PLAYBOOK

The budget playbook: *how finance leaders run a budget process the business trusts*

Roles, calendar, and rules of engagement for budget season, and for the eleven months after it.



FOREWORD

Foreword



By Christina Ross
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Budget season rarely goes wrong because of the math. A capable analyst can build the model in a few weeks. The time goes into everything around it: getting a dozen department heads to submit on time, agreeing on which assumptions are fixed, deciding what happens when requests add up to 40% more spend than the targets allow, and making sure everyone understands the result before January.

When budget season goes badly, it's almost always a process failure. Nobody knew who made the final call. Departments built their submissions on different assumptions. Iteration rounds turned into rebuilds. The plan was approved in December and ignored by March.

AI makes the modeling much faster. Agents can return a scenario in minutes that used to take an analyst two days, and they can show a department head exactly how their request moves the company's margin. That speed only helps if the process around it is designed well. Somebody still has to decide who owns what, when each step happens, and what the rules are.

This playbook is that design. Use it as written, adjust it to your company, and send Chapter 5 to every budget owner on the day you kick off.

"The budget sets targets and guardrails. The forecast tells you where the year is actually going."

Christina

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External date
Board, investors, lenders, audit, tax. These dates don't move.

Internal cycle
Close, plan, refresh, comp. Set by finance.

Continuous work
Agent monitoring, daily and weekly review.

Signal
An event that overrides the calendar.

Agent work People work

Executive summary

Budget season is a process problem more than a modeling problem. The playbook runs in three stages.

Design the process. Before kickoff

- **Decide the design first.** Hybrid approach, with finance setting envelopes and showing its work. Chapter 1.
- **Name an owner for every step.** One accountable person per step, written down in a RACI. Chapter 2.

Build the budget. Kickoff to submissions

- **Plan backward from the board date.** About 12 weeks from kickoff to approval. Chapter 3.
- **Lock the company-wide assumptions.** Departments build on finance's inputs, in one model. Chapter 4.
- **Write the rules, then train people on them.** Deadlines, thresholds, rollover, escalation. Chapter 5.

Decide and run it. Iterations through the year

- **Close the gap from the target.** Two leadership reviews, scenarios in the room, a decision on every item. Chapter 6.
- **Approve and communicate.** Packet out a week before the board; final budgets to owners within four days. Chapter 7.
- **Run it all year.** The budget stays fixed as the target, the forecast runs continuously, and reallocation rules are set before January 1. Chapter 8.

KEY DATES · EXAMPLE: FY2028 BUDGET

DATE	MILESTONE
Thu, Sep 23	Kickoff
Fri, Nov 12	Department budgets due
Fri, Dec 3	Leadership sign-off
Thu, Dec 16	Board approves the plan

First time running a budget? Start with the setup checklist on the next page.

START HERE

Setting up a budget process for the first time



If your company has never run a formal budget season, work through this list in order. Each step points to the chapter that covers it. Start about 8 weeks before the kickoff date.

8 WEEKS BEFORE KICKOFF: MAKE THE DESIGN DECISIONS

☐ Confirm the board approval date	CHAPTER 7	CFO, CEO
☐ Choose top-down, bottom-up, or hybrid	CHAPTER 1	CFO, CEO
☐ Decide who puts the first number on the table	CHAPTER 1	CFO
☐ Name every budget owner	CHAPTER 2	CFO
☐ Fill in the RACI for your company	TOOL 2	CFO, FP&A

6 TO 8 WEEKS BEFORE: BUILD THE FOUNDATION

☐ Set up one model, with a template per department	CHAPTER 4	FP&A
☐ Reconcile the actuals baseline	CHAPTER 4	Controller, FP&A
☐ Load the headcount baseline from the HR system	CHAPTER 4	People/HR
☐ Pick the driver-based lines	CHAPTER 1	FP&A
☐ Agree allocation methods	CHAPTER 4	Controller

