



The Association of
Accountants and
Financial Professionals
in Business

IMA EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLES

How to Cut Transformation Time by 80%:

The Control Tower Framework CFOs Are Using



70% of Transformation Initiatives Fail to Meet Their Objectives

The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) convened CFOs and certified management accountants who've beaten those odds — leaders who've successfully driven multimillion-dollar transformations — to identify what's actually working.

What they're doing differently: A new operating model that compresses transformation timelines by up to 80% while dramatically improving execution success rates.

This report gives you their playbook. The framework they use. The strategies that work. The capabilities your team needs to build now.

Panelists



Jill Eubank

Executive Vice
President for Ronstadt



Thomas de Fabrizio

CFO of Crisp Inc.



Tom Bloomers, CMA

Board Director of the
Project Management
Institute



Tony Caspio, CMA

IMA Board Member,
Former VP of Sealed
Air Corporation

The Emerging Operating Model: The Transformation Control Tower

The most successful organizations are adopting a new operating model—the Transformation Control Tower—that provides four capabilities traditional approaches lack:

Visibility: Real-time monitoring of all transformation initiatives, dependencies, and progress

Coordination: Cross-functional alignment to prevent conflicts and optimize resource allocation

Decision Authority: Clear escalation paths and decision rights to resolve blockers fast

Adaptability: Structured feedback loops to pivot based on data, not assumptions

Modern transformations aren't linear projects, they're dynamic ecosystems requiring continuous oversight and rapid course correction.

Five Critical Capabilities Finance Leaders Must Build Now

1 Speed, Agility, and Learning from Change

Organizations must adapt quickly, but speed alone is not enough. Rapid transformation requires balancing agility with discipline and viewing failure as an opportunity to learn and improve.

Business Impact:

Companies that build rapid-iteration capabilities reduce time-to-value by 60-80% while lowering implementation risk. The panelists' organizations achieved:

- 60-day transformation cycles (previously 12+ months)
- 40% reduction in change-related disruption costs
- Faster ROI realization through MVP testing

This isn't about moving recklessly, it's about building organizational muscle for controlled, rapid iteration.



2 Operationalizing the Transformation Control Tower

The 'control tower' isn't just a metaphor, it's a structured system to: align strategy, monitor progress, empower teams, and resolve roadblocks in real-time.

Business Impact:

Organizations with formal transformation offices report 2.5x higher success rates than those relying on ad-hoc coordination. The control tower model delivers:

- 30-50% reduction in initiative overlap and resource conflicts
- Faster decision-making through clear escalation protocols
- Strategic alignment across all concurrent transformation efforts

3 Engagement, Communication, and Culture as Enablers

Transformations succeed or fail based on people. Open communication, trust-building, and recognition are not soft extras, they are strategic levers.

Business Impact:

Organizations that prioritize employee engagement during transformation experience 3.5x higher success rates. Key outcomes include:

- 65% improvement in employee adoption rates
 - Significant reduction in resistance-related delays
 - Higher retention of key talent through periods of change
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4 Tools, Data, and Infrastructure

Tools like project management platforms, business intelligence systems, and clean, integrated ERP data provide the infrastructure needed to monitor progress, identify interdependencies, and adapt in real time.

Business Impact:

Integrated data infrastructure reduces reporting overhead by 40% while improving decision quality. Organizations with strong data foundations achieve:

- 50% faster issue identification and resolution
 - Real-time visibility into transformation health
 - Data-driven resource reallocation to maximize impact
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5 Managing Change Fatigue and Resistance

Leaders must manage change with intention and empathy. Full execution of any transformation depends on engaging people across the organization as well as anticipating resistance.

