



KNOWLEDGE PARTNER FOR
FINANCE PROFESSIONALS



Will your team become

Best Finance Team of the Year 2025?

Why Best Finance Team of the Year?

Financial management is a multifaceted field that goes beyond numbers alone. In an increasingly complex world, it involves more than just bookkeeping, financial flows, and IT processes. It is about the collaboration of people who, as a cohesive team, bring the organization's strategy and ambitions to life.

It is, after all, the employees—not the figures—who drive professional and efficient financial management. **The election of the Best Finance Team of the Year places not the individual but the entire team in the spotlight.** We celebrate the collective efforts and craftsmanship of the CFO and their team—well-deserved recognition for those professionals who work in perfect harmony to support the organization's success.

The Power of a Strong Finance Team

Professional financial management is essential for the growth and prosperity of any company. Our awards go beyond the bottom line; they **recognize the impact a finance team makes:** from strategic insights and innovative solutions to a robust foundation for efficiency and advancement. These are the building blocks of a forward-thinking organization striving for sustainable growth.

Why Participate?

This election is more than an award; **it is a prime opportunity for team building and a motivational boost for your employees.** By competing for the title of Best Finance Team of the Year, CFOs show their appreciation

for their team's efforts and acknowledge them as the beating heart of the company. For employees who excel in collaboration and innovation, there is no better recognition.

Recognition for Every Team Member

There is no CFO of the Year, there can only be a finance team of the year. Success is not determined by one person, it is **the entire team that makes invisible yet crucial contributions to a project.** And even when an achievement is due to a select number of specialists, the strength lies in the collective effort. The election honors these less visible contributions, whether for a long-term project or a complex, strategic initiative.

A Driving Force Behind Innovation and Success

The focus of submitted projects can be broad or specialized, and sometimes it encompasses an evolution spanning several years. The core criterion remains that **the team is the driving force behind the innovation and success of the project.** We guarantee that participation in the Best Finance Team of the Year competition will motivate and inspire your team to reach new heights together.

Peter De Roeck
Managing partner Financial Media

Your candidacy in 9 steps

1. Convince yourself.

You have a good team. Fortunately! And you also say that often, right? Great! But your employees deserve some extra recognition occasionally. Rapidly evolving (digital) challenges often cause annoying worries for your finance department. A nomination for the award of Best Finance Team of the Year can make up for a lot.

2. You consult with your team.

You inform your people about your plans and that will evoke strong responses. No wonder. This is quite a compliment you are lavishing on them. The atmosphere in the group is bound to skyrocket. And that will boost productivity.

3. You say yes.

You quickly take action – after all, nothing ever brings you to a stop – and submit your candidacy for the Best Finance Team of the Year award in writing (by e-mail, of course!). Any questions left that you would rather ask in person than in an e-mail? Call Peter De Roeck at 0498 16 02 45 and he will bring you the clarity you need.

4. Take a look at your calendar.

Three dates are important:

- **APRIL 10TH 2025:** Deadline for providing us with all the info
- **APRIL 24TH 2025:** Meet the jury in Brussels.
- **MAY 15TH 2025:** Award ceremony with evening programme.

5. Brainstorming within your team.

Schedule some time to figure out with your team which elements you certainly want to feature in the candidacy.

6. Creating your dossier.

We will help you prepare your dossier to support your candidacy. We'll start with a clear template where you can add the main points in bullet form. Once ready, contact our editorial team for an informative and interactive (digital) meeting where you can provide more details orally and answer any questions from our team. Our editor will incorporate this additional information into your document and send it back to you. Review the document carefully, make any necessary corrections or additions, and feel free to attach any extra documents. Together, we'll ensure that everything is finalized and in our possession by April 10, 2025, at the latest. We will then forward your dossier to the jury members.

7. Meet the jury.

The members of the jury will expect you and/or (delegates from) your team in Brussels for an informative meeting. You will have no more than 7 slides. You will have half an hour to emphasise certain aspects of your case and to address questions from the jury.

8. Fingers crossed from now on.

Possibly, a photographer and/or video team might stop by at your office. The tension is building.

9. May 15th.

Le moment suprême. A true joy for finance professionals, an audience of 1000, good food, a unique guest speaker. An evening to remember. There is a genuine chance that you and your team will take one of the awards home with you!

Which awards are given?