4 TO 6 WEEKS BEFORE: SET THE RULES

☐ **Lock the company-wide assumptions**	CHAPTER 4	CFO · People/HR · RevOps
☐ **Write the philosophy memo**	TOOL 1	CFO
☐ **Fill in the rules of engagement**	CHAPTER 5	CFO · FP&A
☐ **Draft the reallocation rules**	CHAPTER 8	CFO

2 TO 4 WEEKS BEFORE: PREPARE THE BUDGET OWNERS

☐ **Draft envelopes by function**	CHAPTER 1	FP&A · CFO
☐ **Send the calendar**	CHAPTER 3	FP&A
☐ **Book the working sessions and both leadership reviews**	CHAPTER 6	FP&A
☐ **Brief first-time budget owners**	CHAPTER 5	FP&A · Budget owners

In the final week, run the kickoff checklist in Tool 3.

CHAPTER 1

Decide what kind of budget you're running



Before kickoff, the CFO makes four design decisions. Most budget-season fights trace back to one of them being left open.

What to do

- [ ] **Pick top-down, bottom-up, or hybrid.** Write one sentence on why.
- [ ] **Decide who puts the first number on the table.** Finance envelopes, or department proposals.
- [ ] **Choose your driver-based lines.** Headcount, sales and marketing, hosting, services delivery.
- [ ] **Pick one function for a zero-based review.** Start with the one whose spend grew fastest.
- [ ] **Write all four decisions into the philosophy memo.** Use Tool 1. Finish it before kickoff.

Decision 1: Top-down, bottom-up, or hybrid

APPROACH	HOW IT WORKS	WHEN IT FITS
↓ **Top-down**	Leadership sets spend envelopes by function; departments allocate within them	Early-stage companies, tight cash, or a clear margin target
↑ **Bottom-up**	Departments build requests from their own needs; finance consolidates	Stable businesses with experienced budget owners
↓↑ **Hybrid**	Leadership sets targets and envelopes; departments build bottom-up inside them; finance reconciles the gap	Most mid-size companies

This playbook assumes the hybrid approach. It keeps strategy in the CEO's hands and puts the detail with the people who will spend the money.

Decision 2: Driver-based or line-item

A line-item budget lists every expense. A driver-based budget ties spend to the things that cause it: headcount, pipeline, customers, units shipped. Driver-based budgets take more setup and pay off every time the business changes, because changing a driver updates every line that depends on it. Use drivers for the large, variable lines (headcount, sales and marketing, hosting, services delivery) and line items for the rest.

Decision 3: What the budget is for

A budget can try to predict the year or it can set targets and guardrails. Teams that try to make it predict the year end up reforecasting it into irrelevance by March. In this playbook, the budget sets the targets each function commits to and the limits it operates within. The continuous forecast handles prediction.

Decision 4: Who puts the first number on the table

Every budget conversation starts with a number. The question is whose. There are two common ways to run it, and the choice shapes the whole season.

Option A: Finance gives each department its number. Finance sets an envelope for each function, derived from the company targets, and the department head builds a budget that fits inside it.

WHY IT WORKS	WHERE IT BREAKS
The budget starts anchored to the company's targets, so the totals add up before anyone builds anything	Department heads can feel the number was imposed, and a budget someone didn't help set is a budget they don't own
It removes the incentive to pad, because the request can't start high and negotiate down	Finance may not know what the function needs, such as a contract renewal coming in 30% higher or a team already stretched thin
Iteration is shorter, since the gap between requests and targets is small from day one	If finance gets the envelope wrong, the error spreads through the whole plan

Option B: The department proposes a number, and finance tells them whether it works. Each department head builds the budget they think they need, and finance evaluates it against the targets.

