The CFO Imperative Series

How can treasurers transform to realize new value in a world of uncertainty?

EY Global DNA of the Treasurer Survey

September 2025

The better the question.
The better the answer.
The better the world works.

Shape the future with confidence

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Foreword

Today's treasurers have a mandate to transform finance and realize new value by balancing advanced financial risk and cash management with digital leadership, cross-functional collaboration and driving inspirational change.

Amid elevated levels of uncertainty, treasurers have a unique opportunity to transform the finance function and unlock additional value for their organizations. As stewards of financial risk and cash management, they are increasingly being called upon to embrace innovation and leverage technology to navigate the complexities of the business landscape.

The current global environment – characterized by geopolitical tensions, economic volatility and evolving social expectations – demands that treasurers drive strategic initiatives that enhance organizational resilience and competitiveness. They also are asked to proactively engage with the business to add value through faster risk identification and by providing real-time cash performance data that is tailored to business needs.

To rise to the challenges they face, treasurers are experiencing transformative journeys that are being set and led by their CFOs. Similar expectations for innovation and strategic partnership were highlighted by the *EY Global DNA of the CFO Survey* and the *EY Global DNA of the Financial Controller Survey*. Just as CFOs and controllers are evolving to meet the demands of their roles, treasurers are expected to combine their traditional responsibilities with a more proactive, collaborative approach – partnering to shape business strategy.

Technological advances, particularly in data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), are revolutionizing treasury operations. By harnessing these tools, treasurers can improve cash forecasting, optimize liquidity and hedging strategies, and provide valuable insights that inform enterprise decision-making. The ability to integrate real-time data and analytics into treasury practices can enable treasurers to become trusted business partners who help drive organizational success.

This report explores how treasurers can redefine their roles in response to the fast-changing business context. It highlights the eminence of the transformative treasurer – a forward-thinking financial leader who creates additional value by embracing change, championing sustainability and fostering a culture of innovation within the finance function.

By providing in-depth insights into the future of treasury management, this research showcases how treasurers can fulfill their potential as proactive value creators. It also offers practical advice for senior finance leaders looking to elevate their treasury teams. These insights form part of the CFO Imperative Series, which provides critical answers and insights to help finance leaders shape the future with confidence.

For more insights for CFOs, treasurers and other finance leaders, visit ey.com/CFO.

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Key findings:

the evolving role of treasurers in creating value

This research, based on a survey of more than 1,200 treasurers and senior finance leaders, reveals that treasurers have significant opportunities to realize new value for their organizations amid a turbulent business environment. As the finance function continues to transform to meet the changing needs of the organization, treasurers should adapt their mindsets, skills and tools to seize these opportunities effectively (for more information on the research, see "About the research" on page 47).

In the past, treasurers tended to be viewed primarily as custodians of cash and risk managers, focusing on liquidity and compliance. Now, the treasurer's role is undergoing a profound shift, in the same way that the roles of the CFO, financial controller and wider finance function are also shifting. Treasurers are increasingly expected to evolve into strategic partners who contribute to organizational growth – for example, by providing valuable insights around cash visibility and financial risk to help inform decision-making.

The research reveals that treasurers can play a critical role in value creation – in fact, their CFOs expect them to. Nevertheless, they face barriers to fulfilling their potential. To evolve as value creators, treasurers should follow the example of transformative treasurers – the top subset of the survey population. Transformative treasurers lead their profession in critical areas such as technology adoption, data-driven decision-making, collaboration and people development.

The following key findings illustrate how treasurers can create value and the challenges they may face as the role evolves.

1 The treasurer as value creator

1.1 To deliver on their CFO's expectations, treasurers must evolve their role and realize new opportunities for value creation.

The majority of CFOs surveyed (84%) expect treasurers to identify new value opportunities, yet just 52% of treasurers surveyed identify as proactive value creators.

1.2 Transformative treasurers intend to create value by playing a more prominent role in two business-critical areas.

Transformative treasurers are 53% more likely than treasurers overall to believe their role will evolve to have a greater focus on addressing liquidity flow and the cost of capital and managing enterprise risk.

1.3 Treasurers' operational responsibilities are hindering them from creating new value.

Treasurers believe the top three barriers to value creation are: managing external relationships with banks or investors (33%), operational responsibilities (33%), and a lack of time to enhance knowledge and expertise (32%).

2 Building resilience: financial risk and cash management

2.1 Treasurers have a significant opportunity to improve organizational decision-making through financial risk management, potentially by collaborating with other functions.

Only 27% of treasurers are "very confident" their strategies for managing financial risk are helping to improve decision-making across their organization.

2.2 Given how the treasurer's role is likely to evolve, treasurers should look to use financial risk management to better protect and create value going forward.

A majority (51%) of transformative treasurers and 43% of CFOs believe the treasurer's role will entail a significantly greater emphasis on managing financial risk in future – yet only 37% of treasurers think the same.

2.3 Transformative treasurers are 13% more likely to have personal responsibility for working capital and free cash flow, underlining their huge influence on cash management.

Just 29% of treasurers say they have full personal responsibility for their organization's working capital and free cash flow and the factors influencing it, rising to 42% of transformative treasurers.

3 Harnessing the transformative power of data and technology

3.1 Harnessing data and technology can enable treasurers to create new value for their organization.

Thirty percent of treasurers see leveraging data and technology as one of the top three ways in which they create value, ranking it highest overall.

3.2 Treasurers are enthusiastic advocates of technology, embracing new tools to carry out tasks that were previously performed manually.

Eighty-two percent of treasurers frequently use data analytics and visualization tools, rising to 97% of transformative treasurers.

3.3 Treasurers who exploit machine learning report more accurate forecasts, enabling their organizations to optimize their use of cash.

Sixty-five percent of treasurers report not having highly accurate 12-month forecasts – but those leveraging AI benefit from a 7% improvement in accuracy.

4 Nurturing talent and driving collaboration

4.1 Talent development is an important way for treasurers to create value.

Twenty-six percent of both treasurers and CFOs say developing finance talent through best-in-class treasury expertise is one of the top ways to create value.

4.2 CFOs have high levels of confidence in their treasurers' capabilities.

Fifty-nine percent of CFOs believe the CFO role should be the ultimate career ambition for a treasurer, with 14% saying they should aim for the CEO's job.

4.3 CFOs are far more likely than treasurers to believe that treasurers need support with leadership skills to evolve their roles.

Twenty-eight percent of CFOs think their treasurer needs additional support and training in leadership – but just 18% of treasurers acknowledge development requirements in this area.

Who are transformative treasurers?

With their forward-looking focus, transformative treasurers are the vanguard of the treasury profession. Proudly technology savvy, they harness the power of innovation and advanced technologies to build best-in-class treasury operations. They also prioritize data-driven insights that optimize financial risk and cash management while driving strategic decision-making.

Transformative treasurers keep risk management firmly at the top of their agenda, adopting leading-edge practices to mitigate operational risk. As part of this risk focus, they are engaged with their organization's sustainability strategy, understanding how sustainability presents both long-term risks and opportunities to create value. They also help to deliver the liquidity to invest in sustainability-related projects.

Above all, transformative treasurers are inspirational team players. By collaborating with senior leaders, they align treasury goals with organizational objectives. What's more, they are deeply focused on developing their people and cultivating a culture of continuous improvement and mentorship within their teams (see Appendix A for more information on transformative treasurers).

The transformative treasurers in this research were identified by a composite index that incorporated major areas of treasury competency from the survey answers. The raw index score was rescaled from 0 to 100, and treasurers in the 80th percentile of the index were identified as transformative. The views and behaviors of transformative treasurers are compared with the general survey population throughout this report.

Characteristics of transformative treasurer

Technology savvy

62%

advocate for new or improved technology at least three or more times per year **(compared with 51% of all treasurers surveyed).**

Strategic collaborators

65%

are extensively involved with company-wide strategic initiatives or plans **(compared with 41% of all treasurers surveyed).**

Data-driven decision-makers

97%

use data analytics and visualization tools **(compared with 82% of all treasurers surveyed).**

Champions of sustainability

59%

always support sustainability and ESG reporting **(compared with 24% of all treasurers surveyed).**

Risk management experts

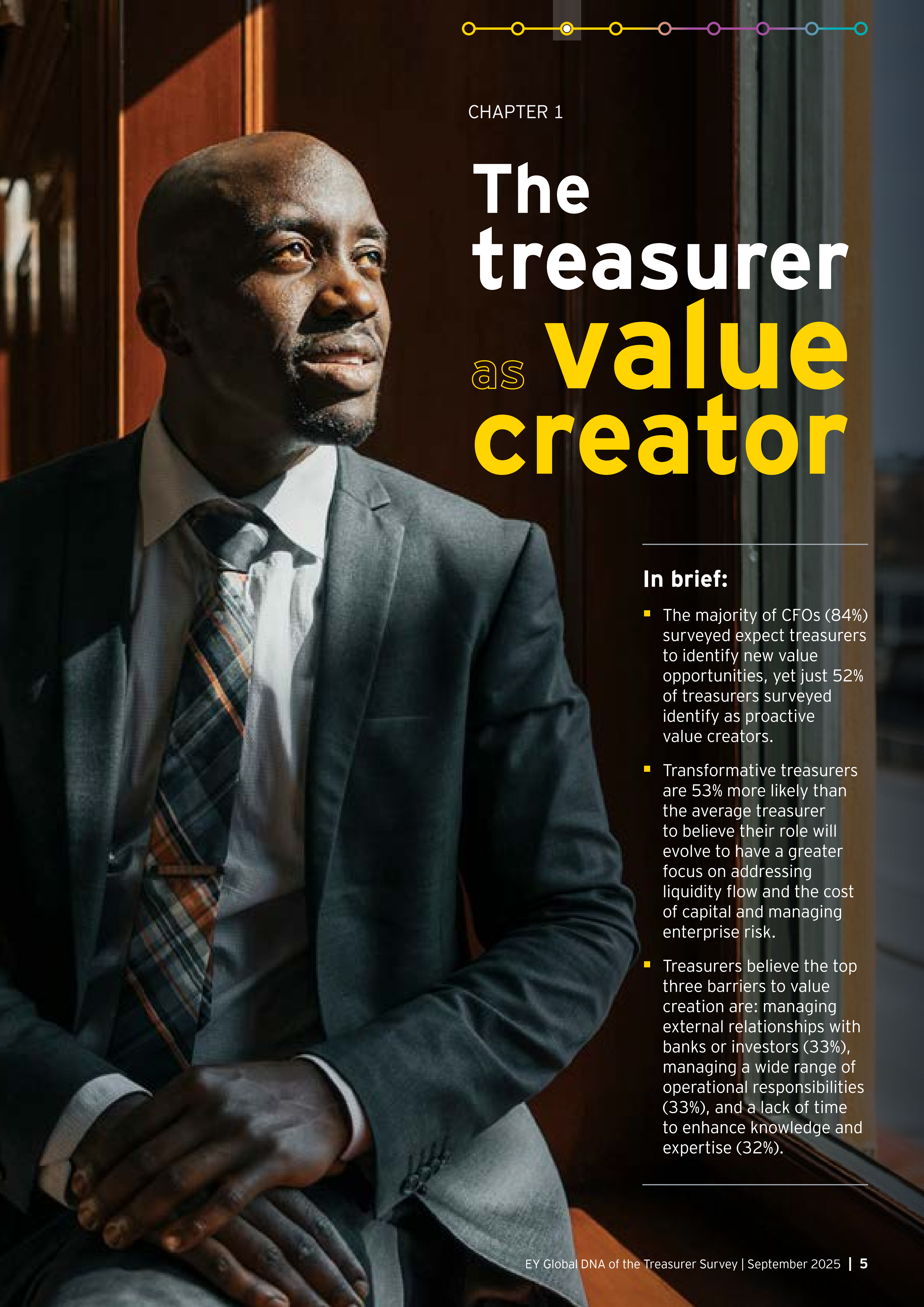
72%

review risk management frameworks on an annual basis at least **(compared with 64% of all treasurers surveyed).**