BEST FINANCE TEAM OF THE YEAR

LARGE ORGANISATIONS

SMALL AND MIDSIZED ORGANISATIONS

In the intricate web of modern businesses, the Finance Department stands as a pillar of stability and a guardian of financial health. It plays a pivotal role in ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of a company. This department is often the unsung hero that enables a company to navigate the complex financial landscape and make informed decisions.

While sometimes hidden in the background, the realisations of the finance team, are very worthwhile to loop back on. The initiatives that finance takes to support the business, to promote efficiency, to navigate in a rapidly changing environment, to implement new technologies and to tackle new challenges, deserve to be mentioned. And the teams who realise those initiatives, are quite deserving of a place in the spotlights.

To compete for the Best Finance Team of the Year awards, is to recognize the efforts made by the finance team and to give them credit for their realisations.

All finance teams can compete for the award: from the smallest to the largest. Based on the submissions, we make a differentiation into **two categories and thus hand over two awards. These are the Best Finance Team of the Year – SME Award, and the Best Finance Team of the Year – Large organisations Award.**

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Evaluation of the created solution in its entirety and/or the outlined development and professionalisation of finance. | Was it a team effort or rather an individual consultancy-driven initiative? | If it concerns a multidisciplinary project: Was the finance team initiator and leader? | What is the result of the project in terms of best or advanced practices? | Did the project result in efficiency improvements to the operation of the finance department and/or the entire company? | What is the added value of the project for the entire organisation? | What is the project's impact on the company's management? | To what extent did the project take the stakeholders into account (human and market)? | How innovative is the project overall, and also – particularly – in the context of the company (background, complexity, culture, and so on) in which it was achieved? | How are the project's know-how and knowledge preserved among the team members? | What does the project's follow-up look like?

BELFIUS ESG AMBITION AWARD

SHOWCASE YOUR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

Sustainability is not just a trend—it's the future. That's why we're looking for inspiring companies and organizations that don't just embrace sustainability but make it tangible. Whether it's through innovative solutions, smart business optimizations, or groundbreaking ways to tackle sustainability challenges—your efforts deserve recognition!

With the ESG Ambition Award, **we celebrate the most impactful and inspiring initiatives where sustainability is integrated into strategy, processes, or company culture.** We don't just focus on large-scale projects—we also value how teams and departments collaborate to drive meaningful and lasting change.

Who Can Participate?

Any organization or company with a strong sustainability vision that can demonstrate how they bring it to life within their own operations. From circular economy practices to energy efficiency, from social impact to innovative reporting—any initiative that enhances your organization's sustainability efforts is a solid foundation for participation.

Why Participate?

- Gain recognition for your commitment and impact
- Inspire others with your best practices
- Increase your visibility as a sustainability leader
- Get evaluated by a professional jury and compete for the prestigious award

Ready to Share Your Sustainability Story? Show how your organization is making a difference! Contact us to discuss your application and download the template to prepare your submission.

Belfius' love for sustainable entrepreneurs is strong. Sustainable change is necessary for companies and for current and future generations. Efforts for a sustainable world really make the difference. And deserve to be featured! Hence this award. As the main sponsor of Best Finance Team of the Year, Belfius calls on companies to submit projects with a sustainable character. The panel members will decide which project will receive the second Belfius ESG Ambition Award at the closing event!

Your portfolio

Our editorial team is here to make the creation of your dossier as smooth and efficient as possible. While your input is crucial, we're committed to keeping your efforts and time to a minimum.

Here are the steps to complete your dossier:

- **Complete the template**

To get started, we'll send you a template as a guide to structure your story. There's no need for elaborate writing concise sentences and bullet points are all we need to understand the case and its framework.

- **Collaborative interview**

Once we've received your initial document, we'll schedule an interview to review, clarify, and supplement the content. This will ensure that your dossier is organized, thorough, and clear for the jury members.

- **Review and finalize**

After we make additions, we'll send the draft back to you for final approval. Adjust and expand as needed, this is your dossier. Once we receive the finalized document, we will pass it on to the jury. They'll review it in advance, allowing you to dive directly into the key points during your presentation.

The deadline to submit your final dossier to us is April 10th, 2025.

The jurymeeting

The jury has the noble task of screening all participating cases and to evaluate them based on a number of criteria. The jury will read a written report on the case in advance (see before). However, the participating teams will also present their case to the jury in person, with ample opportunity to provide additional information. The meeting will take place on Thursday April 24th 2025 in Brussels. The deliberations of the jury are secret and the winners will only be announced at the award ceremony on Thursday May 15th 2025.