WHY IT WORKS	WHERE IT BREAKS
The people closest to the work surface real needs and risks finance can't see	Requests anchor high. Experienced budget owners pad, because they expect to be cut
Department heads own the number, because they built it	The first consolidation lands far above the targets, and closing the gap takes several rounds
Good for stable businesses where last year is a reliable guide	Finance becomes the function that says no, which damages the partnership the rest of the year

THE VERSION TO AVOID: "BRING ME A NUMBER" WITH NO TARGET

The worst approach is a disguised Option B: finance asks for a number without sharing the target, then rejects whatever comes back. Department heads end up guessing what the CFO is thinking. Each rejection teaches them to pad more next time, and the process loses trust in both directions.

What we recommend. For most companies, finance should go first, and show its work. Give each department head a specific envelope, explain how it was derived from the company targets, and give them a defined way to push back: a "risks and asks" section where they can request more with a business case. That keeps the totals anchored to strategy and still captures what the department knows that finance doesn't.

Two adjustments make this work in practice:

- **Revenue-generating functions get a two-way number.** For sales, finance shares the bookings target, and RevOps builds a capacity-based number (reps, ramp, quota, attainment) independently. If the two numbers are far apart, that gap is the most important conversation of budget season, and it should happen in October.
- **Experienced budget owners in stable functions can propose first.** If a department head has hit their budget three years running and the function hasn't changed shape, let them build bottom-up and review it against the envelope. Earned trust shortens the process.

CHAPTER 2

Roles and responsibilities



Every step of the budget needs one person who owns it. When ownership is unclear, decisions drift up to the CEO late in November.

What to do

- [ ] **Put a name next to every role.** One person, not a team.
- [ ] **Fill in the RACI in Tool 2.** Every step gets exactly one A.
- [ ] **Confirm every budget owner by name.** Tell each of them before kickoff.
- [ ] **Send the RACI with the calendar.** So nobody has to ask who decides.

WHO DOES WHAT

A Accountable · R Responsible · C Consulted · I Informed

	CEO	CFO	FP&A	BUDGET OWNERS	PEOPLE/HR	REVOPS	CONTROLLER	BOARD
Strategic targets	A	R	C	I	I	C	I	C
Philosophy memo and assumptions	C	A/R	R	I	C	C	C	
Templates and model		A	R	I	C	C	C	
Actuals baseline		A	C	I			R	
Headcount plan	C	A	R	R	R	C		
Revenue plan	C	A	R	C		R		
Department budgets		A	C	R	C			
Iterations and tradeoffs	A	R	R	C	C	C		
Final recommendation	C	A/R	R	I	I	I	C	
Board approval	R	R	C					A
Communicate final budgets	I	A	R	I	I	I	I	
In-year reallocation	C	A	R	R			I	

The roles

Before kickoff, write down who does what for your company, using the roles below as a starting point. Put a name next to each role, fill in the RACI in Tool 2, and send both to every budget owner with the calendar. When a question comes up in November, everyone should already know who answers it.

- **CEO.** Sets the strategy and the top-line targets. Breaks ties between functions. Approves the final plan before it goes to the board.
- **CFO.** Owns the process end to end. Writes the philosophy memo, sets the assumptions, recommends the final plan, and presents it to the board. Owns the financial integrity of every number.
- **FP&A.** Runs the calendar, the model, the templates, and the iteration rounds. Supports every budget owner and keeps one version of the truth.
- **Department heads and budget owners.** Build their budgets inside the envelopes, defend them in review, and own them for the full year.
- **People/HR.** Provides the headcount baseline, comp bands, merit and promotion assumptions, and benefits load. Owns the merit pool once approved.
- **RevOps and sales leadership.** Own bookings capacity, quota, ramp, and territory assumptions that drive the revenue plan.
- **Controller and accounting.** Own the actuals baseline, the chart of accounts, and allocation methods. Confirm the budget maps cleanly to how the books are kept.
- **The board.** Reviews and approves the plan.
- **The Digital Finance Team (AI agents).** Model scenarios, calculate gaps between requests and targets, draft variance explanations, and assemble board materials. Agents do the work. Finance sets the rules, and people decide.