Mentors and leaders

49%

always engage in team building and career development activities **(compared with 26% of all treasurers surveyed).**



CHAPTER 1

The treasurer as value creator

In brief:

- The majority of CFOs (84%) surveyed expect treasurers to identify new value opportunities, yet just 52% of treasurers surveyed identify as proactive value creators.
- Transformative treasurers are 53% more likely than the average treasurer to believe their role will evolve to have a greater focus on addressing liquidity flow and the cost of capital and managing enterprise risk.
- Treasurers believe the top three barriers to value creation are: managing external relationships with banks or investors (33%), managing a wide range of operational responsibilities (33%), and a lack of time to enhance knowledge and expertise (32%).

From economic turbulence to geopolitical rivalry and trade wars, today's uncertain business environment is continually presenting organizations with new risks and opportunities.

Informed decision-making is vital to balance tactical, short-term priorities with strategic, long-term investments in this era of polycrisis. CFOs expect their treasury functions to play a pivotal role in mitigating the risks and seizing the opportunities that arise, creating new value for the organization in the process.

The value creation imperative

Despite the importance of treasury to business strategy, this research suggests that many treasurers are not yet fulfilling their potential as value creators. (See page 8 for a definition of what value creation, value protection and value optimization mean for treasury.) Only around half of all treasurers surveyed (52%) currently identify as proactive value creators. By contrast, 60% of controllers surveyed for the *2024 EY Global DNA of the Financial Controller Survey* said the same. This disparity raises important questions about the evolution of treasury compared with other finance functions. Controllers appear to be more confident in their value-creating capabilities, suggesting that treasurers may need to upskill and enhance their visibility and influence within their organization.

While many treasurers don't yet see themselves as value creators, they do recognize the importance of value creation. Four-fifths (80%) of treasurers surveyed believe that regularly identifying opportunities for creating new value is generally or very important for their role. This finding suggests that treasurers have the potential to significantly enhance their roles as value creators within their organizations – and they should aim to overcome barriers that may be preventing them from doing so. These barriers are explored in more detail below.

Notably, transformative treasurers have higher levels of confidence in their value-creating capacity than treasurers overall, which likely reflects the extent to which they are involved with company-wide initiatives and collaborate with the C-suite. Overall, 68% of transformative treasurers identify as proactive value creators, while 73% are very confident they have the appropriate skills. This likely reflects their leadership in critical areas such as technology adoption, data-driven decision-making, collaboration and people development.

93%

of CFOs surveyed are confident that their treasurers have the right skills to be value creators.

80%

of treasurers surveyed believe that regularly identifying opportunities for creating new value is important for their role.

68%

of transformative treasurers identify as proactive value creators.

Figure 1. Leveraging data and technology to drive organizational financial agility is the area where treasurers believe they create the most value.

Q **Treasurers: What does the term "value creator" mean to you in your role as a treasurer?**

Q **CFOs: Where do you think treasurers at your organization create value?**

Note: The respondents were asked to rank the top three areas where the treasurer creates the most value.

	Transformative treasurer	Treasurer	CFO
Leveraging data and technology to drive organizational financial agility	43%	30%	35%
Optimizing liquidity to ensure availability of cash across the group	30%	29%	26%
Developing finance talent through best-in-class treasury expertise	30%	26%	26%
Fostering a culture of innovation within the finance function	23%	25%	24%
Increasing cross-functional collaboration on finance matters	27%	24%	23%
Maintaining accurate financial forecasts	24%	24%	26%
Proactively mitigating financial risks to the organization	34%	23%	26%
Increasing and protecting enterprise value	19%	23%	21%
Influencing company strategy and purpose	16%	22%	23%
Leading a cash-focused culture	17%	20%	23%
Managing cost of capital	9%	19%	20%
Improving banking relationships	18%	17%	18%

The CFO perspective

Given today's challenging economic landscape, it is vital that treasurers consider how they can create more value for their organizations — not least because that's what their CFOs expect of them. A majority of CFOs surveyed (84%) believe it is generally or very important for treasurers to regularly identify opportunities for creating new value.

As well as endorsing their potential as value creators, CFOs believe that treasurers have the right skill sets to create value. Overall, 93% of CFOs surveyed are mostly or very confident that their treasurers have the right skills to be value creators, with 56% being very confident. Furthermore, almost half (49%) of CFOs surveyed believe their own treasurer is already a proactive value creator.

Significantly, CFOs are more likely than both treasurers and transformative treasurers to believe that treasurers at their organization create value by managing the cost of capital and leading a cash-focused culture. This is probably because CFOs appreciate the strategic importance of these traditional treasury responsibilities, which can help to drive growth and improve performance.

To encourage their treasury teams to embrace the role of value creators, CFOs can introduce performance metrics linked to value creation, such as increased levels of free cash flow and greater accuracy in the projected cash flow from operations. These growth-focused metrics should be balanced with traditional metrics focused on areas relating to cost and risk. Balancing growth-focused metrics with traditional metrics can support treasurers in shifting their mindsets in favor of value creation. It can also help the treasury function to demonstrate the return on investment of investing in treasury capabilities.

As these findings show, treasurers should adopt a more positive outlook on their capacity to act as value creators. They should engage with their CFO and other leaders within the organization to better understand the perceptions of treasury and how it can create value by playing a broader role within the organization: for example, by demonstrating enhanced financial agility and generating greater returns on capital. Treasurers can then work with their CFO to refresh the metrics for treasury performance to reflect desired changes in focus and behavior.

Value creation, value protection and value optimization: what do they mean for treasury?

Value creation encompasses a broad range of activities undertaken by treasury to drive organizational success. These can include unlocking additional cash to fund growth, minimizing the organization's cost of funding, increasing higher returns on surplus cash through informed investment strategies, raising finance to fund strategic acquisitions and providing valuable insights that influence the future strategic direction of the organization. Treasurers can also create value by collaborating with the C-suite and other leaders on enterprise-wide projects and initiatives, and developing first-class finance talent.

Value protection is a principal responsibility of treasury. Treasury can protect value by mitigating the organization's exposure to a wide range of risks, including foreign exchange (FX), commodity, counterparty, credit, inflation, interest rate and regulatory risk. It mitigates these risks through various strategies, such as bank diversification, due diligence, hedging, investing surplus cash, maintaining up-to-date policies and procedures, and refinancing debt at fixed interest rates.

Treasury **optimizes value** by having visibility over the organization's bank account data and making sure it has sufficient cash and liquidity to fulfill its day-to-day obligations. It also optimizes value by allocating cash to strategic projects, undertaking payments quickly and accurately, and establishing controlled, effective and streamlined processes. Another way that treasury achieves value optimization is by sharing data and collaborating with other functions to achieve organizational objectives.

A transformative treasurer recognizes the need to move beyond their traditional focus on value protection and optimization to spend more time on value creation. They effectively uphold all their value creation, value protection and value optimization responsibilities, rebalancing their efforts across the three areas in response to market conditions.

From cash manager to business strategist: the evolution of treasury

While cash management expertise will remain core to their remit, treasurers are set to play a broader advisory role within their organizations in future. They will be driving innovation, influencing strategic decision-making, and working with peers and senior leaders to enhance overall organizational performance.

"The treasurer's role will develop more into a business partner," says Andrea Pohl, EY Europe West Treasury Leader, Germany. "They will be increasingly advising the business and not just executing activities on its behalf. There will be more collaboration between treasury and other functions, especially accounting and financial planning and analysis (FP&A), and there will be a shift to more analytical, data-driven treasury roles."

More than three-quarters of treasurers surveyed (79%) believe their role will evolve somewhat or significantly over the next five years. The areas where treasurers see the emphasis of their role increasing most are strengthening cash flow forecasting and management (37%), supporting sustainability and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting (37%), and managing financial risk (37%). The heightened emphasis on these areas underlines the opportunities for treasurers to better influence business decision-making.

Transformative treasurers are 53% more likely than the average treasurer to believe their role will evolve to have a greater focus on addressing liquidity flow and the cost of capital and managing enterprise risk. This reflects their understanding of the strategic importance of these topics to their organization.

From a regional perspective, treasurers in the Americas are most likely to believe there will be a significantly greater emphasis on managing financial risk (40%), reflecting the uncertain geopolitical environment and potentially higher currency and commodity risks arising from tariffs. Two out of five CFOs surveyed (41%) believe that making and addressing strategic decisions will become a significantly more important part of the treasurer's role in five years' time.

Transformative treasurers stand out from the general survey population in two key technology-related areas. They expect to see a greater focus on developing digital and analytical skills with the treasury team (51% compared with 36% of all treasurers surveyed), and managing the use of AI in treasury (48% compared with 35% of all treasurers surveyed).

Over the past 12 months, 41% of treasurers say they have been extensively involved in company-wide strategic initiatives or plans, rising to 65% for transformative treasurers. Treasurers who collaborate more extensively with the C-suite and the board tend to report more extensive involvement in a greater number of enterprise-wide decisions.

Of the treasurers surveyed who have extensive collaboration with the C-suite, one-fifth (19%) are involved in five or more enterprise-wide decisions, a significantly greater percentage compared to those without this level of collaboration. Treasurers who engage extensively with the C-suite are, on average, four times more likely to be involved in five or more enterprise-wide decisions compared to those who do not, suggesting that increased collaboration with company leadership creates greater opportunities to broaden the remit of the treasurer's role.

These findings underscore the need for treasurers to embrace their evolving role as strategic partners. By enhancing their skills in financial risk management, data analytics and collaboration, treasurers can position themselves as important contributors to organizational success. As they increasingly take on strategic advisory responsibilities in addition to their traditional cash management roles, treasurers can meet the expectations of their CFOs and also drive meaningful value creation within their organizations.

79%

of treasurers surveyed believe their role will evolve somewhat or significantly over the next five years.

