YOUR CLOUD FP&A SOFTWARE CHECKLIST

limelight

Financial processes in practically every industry have been made easier and more efficient thanks to advancing software.

Now more than ever, there is a growing demand for cloud-based FP&A software, to help the Office of Finance shorten monthly close processes, and in turn, forecast scenarios in a dynamic environment. FP&A software has long been valued and considered useful, but is now essential to businesses wanting to properly budget, plan and forecast during unprecedented times.

Finance teams are looking to first build scenarios and then analyze its potential impact on the business. This includes identifying new performance drivers and forecasting financial outcomes. Using technology such as Cloud FP&A software, businesses can get to these outcomes much faster and with greater accuracy.

WHAT IS CLOUD FP&A SOFTWARE?

Cloud FP&A software is designed to manage the financial and operational information of an organization. Using Cloud FP&A software, an organization can unify data from multiple source systems and instantly analyze information to produce actionable insights.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Particularly if your business is running into challenges around budgeting and reporting using spreadsheets in Excel, Cloud FP&A software can offer solutions to accelerate your process.

The major benefit of Cloud FP&A software is that it works with your existing systems and allows for in-depth analysis.

All of the struggles that surround spreadsheets, from juggling multiple versions to broken formulas and links resulting in more opportunities for errors, are solved with Cloud FP&A software. The software is designed to centralize your data and people, enabling teams to collaborate more on the same version of data, adding commentaries and attachments that tell the story behind the numbers. As well, Cloud FP&A software can visualize your data so managers have a better understanding of the information they are analyzing in real-time.

Cloud FP&A software provides forecasts and predictions of the performance of different areas in your organization. Your team can create models of multiple scenarios in the system and quickly see the outcome of different drivers. Finance teams can slice and dice their data and uncover potential growth.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CLOUD FP&A SOFTWARE PLATFORM?

Finance teams in any industry should look for Cloud FP&A software that offers features related to planning and analysis, goal setting and reporting. Your software should help you analyze the performance of your employees, as well as your business operations and cash flow. Modern Cloud FP&A software also provides detailed reports that are quickly generated and easy to distribute, helping managers and executives make the right decisions.
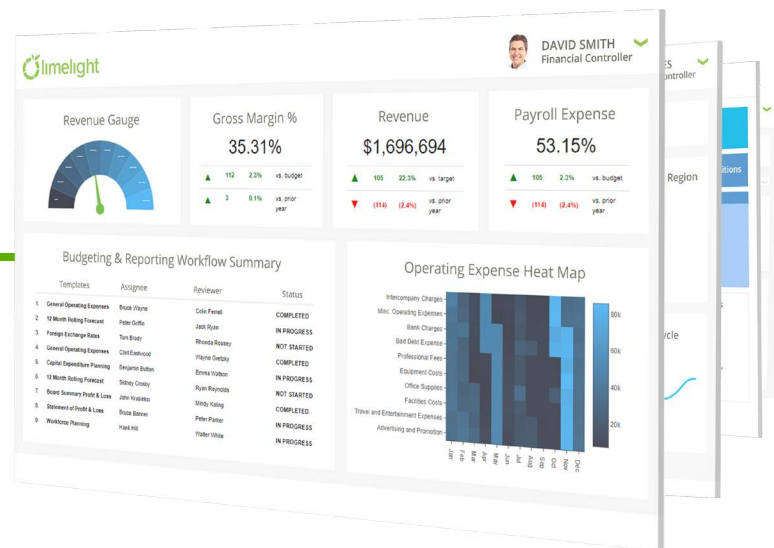
HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST CLOUD FP&A SOFTWARE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

If you're looking for a Cloud FP&A software system for the first time or looking to make a switch, this checklist can help with your evaluation. First, make sure to do a thorough assessment of your needs. Take note of what is working well in your process, and which parts can be improved. Then, prioritize your needs to help narrow down your vendor choices. The best Cloud FP&A software will address your requirements while also being equipped to scale with your business.

