12 Moves to Modern Finance

A 2026 Strategy Playbook for ANZ CFOs

ProSpend

Introduction

Finance teams are expected to deliver sharper control and faster insight, even as regulatory pressure, fraud attempts, and operational risk rise. Yet many still rely on email-driven workflows and manual checks that create delays, exceptions, and audit challenges.

As expectations grow, clarity of data, ownership, and process becomes essential — but manual, individual-driven workflows limit visibility and slow decision-making. Modernising isn't about replacing people; it's about removing the friction that holds them back. Teams that act early gain time, confidence, and resilience, while those who wait absorb the rising cost of rework, delays, and compliance exposure.

The opportunity is to build a finance function designed not just to keep up, but to get ahead.

Executive Summary

The pressures on finance have shifted, but many of the processes supporting them haven't. Recent industry insights reveal where the biggest cracks are forming.

- **Over 60% of finance teams identify manual errors and oversight gaps as their biggest fraud risk,** showing how exposed manual processes still are. *(ProSpend EDGE Fraud)*

- **More than 40% of organisations experience after-the-fact approvals,** a major driver of surprise invoices and weakened spend control. *(ProSpend EDGE PO)*

- **50% of finance teams say delayed approvals slow month-end close,** while 27% lose hours each week chasing sign-offs. *(ProSpend EDGE Approvals)*

- **Finance workflows built around email and disconnected tools continue to drive exceptions and audit issues,** according to our *Stop the AP Leak Report.*

These findings reveal a finance landscape where the complexity of the work has outpaced the systems many teams rely on. Leaders want tighter governance, clearer visibility, and more time for strategic contribution — but legacy processes keep them in manual cycles and reactive problem-solving.

The path forward isn't sweeping transformation. It's a series of intentional moves that strengthen control, reduce risk, and build a foundation for clearer, faster decisions. Leaders who modernise now set themselves up for a year defined by clarity rather than chaos — one where finance leads with confidence, not compromise.

12 Moves to Modern Finance

A month-by-month strategic guide to the moments that give finance teams real leverage. With the support of ProSpend, turn each move into measurable progress with connected and automated spend control.

Move 1: Reclaim Control

Establish Your Operating Model

Email-driven approvals slow teams from the outset, creating visibility gaps that carry into month-end. With **35–50% of invoices taking over 3 days to approve**, early-year spend becomes reactive instead of intentional. January is the moment to reset ownership and workflow discipline before volumes rise and inefficiencies harden.

QUESTION

What would it be worth to start Q1 knowing every dollar is approved by the right person, every time?

Move 1: Reclaim Control

Strategic Priorities

✓ Define approval ownership

📊 Set spend thresholds

🔗 Embed policy in workflow

What You Win Back

A faster, cleaner approval cycle that prevents early-year spend leakage and reduces follow-ups — a key driver of month-end delays for **50% of teams.** *(ProSpend EDGE Approvals)*

Move 2: Spend Smarter with Virtual Cards

Activate the Knights: Agility with Boundaries

As spending activity accelerates, admin from small purchases grows quickly. **One third of finance teams spend more than three hours a week chasing outstanding approvals,** slowing turnaround time and increasing errors. Virtual Cards shift compliance to the point of spend, reducing correction work and improving real-time visibility.

QUESTION

If every low-value purchase came with instant visibility and no receipt-chasing, how much time would your team get back?

Move 2: Spend Smarter with Virtual Cards

Strategic Priorities for This Move

Assign project-based cards

Automate coding rules

Enforce upfront limits

What You Win Back

Cleaner transactions from day one, reducing the downstream errors and mismatched documentation that slow reconciliation.

Move 3: Lock Down FBT

Strengthen Your Defence Before Pressure Builds

FBT exposes the weak points in expense coding and documentation. Every missing receipt or misclassified item increases risk, and our Stop the AP Leak Report identifies documentation gaps as a major source of audit findings. Starting classification earlier reduces rework and gives teams firmer control during the tightest compliance window of the year.

> **QUESTION**
>
> *If every FBT-relevant claim was already classified correctly, how much stress would your team avoid this month?*

Move 3: Lock Down FBT

Strategic Priorities

Apply FBT rules early

Capture receipts instantly

Standardise expense categories

What You Win Back

A smoother, more accurate FBT cycle with far fewer rework points — especially those caused by missing or delayed documentation.