65%

of transformative treasurers say they have been extensively involved in company-wide strategic initiatives or plans.

Figure 2. Treasurers and CFOs both anticipate that the treasurer's role will evolve significantly.

Q **In the next five years, how do you anticipate the emphasis of the treasurer's role will change in the following areas?**

Note: Percentage of respondents that said "emphasis will increase significantly."

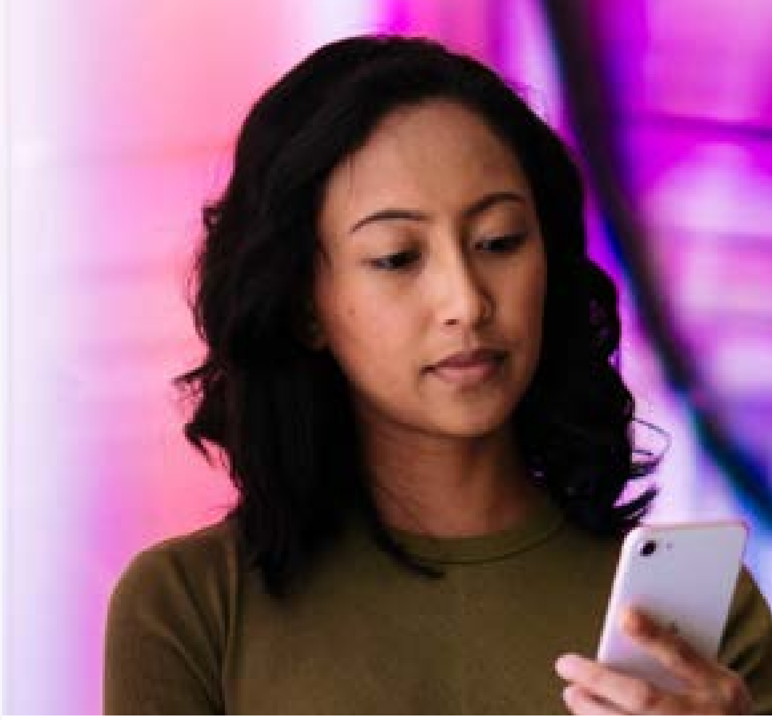


Figure 3. Treasurers are more likely to be involved with M&A than any other enterprise-wide decision.

Q **Over the last 12 months, to what extent has treasury at your organization been involved in the following enterprise-wide decisions within your organization?**

Note: Percentage of respondents reporting "extensive" involvement in enterprise-wide decisions.

Creating value in financial services

In the financial services sector, the nature of a treasurer's role varies according to the type of institution they work for. While a treasurer who works for an asset manager or insurer is likely to have similar responsibilities to a treasurer outside of financial services, a treasurer at a bank has a much greater focus on assets and liabilities and capital management, requiring a specialized skill set.

Bank treasuries are expected to understand and predict how the assets and liabilities of the bank are likely to flow over time, and the implications of these flows for the bank's liquidity. They will also negotiate long-term derivatives to mitigate the macro interest rate risk to their bank's balance sheet.

"Managing the balance sheet is a crucial responsibility for bank treasurers," explains Marie-Laure Delarue, EY Global Vice Chair – Assurance. "As banks' business models involve continuously lending and borrowing money, effective liquidity management is their lifeblood – even more so than for any other type of organization. The asset and liability management team within treasury will analyze the structure of the bank's balance sheet and manage its financial risks, particularly those arising from any mismatches between assets and liabilities."

This focus on asset and liability management could explain why treasurers in financial services are more likely to be extensively involved with changes in corporate structure and reorganizations, compared with all treasurers (51% of financial services treasurers surveyed compared with 42% of all treasurers). While changes in corporate structure can directly impact the financial strategy and risk profile of all organizations, these changes have potentially greater ramifications for financial institutions.

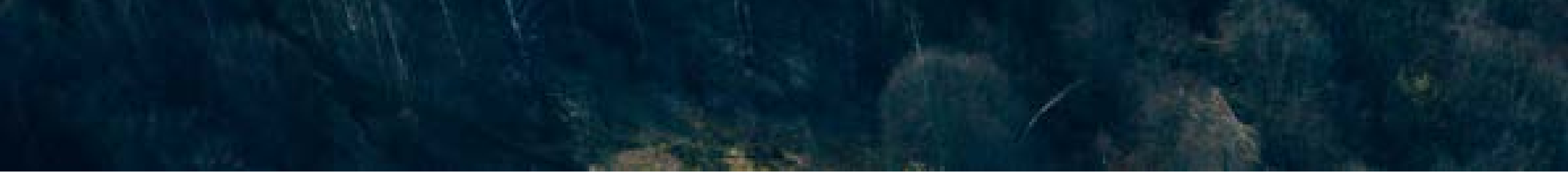
Interestingly, treasurers in financial services are far more likely than their peers in other sectors to report extensive collaboration with their organization's chief sustainability officer (54% of financial services treasurers surveyed compared with 42% of all treasurers). This may reflect the desire of financial institutions to mitigate sustainability-related risks across their lending and investment portfolios. For example, in insurance, insured losses caused by frequent and extreme weather events can severely impact an organization's cash and liquidity position.

51%

of financial services treasurers are likely to be extensively involved with changes in corporate structure and reorganizations (compared with 42% of all treasurers).

54%

of financial services treasurers are far more likely than their peers in other sectors to report extensive collaboration with their organization's chief sustainability officer (compared with 42% of all treasurers).



Creating value through sustainability

Organizations increasingly recognize that sustainable value creation — which may include a shift toward a lower-carbon business model — underpins long-term growth and business performance. For that reason, they are continuing to invest in sustainability strategies. Furthermore, the rise of sustainability reporting rules in many markets, including the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), requires organizations to report on their progress against sustainability targets.

The significance of sustainability as a value creation opportunity for treasurers is underlined by the research findings. Supporting sustainability and ESG reporting is one of the top three areas where treasurers expect to see a greater emphasis in their role over the next five years, with 37% of all treasurers surveyed believing that emphasis on ESG reporting will increase significantly. Nearly one quarter (24%) say they always support sustainability or ESG reporting, while 45% provide frequent support. There is no significant regional variation in the results, likely reflecting the CSRD's global reach.

As well as contributing to ESG reporting, treasurers can support their organizations in achieving sustainability goals through various approaches. These include integrating sustainability into their investment strategies for excess cash, selecting banking partners with strong sustainability credentials, and using sustainable finance options such as green bonds to fund initiatives with a strong environmental or social focus.

Treasurers can also help their organizations to secure strong ESG ratings from rating agencies by providing them with information on the organization's sustainability strategy and updating them on its progress against goals. Higher ESG ratings can create value by enabling an organization to enhance its reputation, attract investment and potentially lower its financing costs.

These findings highlight the important role treasurers can play in driving sustainability initiatives within their organizations. By actively engaging with sustainability strategies, treasurers can enhance their visibility and influence through greater collaboration with peers and demonstrate how they're helping to drive organizational resilience and success in the broadest sense.

37%

of treasurers surveyed believe the emphasis on ESG reporting will increase significantly.

Barriers to value creation

To create new value while fulfilling their value protection and optimization responsibilities, treasurers may need to use their time differently and overcome some significant barriers. Currently, a considerable amount of treasury time is consumed by traditional activities. On average, treasurers spend one quarter (25%) of their time addressing liquidity flow and cost of capital, and a further 18% managing cash and bank relationships, with 17% of their time devoted to managing financial and enterprise risk.

While these traditional responsibilities rightly require focus, treasurers may not be devoting as much time as they could – or should – to long-term strategic decision-making. The research found that treasurers only dedicate 16% of their time to making and addressing strategic decisions. Even when they are involved with strategic initiatives, less than half (41%) are extensively involved. As a result, their organizations could fail to gain valuable insights from treasury in areas such as cash positions and risk exposures – insights that could positively influence strategy. Treasurers should therefore look to play a more active role in shaping strategic decisions.

"The data points and understanding that come out of a treasury team in terms of commodity and currency risk management, considerations around trapped cash, and points of view about geopolitical risk in certain markets are all inputs into strategy," says Jon Morris, EY-Parthenon UK & Ireland Private Equity Value Creation Leader and Europe, the Middle East, India, Asia and Africa (EMEIA) Liquidity and Working Capital Leader. "Treasurers have insights that come from an understanding of financial flows and macroeconomics – insights that you wouldn't necessarily find within a strategy team."

When it comes to enterprise-level decision-making, treasuries are most likely to be involved with new mergers, acquisitions and divestitures (44% of all treasurers surveyed), and major capital investments other than information technology and AI (41%). Their involvement in these activities reflects organizational restructuring as businesses navigate this period of volatility and change.

Several barriers can hinder treasurers' ability to create value. These include managing external relationships with banks or investors (cited by 33% of treasurers surveyed), managing a wide range of operational responsibilities, including IT and people and talent matters (also 33%), and a lack of time to enhance knowledge and expertise through external resources and thought leadership (32%).

Cultural resistance to change, insufficient budgets to invest in people and tools, and a lack of guidance from leadership could further impede treasury functions, preventing them from realizing new value for their organizations. Another critical barrier could be the need for skills development. Just 57% of treasurers surveyed express high confidence that they have the right skills to become a key player in value creation. If treasurers are to fulfill their potential as value creators, all these barriers should be addressed.

Recommendations – treasurers should:

1 Adopt the mindset of a value creator. Treasurers who see themselves as proactive value creators are more likely to seek out opportunities to drive organizational success.

2 Reassess how they allocate their time and resources. Treasurers should balance their traditional responsibilities with playing a more active role in strategic decision-making. New tools and processes, as well as changes to team structure, can potentially support them in this endeavor.

3 Identify barriers to value creation and systematically address them. Investors are broadly positive about the outlook for dealmaking. But they would prefer that companies clearly articulate why returns on acquisitions will be higher than organic investments in a more compelling way.

BP: Transforming treasury into a value center

"By taking a strategic approach, treasuries can have a significant impact on business and corporate performance," says Carlos de la Peña, Group Treasurer at BP

"

I try to make sure that treasury considerations are at the center of decision-making and we are driving value in partnership with the business.

Carlos de la Peña
Group Treasurer, BP

You have a background in strategy. Why did you want to work in treasury?

"Treasury at BP has always been recognized as an ultra-high performing team. For me, leading treasury was an exciting opportunity to engage with the business from a capital markets and financial perspective. My background in strategy meant that I naturally gravitated toward a value-driven approach rather than focusing solely on processes. From the outset, I was keen to identify the key performance indicators (KPIs) that truly drive value in treasury. By positioning treasury as a value center instead of just a cost center, we unlocked significant innovation. This shift revitalized the team, made everyone feel empowered, and brought a renewed sense of energy and purpose. When we implement change, it's not just about incremental improvements; it can have an impact of hundreds of millions of dollars on the business."

How do you support BP's sustainability strategy?