Meet the jury

We invite all teams to illustrate their candidacy to the full jury on Thursday April 24th 2025. This meeting will take place in Brussels. Taking everyone's busy calendars into account, we will schedule time slots of exactly 30 minutes:

- No more than 10 minutes ex cathedra explanation (using up to 7 slides).
- No more than 20 minutes for questions and answers.

The jury's composition is broad and balanced so that all possible considerations and viewpoints will be part of the evaluation of all cases. The broad support for a decision guarantees that the right selection is made and this adds considerable value to the award. The diversity of the jury safeguards the independence and objectivity of the decision.

MEMBERS OF THE JURY BEST FINANCE TEAM '25



Nicolas De Clerq,
CFO Greenyard



Herman Van Steenstraeten,
CFO Vandemoortele



Geert Peeters,
CFO Ontex



Karen Van Griensven,
CFO Melexis



Tom Bamelis,
Ackermans & Van Haaren



Patricia Everaert,
professor UGent



Hugues Pirotte,
professor ULB



Filip Merckx,
CFO Imec



Yvan Absil,
CFO Nohaq



Ann Desender,
CFO Barco



Sophie De Maesschalk,
CFO Effect Photonics



Carl Peeters,
CFO Ahlers



Bart Adam,
CFO GS1



Erik Peeters,
CFO VPK



Isabelle Perilleux,
CFO Van Vitz



Sandra De Kerckhove,
CFO Iris Group



Els Neiryck,
CFO The Fertility Partnership



Stefan Verstraete,
CFO TomTom



Lieven Leenders,
Essers



Jean-Philippe Michaux,
CFO Puratos



Marjolein Frederickx,
CEO Lidl



Hanne Reijnders,
CFO Nitto EMEA

MEMBERS OF THE JURY ESG AMBITION AWARD



Valérie Limpens,
Head of Sustainability Belfius



Lies Bouten,
professor IESEG



Jean-Marie Vanderstichele,
CFO Upgrade Estate



Sofie Deridder,
Process Responsible Sustainable Finance
Colruyt Group



Elise Barbé,
Group Sustainability manager
Ontex Group



Bart Dierynck,
professor Tilburg University



Steve De Craene,
CFO LCL



Els De Keukelaere,
CFO Ekopak



Ilse Geukens,
CFO Siemens Belux

If one of these jury members has a formal link with your company (director's mandate, adviser etc.), it should not stop you from taking part. The jury member concerned will be excluded from the final deliberations in the award category you and your team are nominated for.

Your commitments

- You will fill in the template
- You will free up some time to help our editors compile your portfolio. In practice, that translates into 1 hour for an interview
- You will read the portfolio, correct it, adapt it. The deadline for returning it is: April 10.
- You and your people are prepared to happily say cheese when our photographer asks you to. We will make a short film or animation about your company and your team. You are delighted to cooperate in this effort.
- Your portfolio will not be published, but a one-page summary will be. You will read it and check it before we publish.
- You will step up for a lively conversation with our jury on April 24.
- On May 15th, we will announce the winners during the festive award ceremony (see hereafter), but we hope your full team will be present.
- Your team was honoured with an award? Fantastic! Our editors will have exclusivity, as specialised publication medium, for an in-depth interview with you.
- A true winner will happily cooperate to announce his win to other media, to the extent this is appropriate (newspapers, radio, TV, social media, etc.).

Your presence at the award ceremony

The event around the award ceremony is by far the most important finance community event of the year and is therefore well attended. Of course your team and candidacy are central to the organization and so we hope that you and the whole team will be present at the event.

We want to arrange this as follows:

- The fee for a table (10 participants) at the award ceremony is 2500 euro (excl VAT).
- We offer your team a table (10 participants) with a discount of 25%, so at the price of 1875 euro (excl VAT).