Move 4: Strengthen PO Discipline

Castle Your Structural Control Before the Midgame

Inconsistent PO use results in budget surprises and exceptions at the worst time of year. **Over 42% of organisations still face after-the-fact approvals,** making spend harder to predict and reconcile. April is the last chance to establish disciplined purchasing before EOFY volatility increases the cost of weak controls.

QUESTION

If every invoice arrived with a matching PO, how predictable would your cash flow and budgets become?

Move 4: Strengthen PO Discipline

Strategic Priorities for This Move

Set PO thresholds

Route approvals consistently

Link POs to budgets

What You Win Back

Predictable, auditable spend — reducing the after-the-fact approvals that plague organisations.

Move 5: Win The Budget Game

Strengthen Your Strategic Stance Before the Midyear Shift

Midyear is where budget drift becomes visible — but only if teams are equipped with timely insights. Many organisations wait until late in the year to investigate variances, limiting their ability to adjust. May is the clearest opportunity to realign forecasts, reallocate intelligently, and proactively shape the financial trajectory of Q4.

QUESTION

What would shift if your reforecasting conversations were driven by real-time clarity instead of retrospective correction?

Move 5: Win The Budget Game

Strategic Priorities

Refresh forecasts

Reallocate intentionally

Flag overspend early

What You Win Back

Sharper, earlier financial insight that prevents the budget surprises common later in the year.

Move 6: Close Fast, Close Clean

Tighten Your Endgame for a Clean Finish

EOFY magnifies process breakdowns. Our Stop the AP Leak Report highlights how fragmented workflows lead to exceptions, missing documentation, and late discoveries that slow the close. Entering June with consistent approvals, accurate data, and fewer manual gaps allows teams to focus on accuracy, not firefighting.
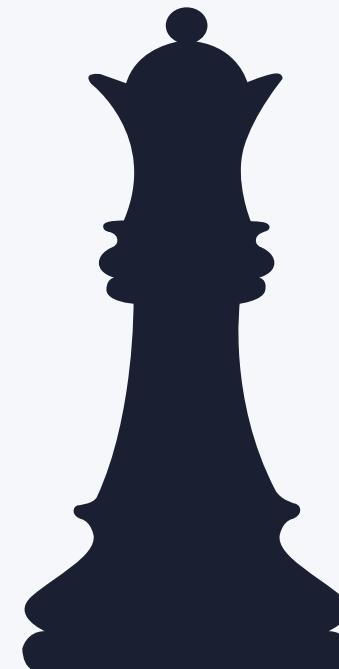
QUESTION

What would your EOFY look like if nothing needed to be chased?

Move 6: Close Fast, Close Clean

Strategic Priorities for This Move

Enforce cutoffs

Automate audit packs

Streamline final approvals

What You Win Back

A smoother, faster close with fewer exceptions and less end-of-year rework.

Move 7: Unify Your Platform

Reset the Board With Unified Foundations

Fragmented tools disrupt visibility and create unnecessary reconciliation work. Disconnected workflows — a recurring issue in our *Stop the AP Leak Report* — reduce reporting confidence and delay decision-making. July's fresh financial year is the ideal time to consolidate systems and remove operational friction before volumes rise again.

QUESTION

How much stronger would your decisions be if every spend, approval, and budget insight lived in one connected platform?

Move 7: Unify Your Platform

Strategic Priorities

Consolidate tools

Align workflows

Centralise reporting

What You Win Back

A cohesive finance ecosystem that eliminates blind spots and accelerates decision-making.

Move 8: Validate Your Vendors

Strengthen Your Position Through Trusted Partnerships

Vendor data issues accumulate quietly until they create significant downstream problems. In our webinar polls, **over 60% of teams identified manual oversight gaps** as their biggest vulnerability, many of which originate from unverified supplier details. August offers the breathing room to clean, verify, and stabilise your vendor base before pressure returns.

QUESTION

How much risk sits inside vendor records you haven't revisited in months?

Move 8: Validate Your Vendors

Strategic Priorities

Validate ABNs

Clean bank details

Remove duplicates

What You Win Back

A cleaner, safer supplier ecosystem that reduces fraud exposure and payment errors.