Business Impact:

Proactive change management reduces transformation failure risk by up to 60%. Organizations that address resistance systematically see:

- 70% reduction in implementation delays due to resistance
- Higher quality implementation through stakeholder input
- Sustained momentum through recognition and early wins

What Leaders Are Doing to Prepare

The most successful organizations aren't waiting—they're building these capabilities now. Here's what leading finance teams are implementing to stay ahead:

Building Transformation Velocity

- Introduce MVPs (minimum viable products) to test ideas quickly and iterate based on results
- Build change capability by embedding leadership development and training during the transformation process
- Encourage failure as a feedback mechanism—create psychological safety around experimentation
- Use pilot programs to test, adjust, and scale, especially in small to mid-sized companies



We transformed in 60 days what used to take a year... because of what we learned through the rapid transformations that came before. ”

— Jill Eubank



Think of it like an air traffic control tower, tracking all movement, aligning goals, and ensuring nothing collides. ”

— Tony Caspio

Establishing Command & Control

- Establish a formal transformation office (or control tower) with clear decision rights and accountability
- Create cross-functional workstreams aligned to enterprise or departmental goals
- Assign initiative owners and workstream leaders with authority to act and escalate as needed
- Develop a cadence of control tower meetings involving senior leadership to track milestones and unblock challenges
- Align all programs to a few clear strategic priorities; if it's not core to strategy, it can be paused or stopped

Driving Human Commitment

- Communicate frequently and transparently—especially when outcomes are uncertain
- Give leaders time to process the change before cascading it across the organization
- Recognize contributors at every level to reinforce momentum and commitment
- Include employees early in the transformation design through surveys, workshops, and pilot initiatives
- Build trust by allowing experts to lead in their domains and encouraging honest feedback loops



Yes, transformation is top-down, but it won't work without strong bottom-up participation. ”

— Tom Bloomers

Creating the Intelligence Infrastructure

- Use integrated project and BI tools like ClickUp, Domo, and Salesforce Reporting to drive visibility and agility
- Establish a clean data foundation—standardize source systems and avoid redundant reporting
- Avoid overcomplication: Limit dashboards to key leading and lagging indicators to reduce noise
- Encourage structured file management and tools (e.g., AI-powered search in cloud drives) to minimize digital disarray



Be very careful not to create additional work in the migration from base data to what the control tower is looking for. ”

— Tony Caspio



You have to listen to people who resist... this is where good leaders really excel. ”

— Tony Caspio

Managing the Human Side of Change

- Recognize resistance as feedback; use 1:1 meetings to uncover root concerns
- Help stakeholders understand the 'why' behind pauses or shifts—clarity reduces frustration
- Use early wins and visible leadership support (e.g., clearing blockages) to build trust
- Frame transformation as evolution rather than disruption to reduce psychological burden

The IMA Perspective:

While each panelist's context differs, a common pattern emerges: successful transformations balance structure with flexibility. The control tower provides the structure, clear governance, decision rights, and progress visibility, while empowering teams with the flexibility to execute in their domains. This balance is what separates transformation frameworks that enable from those that constrain.





What's Coming Next: The Evolution of Transformation

Beyond current best practices, here are the emerging trends that will define transformation leadership in the near future:



AI-Augmented Control Towers

Predictive analytics will shift control towers from reactive monitoring to proactive risk mitigation. Early adopters are already using AI to flag at-risk initiatives before they derail, enabling preventive intervention rather than crisis management.



Shorter Transformation Cycles

As organizations build change capability, expect 6-month transformations to become 60-day sprints. The competitive advantage will go to organizations with the fastest learning cycles and the most refined rapid-iteration capabilities.



Hybrid Transformation Models

The lines between digital transformation, operational transformation, and cultural transformation are blurring. Future control towers will need to coordinate across all three simultaneously, requiring new levels of cross-functional integration.



The CFO as Chief Transformation Officer

Finance leaders are uniquely positioned to lead enterprise transformation given their cross-functional visibility, data fluency, and strategic perspective. This role expansion is already happening at leading organizations, the question is whether your organization will be ready.



The Question Every CFO Should Ask:

Can your organization afford to be reactive when your competitors are already preparing for what's next?

Next Steps:

Schedule a 30-minute consultation to discuss what's coming for your industry and how IMA can help you prepare.

Visit enterprise.imaglobal.org or contact corporate@imanet.org

Join the network of finance leaders who see what's coming next—and are ready for it.



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