CHAPTER 3

The calendar



FOUR MONTH GRIDS · EXAMPLE: SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2027, BUDGETING FY2028

EXTERNAL · INTERNAL · CONTINUOUS · SIGNAL · AGENTS · PEOPLE

September 2027

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 CFO	18
19	20	21	22	23 CFO	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 FP&A		

October 2027

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 CEO	16
17	18 OWNERS	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 OWNERS	30
31						

November 2027

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 OWNERS	13
14	15 FP&A	16	17	18 REVIEW	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 HOLIDAY	26	27
28	29	30 REVIEW				

December 2027

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3 CEO	4
5	6	7	8	9 CFO	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 BOARD	17 REVOPS	18
19	20 FP&A	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Green tint: kickoff to approval. Each marked date shows its owner.

Plan backward from the board meeting that approves the plan. Everything else follows from that date.

What to do

- [ ] **Confirm the board approval date first.** Every other date plans backward from it.
- [ ] **Count back about 12 weeks to set kickoff.** Fewer than eight forces shortcuts.
- [ ] **Give every date an owner.** Use the table below as your starting list.
- [ ] **Book both leadership reviews now.** Before executive calendars fill up.
- [ ] **Send each budget owner their dates.** Highlight the ones that are theirs.

DATE		STEP	OWNER
Fri, Sep 17	−90 days	Long-range model final; strategic targets set	CEO, CFO
Fri, Sep 17	−90 days	Assumptions locked; philosophy memo final	CFO
Thu, Sep 23	−84 days	Kickoff: memo, targets, envelopes, rules of engagement sent to every budget owner	CFO
Thu, Sep 30	−77 days	Templates open in the model; budget owner working sessions	FP&A
Fri, Oct 15	−62 days	Top-down envelopes final by function	CEO, CFO
Mon, Oct 18	−59 days	Department budget build begins	Budget owners
Fri, Oct 29	−48 days	Headcount requests due	Budget owners, People/HR
Fri, Nov 12	−34 days	Department budgets due	Budget owners
Mon, Nov 15	−31 days	Iterations begin; gap analysis to leadership	FP&A, CFO

DATE		STEP	OWNER
Thu, Nov 18	−28 days	Leadership budget review, round one	CEO, CFO, Function leaders
Thu, Nov 25		Thanksgiving	
Tue, Nov 30	−16 days	Leadership budget review, round two	CEO, CFO, Function leaders
Fri, Dec 3	−13 days	Leadership sign-off	CEO
Thu, Dec 9	−7 days	Board packet sent	CFO
Thu, Dec 16	Board date	Board approves the FY2028 plan	Board
Fri, Dec 17	+1 day	Sales comp plans and quotas final	RevOps, CFO
Mon, Dec 20	+4 days	Final budgets communicated to every budget owner	FP&A
Sat, Jan 1, 2028	+16 days	Plan live	Everyone

Timing guidance: For a mid-size company, 12 weeks from kickoff to board approval is comfortable. Fewer than eight weeks forces shortcuts. More than 14 usually means the process is waiting on decisions nobody owns.

CHAPTER 4

Inputs and assumptions



The fastest way to lose two weeks of budget season is to let each department pick its own assumptions. Finance locks the company-wide inputs before kickoff, and departments build on top of them.

What to do

- [ ] **Lock every assumption in the table.** Name its owner and record the value.
- [ ] **Load the actuals and headcount baselines.** Before templates open to budget owners.
- [ ] **Tell departments exactly what to submit.** Headcount, non-headcount spend, business cases, risks and asks.
- [ ] **Retire side spreadsheets.** Every submission lands in the one model.

