context of a Canadian IT services and consulting firm, which, upon transitioning from a basic production model to Unit4 FP&A, experienced a substantial improvement in financial reporting and planning. The platform's real-time multi-dimensional budgeting features enabled these organizations to swiftly identify improvement areas and track success, demonstrating a direct impact on operational efficiency and financial management.
- **Reduced Operational Costs.** Unit4 FP&A's customizable software architecture and integrated approach to financial planning and analysis have proven to significantly reduce operational costs and streamline processes. The major Swiss retailer highlighted earlier achieved a notable decrease in personnel costs, with 70 percent of stores operating within budget constraints compared to 45 percent prior to Unit4 FP&A's implementation. This was achieved through the platform's advanced planning tools, which facilitated more accurate labor and operational cost predictions. Similarly, the Canadian consulting firm reported expectations of eliminating 50 to 80 percent of manual financial consolidation work, underscoring the platform's efficiency in automating and optimizing financial processes. These examples underscore Unit4 FP&A's ability to deliver tangible cost savings and

operational improvements, directly contributing to enhanced financial performance and organizational agility.

- **Rapid Time-to-Value.** Unit4 FP&A distinguishes itself through its rapid deployment capabilities and a high degree of customization, enabling organizations to meet specific financial planning and analysis needs within a short timeframe. The Swiss retailer's experience of considering 19 other solutions before selecting Unit4 FP&A for its ability to meet tight implementation deadlines illustrates this benefit. The platform's building block approach and the support from Unit4's team facilitated a customized solution that was operational within six months, significantly less than the time frames offered by competitors. This rapid implementation capability, combined with the platform's flexibility, ensures that organizations can quickly adapt to changing financial and operational demands, providing a competitive edge in dynamic market conditions.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Nucleus interviewed multiple Unit4 FP&A customers to investigate the value delivered by the platform.

### IT SERVICES AND CONSULTING FIRM

This Canadian-based IT services and consulting firm, specializing in providing comprehensive IT solutions, embarked on a transformative journey to overhaul its financial planning and analysis (FP&A) capabilities. Prior to the implementation of Unit4 FP&A in March 2021, the firm relied on a basic production model for general ledger reporting, with transactions recorded without the support of a financial model, balance sheet, or profit and loss statements. The firm's existing system, Money2, lacked the advanced features necessary for detailed financial planning and analysis. Recognizing the need for a robust FP&A tool to derive financial results and facilitate strategic planning, the firm transitioned to Unit4 ERP and simultaneously initiated the development of an FP&A module.

The implementation process marked a significant shift from reliance on Excel for financial operations to adopting Unit4 FP&A, which promised enhanced presentation usability and user experience. The firm, in collaboration with Levio, a strategic partner, aimed to leverage Unit4 FP&A for comprehensive financial planning, including HR KPIs and profit and loss analysis, albeit initially on a non-consolidated basis. The project, which restarted from scratch in July 2023 due to a change in team composition, demonstrated the solution's potential for scalability and customization. The firm embarked on developing a consolidated

financial model, aligning with IFRS accounting standards, to streamline financial reporting and analysis across its operations.

The initial focus was on developing a Professional Services Organization (PSO) model, followed by efforts to establish a comprehensive consolidation model. Support from Unit4's solution architects proved instrumental in navigating the complexities of both the PSO and consolidation models, enhancing the firm's capacity for integrated financial planning.

The transition to Unit4 FP&A has set the stage for significant efficiency gains within the firm's financial operations. By automating revenue and bank reconciliations, previously conducted manually in Excel for two years, the firm anticipates reducing the workload associated with these tasks by 50 to 80 percent. This shift not only streamlines financial processes but also aligns with the firm's strategic vision of leveraging advanced technology solutions to optimize its financial planning and analysis functions. The successful implementation of Unit4 FP&A underscores the firm's commitment to adopting innovative tools to enhance its financial management capabilities, setting a foundation for informed decision-making and strategic growth.

## MAJOR EUROPEAN RETAILER

A major retailer in Switzerland, with over 25 billion CHF in revenue and approximately 100,000 employees, faced challenges in accurately predicting store hours across its diverse operations, including restaurants, electronics/furniture stores, and 125 supermarkets. Despite having numerous KPIs, there was a significant disconnect between these indicators and the ability to predict hours and revenue accurately. The retailer evaluated 19 other companies, including SAP, Altos, and Unit4 (Pervero prior to acquisition), with some larger companies withdrawing due to the inability to meet the project's tight timeline from spring 2018 to August 2018. Unit4 stood out for its commitment to delivering within the required timeframe, leveraging a building block approach and customizable software that significantly accelerated deployment.

The implementation process involved a series of user training workshops to explain the program's objectives, coupled with the integration of IT systems alongside the retailer's IT team. This collaborative effort resulted in the development of four key tools: the first aimed at managing and predicting personnel costs per store with an accuracy of 99 percent to 99.7 percent, the second focused on waste reduction in restaurants and supermarkets, the third on planning for individual retail locations, and the fourth introduced the first round of AI in budgeting as a collaborative initiative with Unit4.

The deployment of Unit4's FP&A solution yielded significant benefits for the retailer. There was a notable decrease in personnel costs, with 70 percent of stores operating within cost budgets compared to 45 percent prior to the implementation. This improvement

underscores the effectiveness of Unit4's solution in enhancing the retailer's financial planning and analysis capabilities, particularly in the areas of cost management and budgeting accuracy.

The retailer expressed no concerns regarding the solution, highlighting the responsive and effective problem resolution by Unit4. This positive feedback emphasizes the strong partnership between the retailer and Unit4, contributing to the successful implementation and ongoing benefits of the FP&A solution.

## BEST PRACTICES

Through comprehensive analysis and customer interviews, the following best practices have been identified for organizations deploying Unit4 FP&A to maximize their investment returns:

- **Customization and Flexibility:** Leverage the customizable nature of Unit4 FP&A to tailor the system to specific organizational needs. Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach by utilizing the building block approach for a more targeted and efficient deployment.
- **Collaborative Implementation:** Work closely with Unit4 experts and internal IT teams during the implementation phase. This collaboration ensures that the system is configured optimally and integrates seamlessly with existing IT infrastructure.
- **Start Small, Scale Intelligently:** Begin with a focused implementation, such as managing costs in a specific department or forecasting for a single revenue stream. Validate the system's utility before expanding its use to other areas. This approach allows for fine-tuning and ensures a more successful broader implementation.
- **Leverage Integrated Suite Benefits:** If possible, consider deploying Unit4's integrated suite for ERP and FP&A. Organizations that utilize integrated solutions from the same vendor often experience higher ROIs due to reduced IT complexity and streamlined processes.

By adhering to these best practices, organizations can ensure a successful implementation of Unit4 FP&A, leading to improved financial planning, analysis, and overall organizational efficiency.