These teams preceded you

11.11.11 - A SCHULMAN – AB INBEV - ABLYNX - ACATRIS - ACCENT - ACCOR HOTELS - ACTIEF INTERIM - ADHESIA - AGFA EUROPE - AGFA- GEVAERT - AGORIA - AHLERS - ALCADIS - ALCATEL LUCENT - ALCOPA - ALD AUTOMOTIVE - ALIANCE - ALKEN-MAES - ALLIANZ BELGIUM - ALPRO - AMINO LABS - APOTHEEK DE LINDEBOOM - ARCALIUS GROEP ARGENTA ARMONEA – ARVESTA - ATHLON - CAR LEASE AVIAPARTNER - AZELIS GROUP – AZ SINT-MAARTEN - BALTA BANKSYS - BARCO - BEFIMMO - BEKAERT - BELGACOM - BELGIAN INTERNATIONAL CARPETS BIAC - BNP PARIBAS FINANCE - BNP PARIBAS FORTIS - BOREALIS - BORZEE - BPOST - BREPOLS BRUSSEL AIRPORT - BRUSSELS AIRLINES - BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC - BT BENELUX – BUSINESS & DECISION - BW ASSE - CARTAMUNDI GROUP - CEGEKA - CELYAD - CERTIS - CHIREC CLEAR2PAY - COCA COLA - COLRUYT - COMBELL - CONNECT GROUP - CORIALIS - DE JAEGER/ BRONTECH - DE LIJN - DE POST - DECEUNINCK - DECKERS DRUK DEKRA - DELHAIZE - DEVAN CHEMICALS - DIES DISTRIBUTION SPRL - DOCCLE - DOMO – DP WORLD - DUVEL MOORTGAT EASI ECHO NV – ECS2XL - EDF LUMINUS - EDGARD & COOPER - EFICO - ELIA - ENECO - ENI - ESSENTIEL - ESSERS EUROCLEAR – EVS - FAMILIEHULP - FEDEX - FOD MOBILITEIT EN VERVOER - FRANKI FOUNDATIONS - FRIESLAND FOODS PROFESSIONAL - GALLOO HOLDING - GARANTIEFONDS REIZEN GEMEENTE MOL - GEMEENTE OVERPELT - GEMEENTE SINT-KATELIJNE WAVER - GEMEENTE ZWALM - GENK (STAD EN OCMW) – GEVERS GIMV - GLACIO/IJSBOERKE – GRAND HOPITAL DE CHARLEROI - GREENYARD - GROEP GENK - GROUP GALLOO - GROUP VAN MOER LOGISTICS HAYS - HONEYWELL - IGEPa - IKANO - IKO EUROPE - IMERYS - INCOFIN - INCUBAID - INDAVER – INFRAABEL INNOVEX - INTRUM JUSTITIA - ISS - ITALO SUISSE - JBC - JETAIR JOHNSON CONTROLS - KINEPOLIS - KMDA - LAB9 - LAGARDÈRE TRAVEL RETAIL BELGIUM - LAMPPIRIS - LCL - LEASEPLAN-LIDL - LIPPENS PAINTS - MELEXIS - MENSURA/ADHESIA - MERCATOR PRESS - METALLO CHIMIQUE - METRIS - MLOZ MOBISTAR - MONTEA - MOORTGAT - MSF BELGIUM - NAPOLEON GAMES - NIKO - N-SIDE - NU SKIN - OCMW ANTWERPEN - OCMW HASSELT - OLV ZIEKENHUIS AALST OMEGA PHARMA - ONTEX - ORES - P2P HUB RANDSTAD PROFESSIONALS - PARKWINDS - PARTENA - PEPSICO - PETERCAM - PHILIPS BELGIË PINGUIN LUTOSA - PIONEER - PITTSBURGH CORNING EUROPE NV - PROTIME - PROXIMUS - QBD - QRF - RANDSTAD - REAL SOFTWARE - RECTICEL – RENOTEC - RETAIL ESTATES - RODE KRUIS VLAANDEREN - ROULARTA MEDIA GROUP RTBF - RTL SARA LEE COFFEE & TEA BELGIUM - SARENS - SCA PACKAGING - SCANSOURCE NV - SD WORX SECURITAS - SENIOR LIVING GROUPSEPIA NV - SHOWPAD - SIEMENS ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS NV - SIMIM - SILVERFIN - SITA SITA REMEDIATION - SODEXO - SOLVAY - SPAAS KAARSEN - SPADEL - SPICERS SPIE - STAD BRUGGE - STAD GEEL - STAD GENT - STAD ZOTTEGEM - STEELFORCE - STUART ENERGY - STUDIO 100 - TAMINCO - TBP ELECTRONICS BELGIUM - TEAMLEADER TELENET - TESSENDERLO GROUP - THALYS - THOMAS COOK BELGIUM - TNT – TOM&CO - TRANSMARE - TRUVO - TVH - UCB - UMICORE - UNIVeG - UPGRADE ESTATE - USG PEOPLE BELGIUM UZ GENT UZA - VAN DE VELDE NV - VAN GANSEWINKEL - VAN HOOREBEKE - TIMBER NV - VAN HOUT - VANBREDA INTERNATIONAL - VANDEMOORTELE - VANDEVELDE - VAN MARCKE - VDAB - VERMANT - VIB - VICTAULIC - VILLE DE CHARLEROI - VITAZ - VK GROEP - VMW VOLKSWAGEN BANK - VOLVO CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT - VPK PACKAGING - VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL - WATER-LINK - WHAT'S COOKING - WOONHAVEN ANTWERPEN - WORLDLINE – WURTH - WYMAR INTERNATIONAL – XIOR ZENITEL - ZNA