ASSUMPTIONS FINANCE LOCKS

ASSUMPTION	OWNER	EXAMPLE INPUT
Revenue and margin targets	CEO CFO	From the strategic plan
Merit and promotion increases	People/HR CFO	Percentage by level, effective date
Benefits and payroll tax load	People/HR Controller	Percentage of base salary
New hire costs	People/HR	Recruiting, equipment, software per hire
Vendor and software inflation	FP&A	Percentage by category, or per-contract renewal terms
FX rates	CFO	Budget rate by currency
Allocation methods	Controller	How shared costs (rent, IT) are allocated
Bookings capacity and ramp	RevOps	Quota per rep, ramp months, attainment assumption

What each department submits

- **Headcount:** every role, by level, location, and start month, with existing headcount pre-loaded from the HR system
- **Non-headcount spend:** by vendor or category, with the driver behind each large line
- **Business cases:** for new headcount and new spend over the threshold
- **Risks and asks:** anything the department expects to need that it couldn't fit in the envelope

One model. Every submission lands in the same governed model, with no emailed spreadsheets and no side versions. Budget owners can work in a spreadsheet if they prefer, as long as it's connected to the model.

CHAPTER 5

Rules of engagement



Writing the rules is half the job. Every budget owner also has to know them before kickoff: what happens to a late submission, whether unspent budget rolls over, who settles a disagreement. Rules that live only in finance's head get discovered in November, one argument at a time.

What to do

- [ ] **Fill in every bracket on the page below.** Dates, dollar thresholds, contacts.
- [ ] **Decide whether unspent budget rolls over.** And say so in the rules.
- [ ] **Run a short training session in kickoff week.** Walk every budget owner through the rules.
- [ ] **Send the page to every budget owner.** As the reference they keep all season.

FY2028 budget: rules of engagement

- **1. Deadlines are firm.** Submissions are due Friday, November 12. Late submissions default to this year's run rate plus the locked inflation assumption.
- **2. Assumptions are locked.** Merit, benefits, inflation, FX, and allocations come from finance. Don't set your own.
- **3. Build inside your envelope.** Finance sets your envelope from the company targets and will walk you through how it was derived. It's final as of Friday, October 15. If you need more, put the request in the "risks and asks" section with a business case. That's the path for pushing back, and every request there gets a response.
- **4. Every new hire has a role, a level, a start month, and a reason.** Requests without all four won't be modeled.
- **5. New spend over $[threshold] needs a business case.** State what it produces and when.
- **6. One version of the numbers.** Your budget lives in the model. Side spreadsheets aren't part of the process.
- **7. Budget to hit it.** Targets and budgets are commitments. Don't pad them. The forecast will absorb what changes during the year.
- **8. Use your working sessions.** FP&A holds open sessions every Tuesday and Thursday from September 30 through November 12. Bring questions early.
- **9. Escalation path.** Disagreements go to the CFO first, then the CEO. The CEO's call is final.
- **10. The budget you submit is the budget you own.** Once approved, you manage to it all year, with the reallocation rules in Chapter 8.
- **11. Unspent budget [does / doesn't] roll over.** Spend not used by the end of [the quarter / the year] [returns to the company / carries forward to the next period].

Questions: [FP&A contact]

CHAPTER 6

Iterations and negotiation



In most companies, the first consolidation shows requests well above the targets. How finance closes that gap decides whether budget season ends in early December or late January.

What to do

- [ ] **Send the gap analysis the Monday submissions close.** Targets, requests, gap by function, top three drivers.
- [ ] **Bring three scenarios to each leadership review.** Start from the target and work backward.
- [ ] **End every agenda item with a decision and an owner.** Unresolved items go to the CEO with a deadline.
- [ ] **Give every declined request a reason and a path.** What would have to be true to fund it.

If departments proposed first, expect a bigger gap. When budget owners build without an envelope, the first consolidation usually lands well above target. Budget an extra round for it, and share the targets before round one so the second submission moves toward them.

Start from the gap, in one view. On Monday, November 15, FP&A sends leadership a single page: the targets, the consolidated requests, the gap by function, and the three largest drivers of the gap. Agents can produce this the morning the submissions close.