"Every year there's a review of BP's strategy and sustainability framework. As part of that process, treasury provides input into how banks, rating agencies, debt investors and insurance companies view the different elements of our strategy and whether we should focus more on the balance sheet or on free cash flow growth. Due to its role in the group's liquidity

and solvency stress tests, treasury also contributes to BP's scenario analysis and resilience testing as part of its Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) reporting. In addition, treasury provides all the financing assumptions for off-balance sheet structures – absolutely critical in the transition space – since we are ultimately responsible for ensuring delivery on those commitments."

What are your current priorities for your treasury?

"Our first priority is digital transformation. We're working with our technology team to modernize our technology stacks, adjust our processes to commercial standards, avoid friction in the flow of cash through our infrastructure and increase the operational safety of our processes.

"A second priority is to proactively manage refinancing risks, especially given recent market volatility and the fact that a significant share of our deleveraging is associated with divestments that have an uncertain timeline. We've been working on a de-risking strategy that combines a working capital facility and a revolving credit facility, an update to our commercial paper program, revision of our trading stress tests, including cash buffers and optimization of local cash. We also actively monitor all sources of capital available to us across markets and we diversified our strategic banks group to include Middle Eastern banks and expand our Asian footprint."

How do you use KPIs to improve the performance of BP's treasury?

"I track how much value is being created by our value creation initiatives, such as bank fees, integration synergies from acquisitions, insurance pricing and optimization of capital funding. Among other KPIs, I also track how much local cash we are unable to centralize, internal funding balances between the UK and other countries, bank overdraft fees and ancillary fees, third-party funding requirements by region, and our pension surplus or deficit. We've also been using a combination of AI and KPIs to improve our cash forecasting, allowing us to gradually reduce our cash buffers."

In which ways do you collaborate with the C-suite?

"I interact directly with our board and CEO on key issues regarding the balance sheet, including our hybrid bonds strategy, the impact of divestments on our balance sheet and the implications of BP group strategy for treasury stakeholders. I also interact with our CFO on those same issues, as well as on working capital optimization and liquidity buffers. As I've always enjoyed being part of the business, I sit on the boards of several BP joint ventures. I try to make sure that treasury considerations are at the center of decision-making and we are driving value in partnership with the business."

CHAPTER 2

Building resilience: financial risk and cash management

In brief:

- Only one in four (27%) treasurers surveyed are "very confident" their strategies for managing financial risk are helping to improve decision-making across their organization.
- Half of transformative treasurers (51%) and less than half of CFOs surveyed (43%) believe that the treasurer's role will entail a greater emphasis on managing financial risk in future – yet only 37% of all treasurers surveyed think the same.
- Just 29% of treasurers surveyed say they have full personal responsibility for their organization's working capital and free cash flow and the factors influencing it, rising to 42% of transformative treasurers.

Treasurers have always been expected to effectively manage cash and financial risk. Nevertheless, these responsibilities have assumed even greater importance in today's complex and uncertain business climate.

Mitigating financial risk

Treasurers can help to boost their organization's resilience by managing serious financial risks, including commodity risk, counterparty risk, credit risk, FX risk, interest rate risk and liquidity risk. They can also draw on their in-depth understanding of financial risks to support their organization in better managing its broader risk portfolio, including operational, supply chain and sustainability-related risks.

Often, treasurers are at their most effective when they suggest a solution for mitigating a risk before it has even arisen. A good example is proposing a commodity hedging strategy for mitigating commodity price exposure in a long-term, fixed-price contract. Even better, they could add a commodity price indexation clause in the contract that requires the end customer to bear the risk.

Yet, despite their pivotal role in financial risk management, many treasurers are not currently seizing the opportunity to create new value for their organization through financial risk mitigation. Fewer than one quarter of treasurers surveyed (23%) say value creation to them means "proactively mitigating financial risks to the organization" – although this figure rises to 34% for transformative treasurers.

Treasurers may miss out on the opportunity to create value through financial risk mitigation if they see it solely as a value protection activity – protecting the organization from financial loss and reputational damage. In fact, value protection and value creation are inextricably linked, since protected value is the foundation for creating new value. For example, organizations that manage their currency and commodity exposures are better able to protect vital liquidity, which can help them to invest in their business, withstand market shocks and fund future growth.

Collaboration with other business units (44% of treasurers surveyed) and using technology to analyze current exposures (41%) are treasurers' preferred strategies for improving management of financial risk and decision-making. They could potentially unlock greater value from financial risk mitigation if they also sought external advice on identifying risk exposures or used outsourcing services.

Figure 4. Collaboration is treasurers' preferred strategy for improving management of financial risk and decision-making.

Q **Which of the following would most improve your strategies for managing financial risk and decision-making across the organization?**

Note: Respondents were asked to rank the top two strategies.

Concerningly, treasurers are not confident that their strategies for managing financial risks are helping to improve decision-making across their organization. Only around one quarter (27%) describe themselves as "very confident." What's more, nearly two-thirds (60%) of CFOs are only somewhat or generally confident that their treasurers' strategies for managing financial risk are having a positive impact on decision-making. Accordingly, there is a significant opportunity for treasurers to improve decision-making through financial risk management.

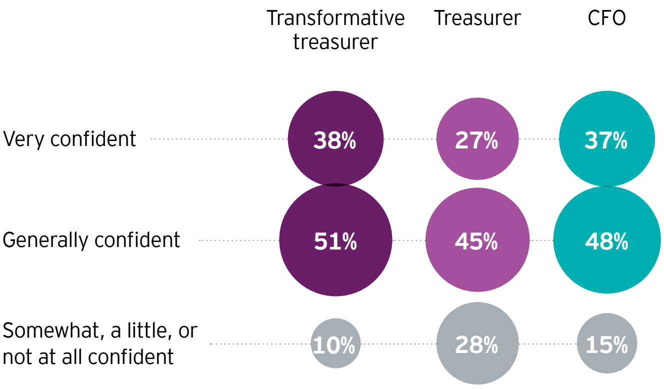
Treasurers' lack of confidence in the impact of their financial risk strategies may be linked to concerns that risk exposures are not being correctly identified and reported by the business. As a result, their mitigation actions may not be fully effective. Greater collaboration with other functions in relation to risk exposures should help treasurers to build confidence in the impact of their financial risk strategies.

Figure 5. Treasurers lack confidence that their strategies for managing financial risk are helping to improve decision-making.

Q **Treasurers: How confident are you that your strategies for managing financial risk are helping to improve financial and business decision-making across your organization?**

Q **CFOs: How confident are you that your organization's treasurer's strategies for managing financial risk are helping to improve decision-making across your organization?**

Note: Examples of financial risks include forex risk, interest rate risk, commodity risk, etc.



When looking specifically at transformative treasurers, this subset of the survey population is more likely than the average treasurer to engage in a wide range of risk management activities on an annual basis. They are far more likely to conduct scenario planning (74% compared with 65% of all treasurers), review risk management frameworks (72% compared with 64%) and undertake financial risk modeling for FX risk mitigation purposes (72% compared with 65%). By taking such a proactive approach to risk management, transformative treasurers are enabling their organizations to better anticipate, mitigate and respond to risks so they can navigate short-term uncertainty and free up capacity to focus on longer-term value creation

Figure 6. Transformative treasurers engage in a wider range of risk management activities on an annual basis.

Q **How frequently does your treasury team engage in the following financial risk management activities?**

Note: Percentage of respondents engaging in activity at-least annually.

Currently, treasurers dedicate 17% of their time to managing financial and enterprise risk. As their role evolves, they are likely to spend more time on this area or may use their time differently. By undertaking basic analysis on their behalf, new technological tools can free up treasurers to focus more on proactive risk management activities, reducing the amount of time they spend on reacting to events.

It seems that many treasurers have yet to anticipate this shift, however, since only 37% of treasurers surveyed believe that their role will entail a greater emphasis on managing financial risk in future. By contrast, 51% of transformative treasurers and 43% of CFOs say the same. This disconnect suggests that treasurers should be thinking today about how they can use financial risk management to better protect and create value going forward.

Johnson & Johnson:

Creating value through cash flow generation and a relentless focus on capital allocation

"The future of treasury is about supporting the C-suite to deliver the company's strategic objectives while capitalizing on technological advances," says Fran Dougherty, Treasurer at Johnson & Johnson.

"

We trained thousands of employees in the importance of cash flow — as a result, we've seen a tangible improvement in free cash flow.

Fran Dougherty
Treasurer, Johnson & Johnson

What are your treasury's priorities and how do these align with Johnson & Johnson's broader strategic and financial priorities?

"Our priorities are grounded in our capital allocation strategy for Johnson & Johnson. That strategy focuses on growing our core business by allocating capital to invest in research and development, which enables us to develop new medicines and technologies that improve outcomes for patients. We also look to create value through strategic business development initiatives – whether that's M&A, partnerships or licensing agreements – by analyzing the value of deals and undertaking post-merger analysis. Another important priority is paying a competitive dividend to our shareholders. We've increased our dividend for 63 consecutive years and our intent is to keep doing so. Lastly, we initiate share repurchase programs when it makes sense. We balance these strategic priorities alongside our traditional treasury responsibilities, including cash and financial risk management."

How does your treasury create value for Johnson & Johnson?

"Our treasury's corporate finance M&A team creates significant value by putting together an unbiased view of external opportunities so that we make the best use of our capital. It improves our deal models through internal analysis and by bringing in external data. Additionally, the team's post-acquisition analysis allows us to assess whether completed deals have delivered the anticipated value so we can apply learnings to future deals. Another way our treasury creates value is through our risk management team, which ensures that we manage the risks associated with day-to-day business, from human health and safety through to product liability. Thirdly, our pension team stands out in terms of the returns that we're able to generate and how we manage potential market risk."

Which significant strategic initiatives have you supported?

"Innovation is at the center of any healthcare company and strong cash flow generation is essential to investing in R&D and external innovation. As a result, we've made cash flow a focus across the enterprise. We trained thousands of employees in the importance of cash flow and what they can do differently in their day-to-day jobs to improve free cash flow."

How will the role of the treasurer evolve over the next five years?

"In some ways it will stay the same and in other ways it will change significantly. What will stay the same are the expectations that we will support our C-suite to deliver on their strategic objectives, create value for shareholders and develop great talent. Change in the treasurer's role will be driven by technological advances. Manual treasury activities are already being automated and this trend will continue to accelerate. This is exciting because our teams will have more time to support the organization to rapidly identify risks and opportunities and think more thoughtfully about them."

What are your personal focus areas?

"Compliance is table stakes. So, first and foremost, I make sure my team understands the importance of compliance. I also focus on talent development because it's critical to bring the best skill sets into the organization and develop a future bench of leaders. Finally, I always say to my team that when we do our jobs well, we create tremendous value for Johnson & Johnson, which means helping to deliver great outcomes for patients around the world. I want them to feel inspired about what they're going to accomplish each day."