The deadlines in a nutshell

Decision to participate!

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Submission of completed portfolio

10 APRIL 2025

Submission of your jury presentation (slides)

22 APRIL 2025

Jury meeting

24 APRIL 2025

Award ceremony

15 MAY 2025



Enjoy our aftermovie!

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a portfolio required?

Awards for which you are nominated out of the blue or merely on the basis of publicly available information? We don't like those.

The accomplishments of a finance department are not always visible to the world at large. The jury will need detailed information to be able to assess properly what your team stands for. A solid portfolio is indispensable.

Won't submitting a portfolio require a lot of my time, human resources and teeth grinding?

Those – understandably – are the most common questions. But if we had no satisfying comeback to that, we would already have run out of candidates. To be clear: our editorial team will compile the portfolio bases on the template filled in by you and your team. We won't need you to spend days, although you and/or a few of your team members will have to tell us your story, of course. We will turn that into a portfolio that you can correct or to which you can add if you feel it is necessary.

In detail? To get your full candidacy past the jury, we count on up to 5 hours of your cooperation: 1 hour to fill in the template, 1 hour for an interview to complete the document, 2 hours of reading and checking, 0.5 hours to meet the jury, 0.5 hours for photo and video.

What if your project is not finished yet?

Well. That's an argument to which we have little to say in return. Keep in mind that projects of a financial department are never finished. That applies to the winners of previous years too. There are always new challenges, and improvements to follow.

You have to have the courage to look back and be proud of what you have already realised. Moreover, participating is a highly original way to thank your staff for their efforts and engagement.

Imagine: Your team is the best but there was no real project in the past year?

That is not a problem. To the contrary. We like the candidacy of finance departments that use their development and approach of the past few years as input for the case. It is perfectly possible to highlight a few elements from within that longer period. Unless you and your employees have been sitting back without doing anything in recent years, every team has always sufficient starting points to support its candidacy.

Someone has just left your team. Bad timing, isn't it?

It is a team award. It does not depend on one person. And to keep your team motivated, looking back on its accomplishments – and expressing appreciations for them – will help a great deal.

You just took on a new colleague who still has to find his or her way.

So what? Your colleague will know right away that the threshold is high and that he/she has landed in a potential Best Finance Team. The work involved in the candidacy is for our editorial team, anyway. One more team member, or one less, it doesn't matter.

Things have been tough in your sector in recent years.

Whether your company is going through a rough patch or displaying double-digit growth, we will only look at the performance and accomplishments of the finance department. In other words, it is not a company's boundless growth that makes its finance people present a better case, and it's not the opposite either.

There are other, larger companies that are doing really well. You consider your own accomplishments ordinary...

It is a typical characteristic of finance profiles to remain modest and downplay their contributions. "It is all pretty normal, the stuff that we do." Stop right there. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pride is not out of place, certainly not with regard to your own company. Because that is what it is about. The assessment of the project will take place from within the specific company context.

Anyway, we created different award categories to be able to compare as many cases of a similar maturity and companies of similar sizes.

You would like to remain discrete.

And we will respect that. We will only make those details public that you agree with. In advance, we will make a film or animation about your candidacy. You can rest easy. You won't have to jump onto the stage during the award ceremony to address those one thousand other people in the room. You can stay nicely within your comfort zone during the entire course of events.

You've participated before.

So? Time has not stood still. Matters evolve and new initiatives constantly have to be noticed and evaluated. We have plenty of examples of teams who went to battle twice, or even three times.