The following checklist details important factors to consider, even beyond the software itself. From ERP integration capabilities to budgeting, forecasting and reporting features, keep these requirements in mind when evaluating the best software for your team.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3

Ease of Integration

How well can this system integrate with our ERP and other systems?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Direct ERP integrations	◯	◯	◯
Provides software connectivity to ERP general ledger table and subledger tables	◯	◯	◯
Ability to drill-through to transactional data	◯	◯	◯
Can source data from other systems such as payroll, HRIS and CRM	◯	◯	◯

Budgeting Capabilities

Can the system simplify my budgeting process?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Ability to bring in actuals and/or historical data	◯	◯	◯
Enables real-time consolidation of financial and operational data	◯	◯	◯
Has an Excel look and feel	◯	◯	◯
Uses Excel formulas	◯	◯	◯
Exports to Excel - Ability to export to Excel with formatting and formulas	◯	◯	◯
Audit Trail - Ability to track who made what changes and when	◯	◯	◯
Ability to lock down cells in the budget	◯	◯	◯
Commentaries - Supports the addition of commentaries and attachments to budget	◯	◯	◯
Consolidates commentaries to provide further context and justifications to budgets and variances	◯	◯	◯
Line-items Details - Ability to enter subledger details with automatic rollups	◯	◯	◯
Enables collaboration from all departments	◯	◯	◯
Workflow - Supports the creation of Workflows to track progress and approvals	◯	◯	◯
Enables dynamic changes: new accounts are automatically added to report templates	◯	◯	◯
Spreading - Supports any data spread pattern for quicker budget input	◯	◯	◯
Spreadsheet Upload - Ability to upload unformatted spreadsheets into the system	◯	◯	◯

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3

Forecasting Capabilities

How can this system allow me to forecast?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Ability to develop projections and view impact in the system	○	○	○
Provides historical budget data, budget-to-actual data, non-financial data and project trends for future fiscal years	○	○	○
Monitors cash position and automates calculations with P&L and balance sheet data	○	○	○
Ability to execute multi-year budgets and 5-year plans	○	○	○
Ability to create 12-month and 18-month rolling forecasts	○	○	○
Allows users to dynamically re-forecast based on historical data	○	○	○
Performs "What if" scenarios based on changes in key inputs	○	○	○
Supports the application of drivers to Expense & Revenue Planning	○	○	○

Reporting Capabilities

How can this system allow me to view information across the entire organization?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Ability for users to create reports without IT or programming resources	○	○	○
Allows users to view and analyze reports in real-time	○	○	○
Ability to drill-through reports to transactional detail	○	○	○
Provides graphical analysis including displaying financial data as tables, graphs, and charts	○	○	○
Report Books - Ability to run and automatically distribute reports to specific users at scheduled times	○	○	○
Supports the export of reports to Excel and PDF	○	○	○
Ability to restrict access to specific reports	○	○	○
Ability to create standard financial statements such as these and more:			
Balance Sheet	○	○	○
Profit & Loss	○	○	○
Cash Flow Statement	○	○	○
Customer Analysis	○	○	○
Budget vs. Actual Report	○	○	○
Variance Analysis	○	○	○
Aging Reports	○	○	○
Management Reports	○	○	○
KPI Reports	○	○	○

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3

Software Capabilities

What are the security and user experience capabilities my team needs for our FP&A process?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Cloud-based	◯	◯	◯
100% Browser-based for ease of access and distribution	◯	◯	◯
Provides a user-friendly interface	◯	◯	◯
Provides a single, unified interface for FP&A	◯	◯	◯
Allows for multiple levels of authority in the system	◯	◯	◯
Allows user permission configuration	◯	◯	◯
Ability to lock down fields but allow users to view data	◯	◯	◯
Allows ease of administration to add people to new views & reports	◯	◯	◯
Allows for custom dashboards for each user	◯	◯	◯

Implementation Process

How much time and effort is required for the implementation?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Uses an In-house implementation team	◯	◯	◯
Provides fixed fee projects	◯	◯	◯

Customer Success and Support

Does this system offer support when needed?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Includes a support team that will cater to your key objectives and needs	◯	◯	◯
Provides training to staff in the use of the CPM software	◯	◯	◯
Provides online resources, customer portal, help desk ticket system, monthly scheduled calls	◯	◯	◯
Provides ad hoc technical support as needed	◯	◯	◯
Provides ongoing system support post-implementation	◯	◯	◯
Hosts customer events	◯	◯	◯

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3

Cost

Is this system affordable based on its capabilities?
What is the cost of not implementing this system?

	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Annual subscription cost included	◯	◯	◯
Implementation and training fees are fixed	◯	◯	◯
Support and maintenance fees are included	◯	◯	◯

Comments