Building a cash-focused culture

Inefficient balance sheets can be a challenge for many organizations today. They may have large amounts of cash ineffectively utilized or not easily accessible, or they may be carrying excessive debt. When treasurers successfully unlock operating cash and improve liquidity, they can create new value by freeing up funding for vital investments that could transform the organization's business model. Alternatively, they can use surplus cash to cut net debt and reduce the organization's financing costs.

Another important way that treasurers can potentially create value for their organization is by working with the commercial and finance teams to unlock working capital from purchase-to-pay and order-to-cash processes. This likely requires access to systems with real-time, integrated data so treasurers can fully understand the business and monitor its activities. They will also likely need analytics tools to evaluate the implications of business activities for both cash management and financial risk.

"Treasurers can become the co-pilots of the business," says Thomas Schmidt, EY SAP Treasury Consulting Partner. "They can advise the business to take a different approach to invoicing or assessing the creditworthiness of a client to minimize its risks or meet its liquidity needs. That's where treasuries should be, but they are not there yet."

Greg Russo, Principal, Financial Accounting Advisory Services at Ernst & Young LLP, believes that the treasurer will increasingly be seen as a free cash flow manager. "Free cash flow is critical," he says. "Investors focus on it because it's the money that organizations use to invest in new projects, pay down debt, buy back stock and pay dividends. If treasurers can help to free up cash flow through their day-to-day cash management processes, they can create immense value for their organization."

Treasurers have a major opportunity to evolve their role and create new value through cash and liquidity management by following four principal strategies.

1. Work with the enterprise to improve working capital, by reducing receivables, minimizing inventory and increasing payables as far as possible.
2. Invest in AI-driven cash forecasting tools, which provide greater accuracy and visibility than other forecasting techniques, enabling the organization to use its cash more efficiently.
3. Bring more cash back to the center of the organization by deploying sophisticated cash pooling practices.
4. Use excess cash that is freed up through the other strategies to repay short-term debts. Alternatively, invest the excess cash in money market funds to mitigate the impact of inflation on organizational cash reserves.

Collectively, these four strategies can transform treasury from a cost center into a value center.

Treasurers recognize that building a cash-focused culture can enable them to create new value. Optimizing liquidity to ensure availability of cash across the group is the second most cited way that treasurers add value to their organization, according to both treasurers (29%) and CFOs (26%). What's more, in many organizations, treasury's influence over cash management is already far-reaching — 29% of treasurers surveyed say they have full personal responsibility for working capital and free cash flow, as well as the key factors influencing it. This rises to 42% for transformative treasurers.

Yet some treasurers' capacity to create new value through cash and liquidity management is hindered by a lack of visibility into their organization's operating cash. Fewer than one-fifth (17%) of treasurers have complete near-real-time visibility. Treasurers in the consumer products and retail sector report having higher real-time visibility than average (29%). This is likely because of the fast-moving nature of their business models, which involve large volumes of goods being sold every day. Within retail, in particular, statistical information is generated on a continuous basis when consumers pay for products using cards.

Transformative treasurers are 70% more likely to report having complete near real-time visibility into their organization's cash compared with all treasurers, adding context to decision-making and allowing more sophisticated cash analysis. They are also more likely to say their cash analysis can provide "complete visibility" into several areas including required cash reserves, exposure to FX volatility and projected quarterly cash flow figures. Thanks to their greater cash visibility, transformative treasurers appear to be better equipped than other treasurers to act as strategic business partners to their organizations.

Technological innovation can potentially increase treasurers' ability to create new value through cash management. This is because systems-related challenges are among treasurers' greatest barriers to achieving near-real-time visibility over their organization's cash. More than one quarter of treasurer respondents (26%) cite a lack of technology to aggregate financial data as one of their greatest barriers to visibility.

Figure 7. Lack of technology to aggregate financial data is the greatest barrier to achieving near-time cash visibility.

Q **Treasurers: What do you consider as the greatest barrier to achieving near real-time visibility into your organization's available cash?**

Q **CFOs: What do you consider as the treasurer's greatest barrier to achieving near real-time visibility into your organization's available cash?**

Note: Respondents were asked to rank up to three options.

	Transformative treasurer	Treasurer	CFO
Limited access to cash management tools	32%	25%	18%
Lack of technology to aggregate financial data	29%	26%	30%
Latency in accounts payable (AP) and receivable (AR) processes	29%	25%	34%
Inability to view cash across complex organizational structures	26%	23%	28%
Poor integration between different financial systems	24%	25%	35%
Geographical dispersion of operations	24%	21%	19%
Lack of standardized reporting practices	21%	20%	18%
Manual data entry processes	21%	17%	19%
Legal and regulatory restrictions in some markets	18%	25%	38%
Inconsistent data across systems	12%	22%	16%
Lack of real-time information	12%	22%	19%

Around half (49%) of treasurers surveyed believe that using technology to achieve real-time visibility into cash positions across the organization would provide significant value in terms of enhancing their organization's cash management practices, while 29% are already incorporating this. A similar number (49%) believe that automated cash forecasting would bring significant value and 28% are already incorporating it.

While it is important today, cash management is set to be an even more vital component of the treasurer's role in the future. More than one-third (37%) of treasurers surveyed believe the emphasis on managing cash and banking relationships will be even greater in the next five years, potentially reflecting the challenging economic climate and more focus from organizations on increasing free cash flow.

These findings highlight the importance of technology to the transformation of the treasury function. Treasury functions with state-of-the-art tools, including automated cash forecasting, are better equipped to create value for their organizations through enhanced cash and liquidity management, both today and going forward.

Recommendations — treasurers should:

1 **Challenge the business to rethink its cash culture.** Improve operational cash management through strategies such as renegotiating payment terms with customers and suppliers, persuading the business to run leaner inventories, reviewing approaches to taxes and excise, and encouraging business units to exchange best practices. Better cash management can free up capital for investment in initiatives that drive growth.

2 **Undertake major financial risk management activities on an annual basis at least.** Activities such as scenario planning and financial stress testing can support forward planning and boost the organization's financial resilience.

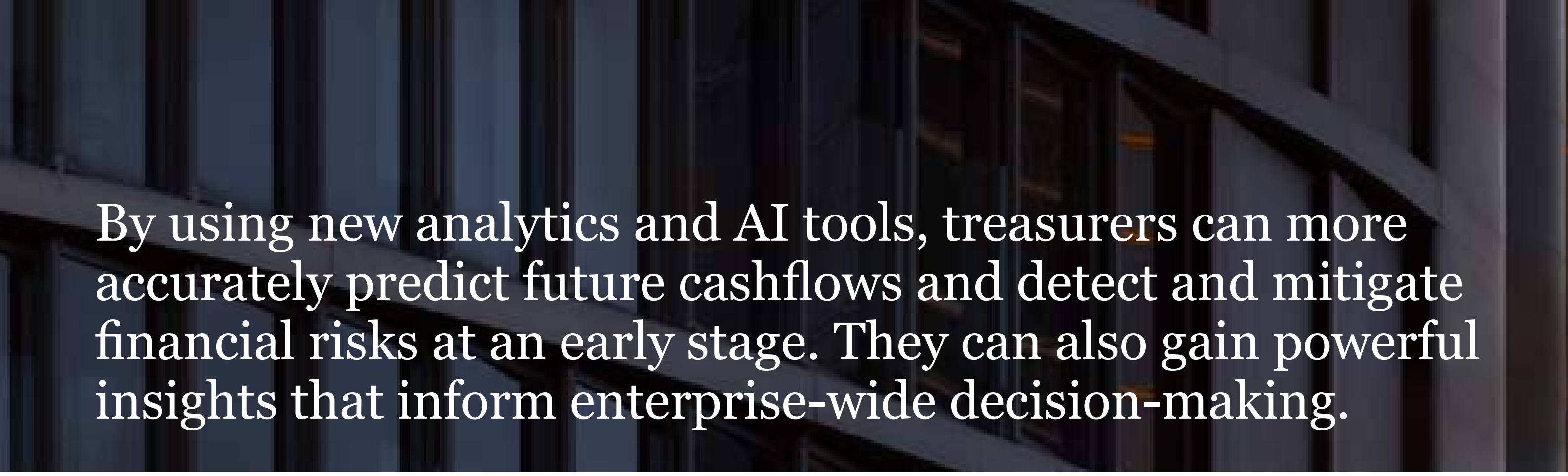
3 **Get more involved with the organization's end-to-end processes, from sales and procurement through to accounting and tax.** Greater treasury involvement in a wide range of processes can help the organization to better manage its cash and mitigate financial risk.

CHAPTER 3

Harnessing the transformative power of data and technology

In brief:

- Leveraging data and technology is the number one way treasurers believe they can create value.
- Two-thirds of treasurers surveyed (65%) report not having highly accurate 12-month forecasts – but those leveraging AI benefit from increased accuracy.
- Four out of five treasurers surveyed frequently use data analytics and visualization tools, rising to 97% of transformative treasurers.



By using new analytics and AI tools, treasurers can more accurately predict future cashflows and detect and mitigate financial risks at an early stage. They can also gain powerful insights that inform enterprise-wide decision-making.

Going forward, treasurers should be able to capitalize on agentic AI to dynamically adjust investment strategies and optimize currency exposure among other activities, freeing them up to spend more time on major strategic initiatives.

By using new analytics and AI tools, treasurers can more accurately predict future cashflows and detect and mitigate financial risks at an early stage. They can also gain powerful insights that inform enterprise-wide decision-making. Going forward, treasurers should be able to capitalize on agentic AI to dynamically adjust investment strategies and optimize currency exposure among other activities, freeing them up to spend more time on major strategic initiatives.

The significance of data and technology as value creation opportunities for treasurers is underlined by the research. Treasurers and CFOs agree that the most important way in which treasury adds value to the enterprise is by leveraging data and technology to drive organizational financial agility (cited by 30% of treasurers and 35% of CFOs surveyed). Transformational treasurers are even more likely to believe this (43%), suggesting they already heavily exploit technological tools in their work.

This emphasis on leveraging data and technology reflects the importance of financial agility to organizational success. Furthermore, finance — as custodian of much of the organization's most critical data — is in a unique position to lead, and capitalize on, digital transformation.

When treasurers embrace technology transformation, they are supporting their organization's broader finance transformation agenda. This boosts treasury's visibility with the CFO, as well as with the C-suite and board more broadly. AI-powered transformation, in particular, presents important opportunities for treasurers to collaborate with the CEO. According to the *EY Responsible AI Pulse survey*, 50% of CEOs say they have primary responsibility for AI.[1]

In general, treasurers are enthusiastic advocates of technology and have embraced new tools to carry out tasks that were previously performed manually. Four out of five respondents (82%) frequently use data analytics and visualization tools, rising to 97% of transformative treasurers. A similar number of treasurer respondents use cloud-based accounting software (82%) and treasury management systems (83%).