You may take the decision to become a candidate for Best Finance Team of the Year on your own. You need others, however, to put this into practice. **It is a team award. Sit down with your team members and make an inventory of everything you have achieved in past years and of the hurdles you conquered. Sure, you have a right to be proud!**

Here's how it was last edition

On May 16, the winners of the Best Finance Team of the Year were announced. The finance teams from LCL Data Center, Edgard & Cooper, and Solvay/Syensqo joyfully received their awards in a festive atmosphere..



BEST FINANCE TEAM 2024

Best Finance Team of the Year 2024:

RELIVE THE AWARD CEREMONY



Mario De Vry, Head of Corporate Banking and Wealth Management at Belfius, delivered an opening speech about Belfius's LOVE for all entrepreneurs and businesses.

The tension was palpable during the award ceremony for the Best Finance Team of the Year 2024. After a lively networking reception and a seated dinner, guests had the opportunity to get to know all the candidates through short films.



A top keynote speaker, Cédric Dumont, was also present to inspire participants on creating the right conditions to take risks and dare to leap.

The evening ultimately culminated in the award ceremony.

The moment of truth... The jury chairs for the Belfius ESG Ambition Award and the Best Finance Team of the Year awards, respectively Valerie Limpens, Head of Sustainability at Belfius, and Tom Bamelis, CFO at Ackermans & Van Haaren, had nothing but praise for the winners:

BEST FINANCE TEAM OF THE YEAR LARGE ORGANISATIONS



BEST FINANCE TEAM OF THE YEAR 2024 CATEGORY LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

The split of the 160-year-old Solvay—one of Belgium's largest industrial groups—into two separate publicly listed companies, Solvay and Syensqo, was undoubtedly the most notable transaction in Belgium's financial landscape this past year. The Solvay Group comprised over 200 legal entities spread across 40 countries. Dividing this structure posed a complex challenge involving many facets, including accounting and reporting, financing, taxation, legal matters, IT, and HR—all while industrial operations continued uninterrupted.

At the same time, this transaction impacted the finance team of approximately 800 employees, who each had to find their place within this new structure. The Solvay finance team played a crucial role in the successful execution of this transaction, which was completed on schedule in December 2023. This split was rewarded by the financial markets with the creation of additional shareholder value. In turn, the BFT jury recognizes the finance team of Solvay/Syensqo for this remarkable achievement.





BEST FINANCE TEAM OF THE YEAR CATEGORY SME

The finance team at Edgard & Cooper faced the typical challenges of a rapidly growing scale-up, evolving from €1 million in revenue in 2016 to an expected €100 million in 2024. The team had to shift its focus over time from processing transactions and reporting production to becoming true business partners with a focus on value creation and driving further growth. To support this, a total of €52 million was raised over four funding rounds.

When the jury decided to award the Best Finance Team (Small and Medium Enterprises) for the all-around performance of this team since 2016, Edgard & Cooper's acquisition had not yet been announced. However, this does not diminish the accomplishments of the finance team. In fact, the acquisition may even serve as a recognition of the financial achievements realized within this company.

TEAM OF THE YEAR
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

edgard
& cooper





BELFIUS ESG AMBITION AWARD

LCL has proven that sustainability and innovation go hand in hand. With five data centers spread across Belgium, LCL places a strong emphasis on environmental awareness and customer focus. Their commitment to green initiatives and their ongoing pursuit of eco-friendly solutions make them a model for the industry.





SUMMARY OF THE WINNING CASES

Across each of these cases, a clear common thread emerges: the transformation of the business and the pivotal role that finance plays in steering these changes smoothly. Let's take a closer look at each case.

LCL DATA CENTERS

LCL is a data center operator in the Belgian market, founded in 2002. Over the years, the company has grown to operate five data centers, focusing on innovative solutions, customer care, security, environmental responsibility, and a highly engaged workforce. These elements have fueled its growth and positioned it as a market leader.

LCL's journey toward "Customer Intimacy" began in 2016 when CEO and founder Laurens van Reijen decided to focus on this strategy. The company was already performing well operationally, but Laurens opted to enhance service quality and strengthen customer relationships. When CFO Steve De Craene joined in 2019, this approach was further refined and expanded, resulting in a strategic "strategy map." This guideline zoomed in on processes that needed attention, key enablers, and human and information capital factors—all aimed at defining and achieving financial value effectively. This exercise supported and propelled LCL's growth.