Start from the target. Instead of asking each department to cut 10% and resubmit, start from the target and work backward. If the company needs to recover 300 basis points of margin, ask which combinations of hiring, pricing, vendor spend, and marketing investment get there. The output moves from “build me a scenario” to “here are three viable paths and their financial consequences.” Leadership picks a path, and departments adjust inside it.

Run the leadership review as a decision meeting

- Send the gap analysis and scenarios 48 hours ahead.
- Spend the meeting on tradeoffs, one function at a time, with the scenario live on screen so changes recalculate in the room.
- End each agenda item with a decision and an owner. Anything unresolved goes to the CEO with a deadline.

How to say no. Every declined request gets a reason and a path: what would have to be true to fund it, and when it can be revisited. Budget owners who understand why they got a no stay invested in the plan.

CHAPTER 7

Approval and the board



What to do

- [ ] **Set the packet countdown from the board date.** T-28 through T-0.
- [ ] **Lock the numbers at leadership sign-off.** No changes after T-13.
- [ ] **Cover all six sections in the packet.** Targets, bridge, headcount, cash, tradeoffs, risks.
- [ ] **Send final budgets within four days of approval.** With what changed and why.

DATE	DAYS OUT	WHAT HAPPENS
Thu, Nov 18	T-28	Packet structure drafted with round-one numbers
Tue, Nov 30	T-16	Round-two numbers flow into the draft
Thu, Dec 2	T-14	CFO writes the narrative
Fri, Dec 3	T-13	Leadership sign-off; numbers final
Thu, Dec 9	T-7	Packet sent to the board
Thu, Dec 16	T-0	Board approves the plan

What the plan approval packet covers

- **1. The targets.** Revenue, margin, cash, and the headline KPIs.
- **2. The bridge.** How the plan gets from this year's landing estimate to next year's targets, by driver.
- **3. Headcount.** Where the company is adding people, by function and quarter.
- **4. Cash and runway.** Monthly cash through the year, and any financing assumptions.
- **5. Investments and tradeoffs.** The top priorities funded, and what was deliberately left out.
- **6. Risks and sensitivities.** What happens to the plan if the largest assumptions miss, such as revenue 10% below target.

CHAPTER 8

After approval: running the budget all year



Most budgets fail after they're approved. The plan gets locked in December, the business changes in February, and by March leaders are managing to a document nobody trusts.

What to do

- [ ] **Write the reallocation thresholds before January 1.** Fill in the $[X] and $[Y] in the table below.
- [ ] **Give every budget owner live actuals against budget.** In the tools they already use.
- [ ] **Schedule quarterly budget reviews now.** Each owner with their finance partner.
- [ ] **Agree when you'd reset the budget.** Strategy change, financing event, or a gap too large to guide behavior.

The budget becomes the baseline. Keep the approved budget fixed as the target. Run the forecast continuously against it, so leadership always sees the plan, the current forecast, and the gap.

Budget owners see their spend as it happens. Each owner sees actuals against budget in the tools they already use, without waiting for a month-end report. When something trends off plan, the context comes with it. At 2:14 AM, agents flag marketing spend 12% over plan, with pipeline creation down 8%, and draft three scenarios. At 9:05 AM, the CFO and CMO pick one.

Reallocation rules. Set them before the year starts, so mid-year changes don't need a negotiation every time:

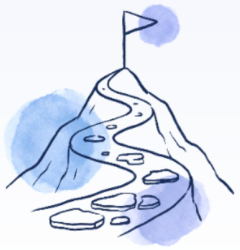
CHANGE	WHO CAN APPROVE
Moving spend between lines within a department, under $[X]	Budget owner
Moving spend between lines within a department, over $[X]	Budget owner and FP&A
Moving spend between departments	CFO
New headcount not in the plan	CFO and CEO
Increasing total company spend	CEO, and the board if above $[Y]

Quarterly budget reviews. Each quarter, every budget owner reviews actuals, forecast, and budget with their finance partner. Decide together whether the gap is timing, a change in the business, or a miss.