Proportionately, treasurers are even more enthusiastic about new tools than the controllers surveyed for the *EY Global DNA of the Financial Controller Survey*. Around three-quarters (76%) of financial controllers surveyed for that research said they frequently used data analytics and visualization tools, while 75% said they frequently used cloud-based accounting software.

43%

of transformative treasurers believe that the most important way in which treasury adds value to the enterprise is by leveraging data and technology.

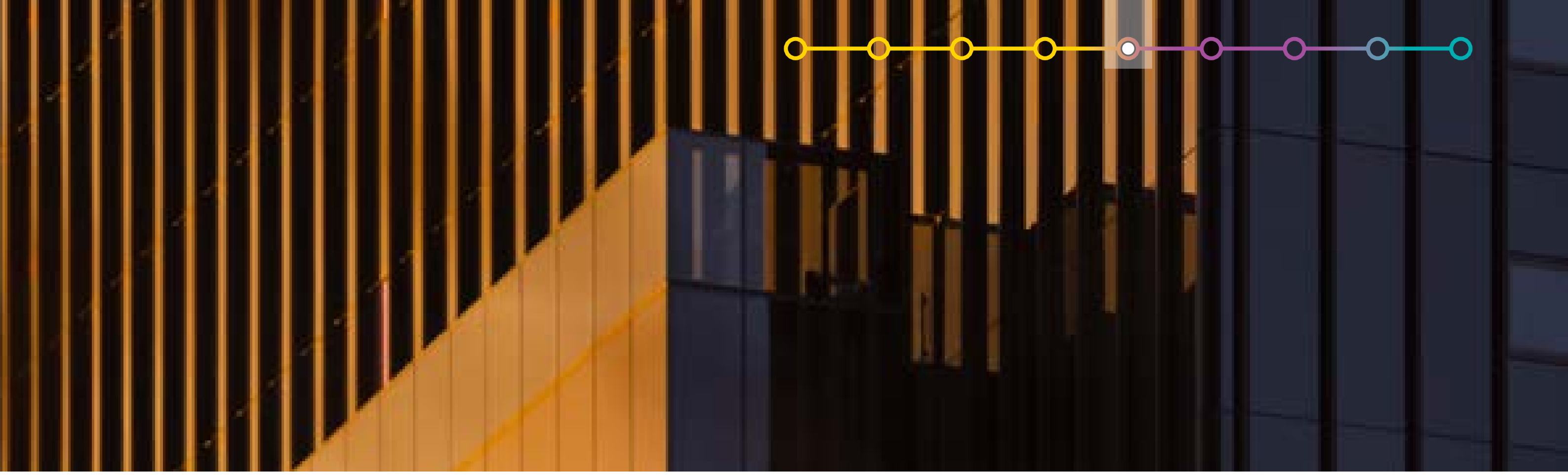
97%

of transformative treasurers frequently use data analytics and visualization tools.

96%

of transformative treasurers believe that managing the use of AI will constitute a greater part of their role over the next five years.

[1] Schuller, S, "How responsible AI can unlock your competitive edge," EY, 3 June 2025 © 2025 EY.



AI and cash forecasting

Treasurers are increasingly using AI – including machine learning and generative AI (GenAI) – to perform routine tasks that were previously performed manually, allowing treasury to focus on higher-value activities. In fact, 78% of those surveyed believe that managing the use of AI will constitute a greater part of their role over the next five years, rising to 96% of transformative treasurers. As an example, AI is now commonly used by treasuries to reconcile bank statements with the organization's accounting ledgers. AI tools can also be used for risk mitigation purposes, such as the detection of payment-related fraud, helping treasurers to protect their organization from financial loss.

While it is encouraging that treasurers are embracing AI, they should also be aware of the risks and governance issues associated with the technologies. AI tools present a wide range of risks, including data privacy and cybersecurity, and the risk of hallucination (presenting inaccurate information as if it were true). To be able to rely confidently on AI outputs, treasurers should make sure that their AI systems are using accurate, high-quality data and have appropriate governance systems in place. They should consider getting assurance around their AI systems to help make sure the systems are operating reliably and being used as intended.

Accurate cash forecasting underpins a cash-focused culture, enabling treasurers to create new value for their organization. By using AI-driven forecasting tools that integrate and analyze data from multiple sources, treasurers can support their organization in better predicting its future cash position and potential exposures. Equipped with reliable forecasts, treasurers can then work with the FP&A team to create budgets, set strategy, meet day-to-day operating requirements, plan for future capital expenditure and generally support the organization in making more efficient use of its cash.

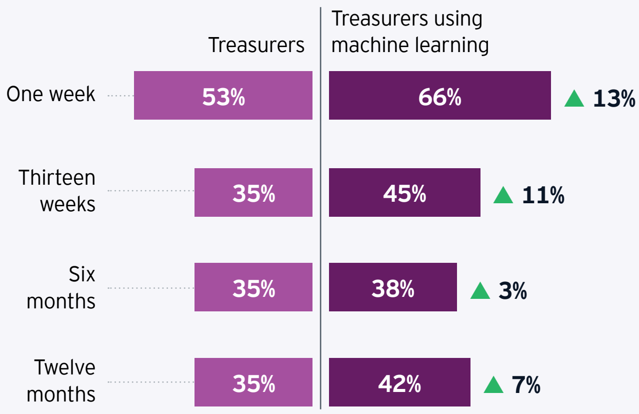
More than two-fifths of treasurers surveyed who very frequently use AI or machine learning for forecasting purposes (42%) report that their 12-month forecasts are highly accurate – compared with 35% of all treasurers. A similar number (45%) say the same of their 13-week forecasts, compared with 35% of all treasurers.

Increased accuracy in cash forecasting is not just a technical achievement; it also has significant implications for organizational performance. Accurate forecasts can help treasurers to make informed decisions about cash allocation, optimize liquidity and enhance overall financial agility. By leveraging AI-driven insights, treasurers can better support their organizations in navigating uncertainty, planning for capital expenditures and meeting day-to-day operational requirements.

Figure 8. Treasurers who very frequently use AI or machine learning report higher levels of cash forecasting accuracy compared with all treasurers.

Q How accurate are your forecasts for the following time periods?

Respondents who selected "highly accurate":



Data as an enabler

Four out of five treasurers surveyed (81%) believe that using data insights to recommend strategic opportunities is an important element of innovation for their role – slightly lower than controllers. Overall, 89% of controllers surveyed in previous EY research saw using data insights to recommend strategic opportunities as an important aspect of the controller role.[2] This comparison suggests that controllers currently have the edge over treasurers in terms of using data to enable the transformation of their roles.

Advanced analytics tools can enable treasurers to create value in multiple ways. For example, they allow treasurers to identify opportunities for cash optimization, manage market and credit risk, undertake scenario analysis and better understand their organization's financial performance such as the impact of seasonal trends on sales flows.

Unfortunately, many treasuries' ability to deploy AI and analytics tools is currently being hampered by a lack of access to comprehensive, high-quality and robust data. Nearly one quarter (22%) of treasurers surveyed see inconsistent data across systems as one of their three greatest barriers to cash visibility. Only two out of five (38%) believe their treasury function's transactional data is very accurate, while 40% say the same of its historical data.

Transformative treasurers are 24% more likely to report having "very accurate" transactional data compared with all treasurers surveyed. As a result, they are better placed to create value by providing reliable forecasts that enable the organization to optimize its use of cash and liquidity.

To create new value through cutting-edge technological tools, treasurers should not just harness treasury data, such as bank account information. They should also harness other data from across the organization, from controllership through to sales. Treasury management systems are an effective platform for giving treasurers visibility of their cash position, executing payments and managing loans and investments. Nevertheless, these systems should be integrated with other enterprise systems to give treasurers visibility over purchase-to-pay and order-to-cash processes. Only then will treasurers be able to provide the most powerful insights that truly drive business performance.

It is worth noting that while treasury will benefit from having access to a wider pool of organizational data, quality and provenance challenges are likely to arise in relation to data that is outside of direct treasury control. This is where collaboration comes in – treasury will need to collaborate with operational business units, as well as the CTO and CIO, to monitor and enhance data governance processes.

Innovation imperative

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, innovation is not just a luxury but a necessity for treasurers aiming to create value within their organizations. As the treasury function adapts to new challenges and opportunities, fostering a culture of innovation becomes crucial. This involves leveraging technology, enhancing collaboration among teams and developing the skills of treasury professionals to drive strategic initiatives.

One quarter of treasurers surveyed (25%) believe that treasury creates value by fostering a culture of innovation within the finance function. Treasurers can innovate in various ways, including applying analytics to new data sets, establishing new methods of reporting, consolidating bank relationships and account structures, and restructuring the treasury function to align with different legal entities or local businesses as a means to gain greater visibility over the organization's cash.

Technological transformation presents some of the most exciting opportunities for innovation in treasury. The research indicates that treasurers are enthusiastic about transforming the finance function through technological advancements. Almost three-quarters (72%) are already frequently involved with the innovation of finance processes and systems. Using data insights to recommend strategic opportunities is viewed as the most important element of innovation by the treasurers surveyed, with 41% ranking it as very important.

72%

of treasurers are frequently involved with the innovation of finance processes and systems.

[2] *EY Global DNA of the Financial Controller Survey*, the EY organization, 2024.

Regional differences in innovation priorities are evident. Treasurers in Asia-Pacific are most likely to view spearheading innovation to drive business (44%) as very important for their roles. By contrast, EMEIA treasurers prioritize using data insights to inform strategic opportunities (39%), while treasurers in the Americas emphasize identifying new cost savings (45%). The focus on innovating for growth in Asia-Pacific could help to explain why treasurers based there are more likely than their peers in other regions to be using AI tools to perform tasks that were previously undertaken manually.

Outsourcing is another key component of treasury innovation strategies. This is because outsourcing of manual and routine tasks can free up treasurers' time, allowing them to focus on in-depth data analysis and strategic decision-making. Advanced analytics and modeling, as well as accounts payable and receivable, are the activities that treasurers are most likely to fully outsource to an external provider (cited by 17%). Almost half (47%) either fully or partially outsource investment management. The greatest benefits seen from outsourcing include improved business experience (47%), increased automation (43%), access to specialist knowledge and skills (41%), and more time for strategic activities (41%).