In 2021, the strategy was updated to include an ESG framework. Initially based on single materiality, LCL identified ESG opportunities and risks impacting business value through stakeholder interviews. While a strong start, this framework had to align with LCL's core focus on customer intimacy. Defining success in ESG and measuring its impact proved essential to integrate this strategy, which required defining LCL's "social value," establishing relevant KPIs, and setting actions for improvement. This resulted in a comprehensive strategy map with 57 metrics, forming an integrated value approach for ESG success.

To ensure alignment, LCL engaged employees through online training, and the CEO hosted small group sessions to discuss the strategy personally. The strategy is highlighted at every employee event, and quarterly and annual reports track targets. As of this year, performance metrics are also linked to the bonus system, adapted by role and department to keep the strategy alive and maximize social, environmental, and financial value.

The most recent strategy update saw LCL voluntarily shift from single to double materiality, addressing both internal and external impacts. This double materiality matrix is published in each ESG report, positioning the company for the 2026 CSRD reporting on 2025, with plans to run a trial next year before it becomes mandatory.

EDGARD & COOPER

Edgard & Cooper is a producer of high-quality food for dogs and cats. Since its founding in 2016, the company has rapidly evolved from a promising start-up into a stable, fast-growing scale-up—a transformation made possible by a competent finance team. Finance transitioned from a purely supportive function into a future-proof business partner, shaping the company's future.

Following its launch in March 2016, the founders' complementary skills helped Edgard & Cooper take off quickly. With revenue doubling annually in the early years, the company grew an average of 67% annually between 2018 and 2023, expecting to reach €100 million in revenue in 2024, with 195 employees across Europe.

The Finance team grew with the company, hiring the first finance staff member in 2017 to manage accounting and payroll. As complexity increased, additional roles in credit control, controlling, and treasury were introduced to support the ongoing growth. In early 2022, a CFO joined, completing the nine-member team.

The Finance team's mission is to evolve from a support function to a proactive partner adding value to the business through four strategic pillars: Transactional Management, Process Management, Business Partnering, and Value Management.

Transactional Management: Focused on efficiently handling transactions in a scaling environment, delivering high-quality information within expected deadlines, and ensuring compliance across all active countries through automation and optimization.

Process Management: This involves standardizing data structures and processes to support growth and instill trust among internal and external stakeholders. It includes implementing pragmatic processes, procedures, internal controls, and risk management.

Business Partnering: By structuring data efficiently, the team generates actionable insights for operational decision-making, establishing a self-service reporting environment to shift from reactive to proactive reporting.

Value Management: Concentrated on strategic growth and profitability, guiding the company's strategic direction, and securing funding to support expansion.

The journey of Edgard & Cooper and its Finance team is unique. Over the years, the team has driven a wave of professionalization throughout the entire organization, placing the department on a future-proof level that exceeds what is typically expected from a start-up or scale-up.

SOLVAY

In December 2023, the 150-year-old company Solvay split into two companies: Solvay and Syensqo. Prior to the split, the company employed 22,000 people, including approximately 800 finance professionals. Today, Syensqo comprises about two-thirds of this group.

The idea for the split and the new strategy began three years ago. Solvay had grown significantly, and a stark difference existed between its activities, leading to an overly complex structure. In 2022, the split was announced. While the concept was straightforward, the execution was anything but simple. It became a strategic project involving the entire company, with the finance department at the forefront to achieve a dual stock market listing by the December 11, 2023 deadline. On this date, each shareholder would receive two new shares. The entire project required two years before the dual listing.

The IPO occurred in December 2023, marking the year's first listing. In a challenging year for IPOs, communication was critical to success.

There were five key project streams leading to the split:

Preparing Two IPOs and Communicating with External Stakeholders: This involved storytelling (the rationale for the split, different strategies for the new companies, writing the prospectus, explaining clearly to shareholders) and a substantial compliance component.

Treasury and Capital Structure: Mapping the entire capital structure was complex, as each company needed a new credit rating.

Operational Split: All systems, data, and bank accounts needed splitting or duplication, ensuring business continuity.

Legal and Fiscal Carve-Out: This was highly complex due to the organization's size and geographic spread.

Forming New Teams and Defining Roles: It was essential to place the right people in the right teams.

The project was a two-year marathon with multiple intense sprints, with finance teams experiencing especially high workloads on top of regular duties and navigating economic crises. Although challenging, it was a unique opportunity for finance to demonstrate its value and create a real impact.

CE TEAM OF THE ORGANISATION