Move 9: Fight Fraud Proactively

Enhance Your Strategic Sightlines to Stay Ahead of Risk

Fraud risk increases as workloads intensify and oversight becomes reactive. With more than **66% of organisations reporting moderate to significant increases in fraud attempts** in the past year. September is the time to enhance detection, automate monitoring, and strengthen the pathways where risk most commonly enters.
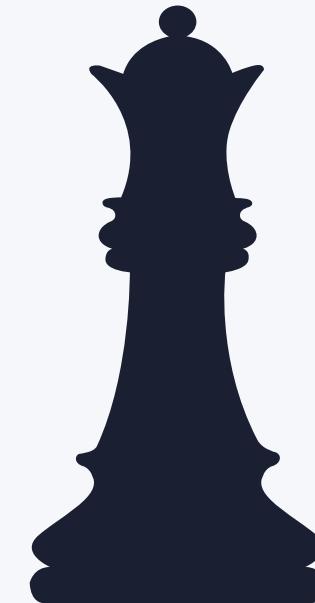
> **QUESTION**
>
> *If every fraudulent attempt was blocked before reaching your team, how much capacity would you gain back?*

Move 9: Fight Fraud Proactively

Strategic Priorities

○○● Enforce multi-step approvals

▤ Activate anomaly checks

⛓ Centralise audit trails

What You Win Back

Earlier detection and fewer downstream surprises — reducing the manual oversight that leads to most fraud errors.

Move 10: Lead With Insight

Solidify Your Reporting Structure for Clear Direction

By October, financial patterns are fully formed — if systems can surface them. Fragmented data environments weaken visibility just when leaders need clarity most. Strengthening reporting foundations now ensures Q4 decisions are informed by real-time, trusted data rather than end-of-month surprises.

QUESTION

If every department could see the same real-time financial picture, how different would your Q4 decisions look?haven't revisited in months?

Move 10: Lead With Insight

Strategic Priorities

Build live dashboards

Track KPI variances

Share insights cross-functionally

What You Win Back

Clarity — enabling proactive, evidence-based steering instead of reactive, end-of-month corrections.

Move 11: Get Future-Ready

Strengthen Your Strategic Position Before the Year Resets

Planning season requires clarity and alignment — both of which diminish once the holiday period begins. November is the strategic window to evaluate capability gaps, confirm priorities, and secure buy-in before competing demands dilute focus. Strong positioning now prevents rushed decisions in January.
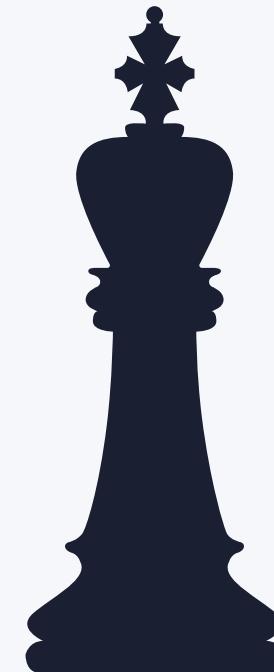
QUESTION

What would you change next year if you had the time, space, and backing to do it?

Move 11: Get Future-Ready

Strategic Priorities

Assess AI readiness

Prioritise workflow upgrades

Secure FY roadmap alignment

What You Win Back

A stronger starting position for the next year — not a reactive scramble once January arrives.

Move 12: Reflect And Reset

Close the Game With Clarity, Not Guesswork

December provides space to understand what strengthened or strained operations this year. When reflection is skipped, inefficiencies carry forward unchecked. Capturing lessons early and aligning on improvements ensures the next cycle begins with intention rather than inherited friction.

QUESTION

If your team captured every lesson from this year, how much stronger would your opening moves be next year?

Move 12: Reflect And Reset

Strategic Priorities

Review key outcomes

Capture team insights

Align FY learnings

What You Win Back

A clear, strategic starting point that strengthens the opening moves of the coming financial year.

Ready to Make Your Next Move?

Strategy only matters when it shows up in how your finance team operates.

ProSpend helps turn these moves into action by embedding control, visibility, and accountability directly into everyday spend.

Book a Demo

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