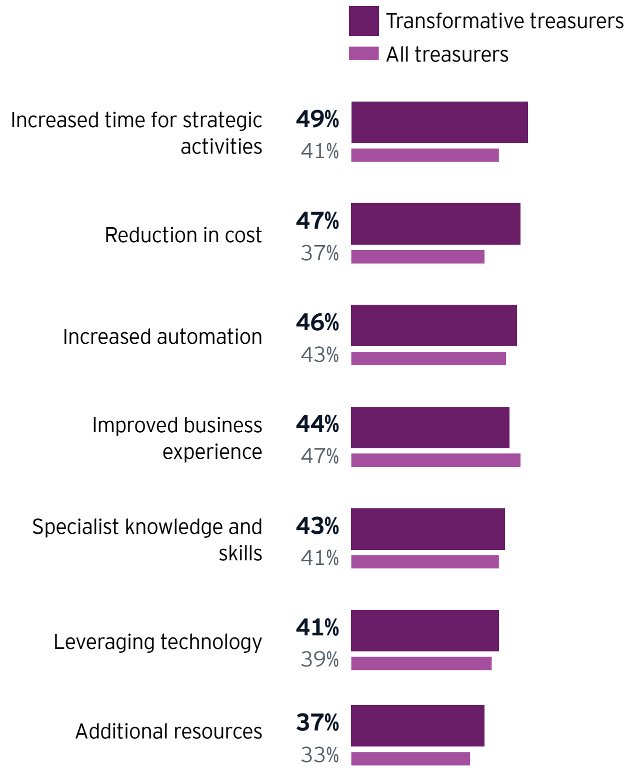
These findings highlight the important role of innovation in the evolution of the treasury function. By embracing technological advancements and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, treasurers can enhance their contribution to organizational success. The ability to leverage data insights and streamline operations positions treasury as a strategic partner to organizations as they navigate complexities and seize growth opportunities in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Figure 9a. Advanced analytics and modeling and accounts payable and receivable are more likely to be "fully externally managed."

Q **Please rate the extent to which the following treasury activities are managed by an external service provider at your organization?**

Figure 9b. Improved business experience is the greatest benefit of outsourcing seen by treasurers.

Q **Where you have outsourced functions to a services provider, where have you seen the greatest benefit?**



What do CFOs think?

CFOs are keen for their treasurers to be innovators. In fact, 47% say it's very important that treasurers spearhead innovation strategies to drive business growth. There is some divergence between CFOs and treasurers in terms of innovation priorities, however. CFOs are much more likely than treasurers to see assessing financial risks around innovation, leading on adoption of new financial software and technologies, and innovating to improve operational efficiency as very important to the treasurer's role.

Figure 10. Treasurers see innovating to improve operational efficiency as their innovation priority.

Q **Treasurers: How important are the following elements for innovation in your role as treasurer?**

Q **CFOs: How important are the following elements for innovation in the role of the treasurer at your organization?**

Note: Examples of financial risks include forex risk, interest rate risk, commodity risk, etc.

	Treasurer	CFO
Innovating to improve operational efficiency	42%	51%
Using data insights to recommend strategic opportunities	41%	44%
Identifying new cost-saving strategies	40%	48%
Hiring for innovation	40%	45%
Spearheading innovation strategies to drive business growth	40%	47%
Leading on adoption of new financial software and technologies	40%	51%
Collaborating with other departments to optimize financial performance	39%	44%
Leading on streamlining and transforming financial processes	37%	46%
Assessing financial risks around innovation	37%	50%
Regularly identifying opportunities for creating new value	37%	40%

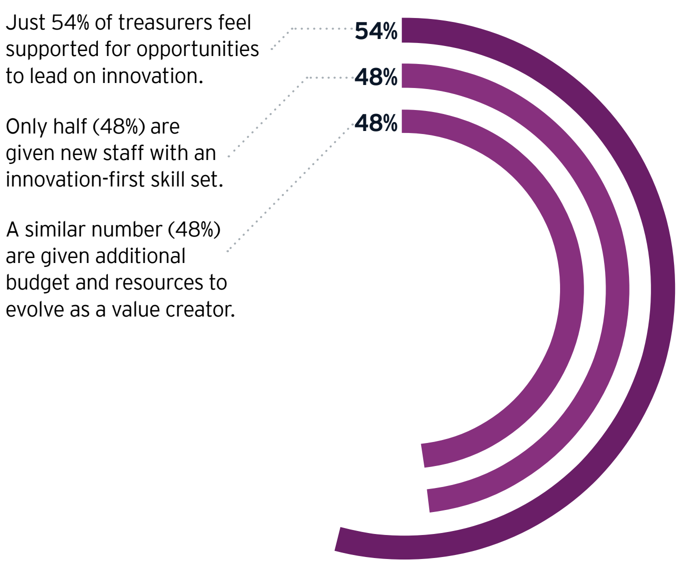
If they want their treasurers to innovate, CFOs should empower them. Many treasurers currently face substantial barriers when it comes to innovation — around half of those surveyed either have insufficient opportunities, people or resources to innovate.

CFOs should engage with their treasurers around innovation, looking for opportunities to enhance the performance of the treasury function, as well as the finance function and the organization more broadly. They should identify specific areas where their treasurers can lead on innovation and equip treasurers with the budget, people and tools to innovate. Meanwhile, treasurers themselves should proactively demonstrate their willingness to engage with innovation, highlighting their successes with current resources so they can unlock additional resources in future.

Treasurers may have identified the cited barriers because they take a narrow view of innovation, seeing it primarily in terms of technological transformation. Yet there are other, less resource-intensive, ways to innovate than investment in technology projects. For example, they could improve internal processes for collaboration. CFOs should encourage their treasurers to experiment with strategies such as outsourcing and AI proofs of concept in areas such as cash forecasting and fraud detection. To minimize risk, treasurers could take a dual-track approach where they simultaneously maintain existing processes while experimenting with new ones.

Figure 11. Treasurers lack opportunities to lead on innovation.

Q **Treasurers: What types of support are provided to help you evolve in your role as a "value creator"?**



Recommendations – treasurers should:

1 Encourage a culture of innovation. Set the tone at the top by explaining why innovation matters. Dedicate regular time to discussing innovation – for example, in leadership meetings and town hall events – and explore opportunities to integrate advanced technology and data into treasury activities.

2 Enhance data quality to drive business action. Engage with organizational initiatives that aim to improve standards of data quality. Higher data quality can support your treasury function to harness the power of new tools and create new value by providing greater visibility around the organization's cash performance and management of financial risk.

3 Seek outside perspectives. These may come from external consultants, peer organizations and sector networks, or by attending conferences and other events. Every treasurer can learn from the best practice and transformation experiences shared by others.

Schneider Electric:
Embracing a cash mindset

“Everyone in an organization can help to deliver free cash flow targets,” says Matthieu Meunier, Senior Vice President Financing & Group Treasurer at Schneider Electric.

“

Our vision is that treasury and corporate finance will enable business development, increase and protect enterprise value, promote a cash culture and develop finance talent.

Matthieu Meunier
Senior Vice President Financing & Group Treasurer, Schneider Electric

You became Schneider Electric’s group treasurer in 2023, having previously held CFO and audit roles. Given your fresh perspective, what are your strategic priorities for your treasury?

“Schneider Electric’s treasury has five priorities. The first is risk management and compliance. The second priority is the Future of Treasury program, which we have worked on with EY teams. This is about designing the right treasury operating model to support the future of the business and rolling that out. The third priority, which is also a group priority, is cash mindset. Our fourth priority is digital transformation, which involves integrating new software and working on new use cases for data and AI. Our final priority is enabling Schneider Electric’s transformation, including M&A support and helping to drive the growth of the group’s new business models.”

What are the overarching vision and missions of your treasury?

“Our vision is that treasury and corporate finance will enable business development, increase and protect enterprise value, promote a cash culture and develop finance talent through best-in-class financial expertise. We have five missions: optimize liquidity, manage financial risk, anticipate future needs, protect capital and shareholder interests, and enhance cash performance.”

How would you define a cash mindset?

"A cash mindset means thinking about cash and acting with cash considerations in mind. When Schneider Electric communicates to the market, we have three key financial performance indicators: revenues, earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) and free cash flow. We want everyone in the company to be able to deliver upon our free cash flow targets. So, treasury has a cash mindset program that provides data, reporting, governance, people and training to support this objective. We want to make sure we can achieve what we promised to the market."

Does your treasury collaborate with the C-suite?

"In addition to reporting to our CFO, we regularly engage with members of the executive committee, including our CEO, to provide insights into treasury matters. The leadership team has a strong interest in deepening their understanding of our operational challenges and the strategic nature of our banking relationships. We collaborate closely with the C-suite on strategic initiatives, including M&A activities. Our role in M&A transactions is to assess and explain the financial aspects of an acquisition – for example, how it might impact the group's credit ratings and which financing or hedging requirements it may trigger. We aim to engage with the C-suite from the beginning of the process to mitigate risk and enable a smooth transaction."

How are you developing your career and building your personal brand?

"As a finance generalist, I value broad experience across functions and I see my time in treasury as a valuable chapter within an evolving career path. It's a key experience for growing into a CFO role or even a CEO role, because of the exposure you get to financial markets. Schneider Electric is recognized for its valuable thought leadership and I'm proud to contribute to this. I contribute through speaking engagements at industry conferences, occasional press interactions, active participation on social media, and educating stakeholders about debt issuance, financing operations and broader treasury trends."

CHAPTER 4

Nurturing talent and driving collaboration

In brief:

- More than one quarter of treasurers and CFOs surveyed (26%) see developing finance talent through best-in-class treasury expertise as one of the top ways for treasury to create value.
- A majority of CFOs surveyed (59%) think the CFO role should be the ultimate career ambition for a treasurer, with 14% saying they should aim for the CEO's job.
- More than one in four CFOs surveyed (28%) believe their treasurer needs additional support and training in leadership – but just 18% of treasurers believe this an area they should focus on.

As strategic leaders, treasurers can co-lead the evolution of the finance function by helping to develop an agile and skilled team capable of driving innovation, including the next generation of treasury talent.

As well as having deep technical expertise, a future-fit treasury team should be agile, adaptable, creative, empathetic and technologically savvy, with sound communication and critical thinking skills.

A best-in-class treasury team understands the organization, its people, its processes and its data. It is able to exploit a range of technological tools, including AI and data analytics, to streamline operations and generate insights. Furthermore, it offers advice, makes recommendations and solves problems while partnering with others to achieve the desired results. A best-in-class treasury will also need a diverse range of views and perspectives to be able to innovate, strategize and identify and mitigate risks.

Treasurers and CFOs agree that one of the top ways that treasury adds value is by developing finance talent through best-in-class treasury experience. Around one quarter (26%) of both treasurers and CFOs surveyed cite talent development as one of the principal ways that treasurers can add value to their organization. As well as investing in training and on-the-job skills development, treasurers can develop their teams through rotational programs with other parts of finance and secondments to other teams within the business.

Treasurers' commitment to nurturing talent is underlined by the fact that 70% of treasurers surveyed always or frequently engage in team building, mentoring and career development. In this respect, they far outperform financial controllers.[3] Just 34% of controllers surveyed for the EY Global DNA of the Financial Controller Survey said the same. Furthermore, 70% of treasurers surveyed say they always or frequently engage in developing digital and analytical skills within the treasury team, while 36% believe that the importance of developing digital and analytical skills within the finance function will significantly increase in five years' time.

Although treasurers are being proactive about developing talent, the research suggests there is more they can do. For example, 49% of respondents believe increased training and development can offer significant value in enhancing their organization's cash management processes – but only 27% are already doing this. Transformative treasurers are ahead of the pack, with 48% incorporating training on technology tools.