When to reset. Reset the budget mid-year only for a change in strategy, a financing event, or a gap large enough that the targets no longer guide behavior. Otherwise, keep the budget fixed and let the forecast carry the change.

TOOLS

Tools



Tool 1: Budget philosophy memo

To: Leadership team · From: CFO · Date: [Kickoff date]

- **Approach:** [Top-down / bottom-up / hybrid], and why
- **Who sets the first number:** [Finance sets envelopes / departments propose], and how to push back
- **Budget method:** Driver-based for [lines]; line-item for the rest
- **Zero-based review this year:** [Function]
- **Company targets:** Revenue $[ ], operating margin [ ]%, ending cash $[ ]
- **Top three priorities the budget must fund:** 1. [ ] 2. [ ] 3. [ ]
- **What we won't fund this year:** [ ]
- **Key dates:** Kickoff [ ], budgets due [ ], board approval [ ]

Tool 2: RACI (blank)

A blank version of the Chapter 2 table, with your roles across the top and your steps down the side.

STEP												

Tool 3: Kickoff checklist

Run this in the final week before kickoff. Every item should already be done; this is the check that nothing was missed.

STRATEGY AND APPROACH

☐ Strategic targets agreed with the CEO	CHAPTER 1	CFO, CEO
☐ Philosophy memo written and approved	TOOL 1	CFO, CEO
☐ Board meeting date confirmed and packet countdown set	CHAPTER 7	CFO

DATA AND MODEL

☐ Actuals baseline reconciled with the controller	CHAPTER 4	Controller, FP&A
☐ Headcount baseline loaded from the HR system	CHAPTER 4	People/HR
☐ Templates built in the model, one per department	CHAPTER 4	FP&A

RULES AND LIMITS

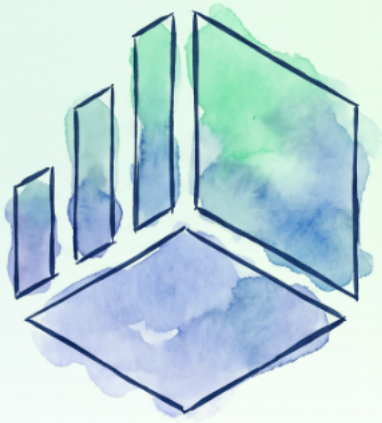
☐ Company-wide assumptions locked	CHAPTER 4	CFO
☐ Envelopes drafted by function	CHAPTER 1	FP&A, CFO
☐ Rules of engagement finalized with dates and thresholds	CHAPTER 5	CFO
☐ Reallocation rules drafted for next year	CHAPTER 8	CFO

COMMUNICATION

☐ Calendar sent to every budget owner	CHAPTER 3	FP&A
☐ Rules training scheduled for kickoff week	CHAPTER 5	FP&A
☐ Working sessions scheduled	CHAPTER 6	FP&A

Ready to put this guide into practice?

Learn more about Cube



The agentic FP&A platform that helps you tell the story behind the numbers. Founded by three-time CFO Christina Ross.

Start your free trial →

Or get a demo

We believe the future of business is finance-driven. Cube connects your business data into one governed model and brings it everywhere decisions happen.

How finance teams use Cube

Close and consolidation

Multi-entity rollups and a faster month-end.

Budgeting and planning

Budgets, headcount, and revenue plans.

Forecasting and scenarios

Rolling forecasts and what-ifs in minutes.

Reporting and board decks

Packs in Excel, Sheets, and slides.

Variance analysis

Drivers explained and traced to the GL.

KPIs and performance

One set of metrics for the business.

AI Agents: Your Always-On Digital Finance Team

Charlie, the superagent, routes work to four FP&Agent teams. People stay in control.

The Data Managers
Integrate and reconcile

The Analysts
Analyze and report

The Planners
Forecast and model

The Business Partners
Shape decisions