Furthermore, despite the rapid rate of technological change and their own interest in innovation, just 40% of treasurers view hiring for innovation as "very important" in their role. This suggests that treasurers do not see the opportunity to create value by fostering a culture of innovation.

It is not just their teams who need development to become effective value creators for their organization. Treasurers should also develop their own skill sets. This means embracing continuous learning and furthering their personal growth. Just 30% of treasurers surveyed say they are always developing digital and analytical skills. They should look to transformative treasurers for inspiration, since 49% of this group say the same.

As these findings highlight, people development is central for helping the treasury function to reach its full potential. CFOs should support their treasurers in developing people management skills, as well as other skills that can enable value creation. Notably, 51% of transformative treasurers benefit from mentoring and coaching compared with 44% of all treasurers – an investment that appears to be enhancing their value-creating capabilities.

70%

of treasurers surveyed say they always or frequently engage in developing digital and analytical skills within the treasury team.

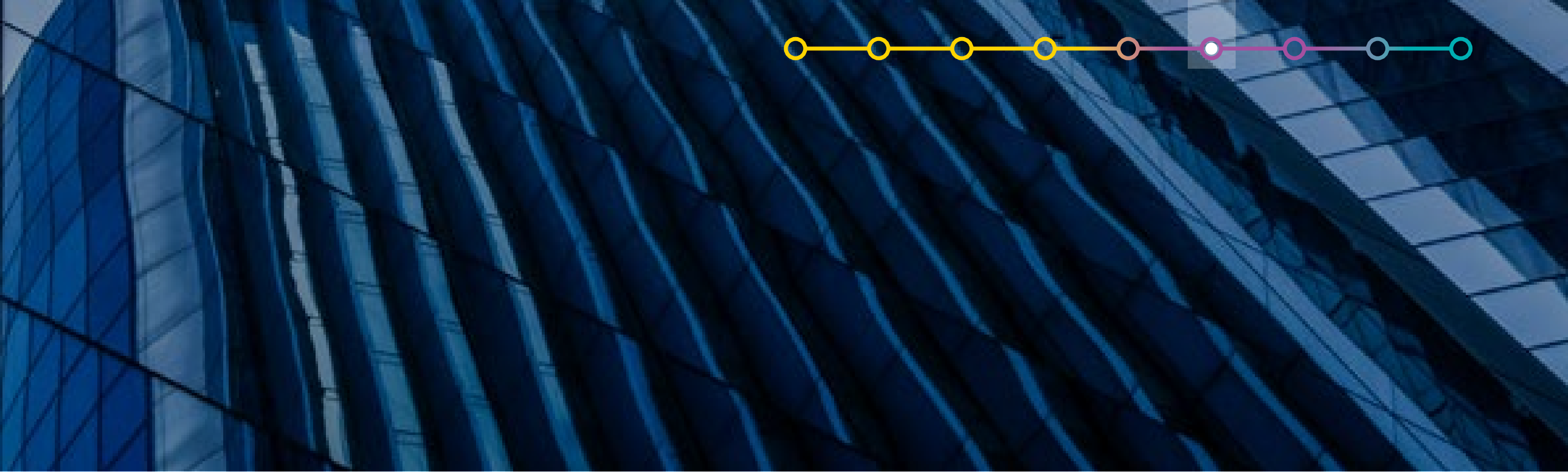
49%

of treasurers surveyed believe increased training and development can offer significant value in enhancing their organization's cash management processes.

51%

of transformative treasurers benefit from mentoring and coaching compared with 44% of all treasurers.

[3] *EY Global DNA of the Financial Controller Survey*, the EY organization, 2024.



Collaboration with the C-suite

Treasurers can potentially collaborate with the C-suite in a host of different ways. These range from financially structuring projects and explaining how bank relationships work through to participating in investor relations roadshows and advising on M&A, including the potential impact of an acquisition on the organization's credit ratings. The critical role of treasurers in managing cash flow can also give them the ear of the C-suite, particularly if improving free cash flow is one of the organization's key strategic objectives.

Within private equity, where corporate transactions might involve an organization taking on a large amount of debt, EY teams have noticed that it is common for treasurers to attend board meetings alongside their CFOs. In this case, treasurers will be expected to provide insights to the board on critical topics including cash, debt and credit ratings.

Another area where treasurers may collaborate with senior leadership is on managing financial risk. Treasurers can help the board and the executive team to understand market dynamics, explain how treasury is mitigating financial risks and predict future trends. Nearly three-quarters of treasurers who say they always collaborate with organizational leadership (72%) report being very confident that their strategies for managing financial risk are helping to improve financial and business decision-making across their organization.

Collaboration with the C-suite can help treasurers to evolve into business partners who can create significant value for their organizations. Nevertheless, many treasuries still appear to be operating within silos, which can limit their ability to help drive broader business strategy. Overall, the treasurers surveyed say they spend just 15% of their time collaborating with peers and organizational leadership. Less than half (43%) report extensive collaboration with their organization's C-suite, although that rises to 56% for transformative treasurers.

Collaboration with other teams

Given the limited time they devote to collaboration, treasurers have a major opportunity to improve the frequency and effectiveness of their interactions with other teams. To collaborate effectively, they need strong verbal and written communication skills, listening skills and problem-solving skills, as well as empathy and emotional intelligence. They also need the ability to give and receive constructive feedback.

Clearly, it is vital for treasury to work with the rest of the finance function to share information, identify and assess risks, support strategic planning and comply with regulation. Collaboration with tax can be vital to help treasury teams manage cash in a way that doesn't create unexpected adverse tax consequences for the organization.

"Any transaction when cash moves from one entity to another — whether that's structured as an intercompany loan or another kind of transaction — can have tax consequences," says Lee Holt, Director of Capital Markets Tax, International Tax and Transaction Services at Ernst & Young LLP. "Treasury and tax need to work together to manage the organization's tax and understand both the benefits and costs of undertaking transactions in a particular way."

It is considered good practice for a member of the tax team to regularly sit on treasury team calls, so they understand treasury priorities and approaches. Treasury software can also support tax reporting on hedging, investment and other treasury activities.

As well as collaborating within finance, treasury should look for opportunities to proactively collaborate with other key functions across the organization. For example, treasury can support the sales team by working with them on cash flow projections, as well as payment terms and financial options for customers. It can also liaise with procurement and supply chain leaders to monitor working capital indicators, such as days payable outstanding, and manage FX and commodity exposures.

Treasurers should collaborate with the sustainability team around how treasury can contribute to sustainability strategy setting and the achievement of organizational targets, as well as to ESG reporting. They can also support the investor relations teams by providing accurate and timely financial information, including robust financial forecasting and analysis. Routine collaboration with IT can be crucial given treasuries' dependence on technology and data.

Overall, collaboration with peers and senior leaders is set to be one of the principal ways in which treasurers create value for their organizations in future. More than one-third of treasurers surveyed (35%) believe that over the next five years the treasurer's role will have a greater emphasis on collaboration with peers and organizational leadership. Transformative treasurers believe this even more strongly, with 50% expecting to collaborate more.

Developing broader collaboration capacities is potentially a challenge for treasurers, particularly those with small teams and limited bandwidth. Nevertheless, treasurers should invest in developing these capabilities if they are to successfully rebrand themselves as business partners and distance their treasuries from perceptions of being isolated towers of niche expertise.

Reaching for the top

As highly skilled finance professionals, it's no surprise that treasurers are ambitious. Overall, 40% aspire to hold the CFO role in the future, rising to 54% for transformative treasurers. Once again, CFOs are more confident in treasurers' abilities than treasurers themselves. Nearly three in five CFOs surveyed (59%) believe the CFO role should be the ultimate career ambition for a treasurer, with 14% saying they should aim for the CEO's job.

These findings show that treasury experience can be a good pathway to the C-suite. Treasurers' thorough understanding of cash and financial risk, as well as their contribution to strategic decision-making, equips them with skills and knowledge that are invaluable at the C-suite level. Indeed, many CFOs have done a stint in treasury at some point during their career. Research by executive search firm Spencer Stuart identified treasury as one of the three most common routes to a CFO role in the Fortune 500 after controllership and divisional finance.[4]

To achieve their career ambitions, treasurers will likely require the support of their organizations to grow and develop. The top three areas where treasury respondents express a need for additional support are using data for developing strategic insights (38%), innovation and creativity (28%), and communications and networking (27%).

The research highlights some divergence between what CFOs and treasurers think when it comes to the support required by treasurers. CFOs are much more likely than treasurers to think that extra support is required in relation to innovation and creativity, emerging and new technologies, and leadership.

Leadership is the source of the greatest divergence, with CFOs being far more likely than treasurers to believe that treasurers need support with leadership skills to evolve their roles. More than one-quarter of CFOs surveyed (28%) think their treasurer needs additional support and training in leadership, while just 18% of treasurers surveyed acknowledge development requirements in this area.

Myles Corson, EY Global Financial Accounting Advisory Services, Strategy and Markets Leader, believes that CFOs are taking a more expansive approach to leadership skills, seeing them not only in the context of treasurers leading their own teams but also in the context of the wider organization.

"CFOs are increasingly taking on broader roles within their organization, helping to set strategy and executing more operational responsibilities," he says. "So, they expect their treasurers to do the same. In the past, treasury was often seen as a silo because of its very specific role. Nevertheless, the value creation agenda can require treasurers to engage with different stakeholders — within finance and tax, but also alongside the commercial functions — to understand the organization's working capital requirements and opportunities, as well as support other strategic initiatives."

Treasurers are likely to need the support of their CFOs to bridge the gap between the skills they have today and the skills they will likely need in future. Skills development can be vital for helping them to evolve into proactive value creators.

[4] "Profile of the Fortune 500 CFO – today and in the future," Spencer Stuart, June 2017, accessed via spencerstuart.com.

Figure 12. Treasurers need support with using data for developing strategic insights.

Q **Treasurers: In which areas do you require additional support or training to enhance your skills and effectively meet the evolving requirements of your role as treasurer?**

Q **CFOs: In which areas do you think the treasurer at your organization requires additional support or training to enhance their skills and effectively meet the changing requirements of their role as treasurer?**

Note: Respondents were asked to rank up to three options in order of greatest need.

	Treasurer	CFO
Using data for developing strategic insights	38%	35%
Innovation and creativity	28%	37%
Communications and networking	27%	23%
Managing automation	26%	24%
ESG and sustainability	26%	23%
Emerging and new technologies	26%	31%
Digital strategy	26%	29%
Developing human capital	24%	22%
Entrepreneurship	20%	25%
Leadership	18%	28%

Recommendations – treasurers should:

1 Undertake a skills audit. Identify which skills your treasury team lacks and create a plan to develop those skills so your treasury can hone its value protection and value optimization expertise while creating new value in multiple ways. Also, consider how mindsets can be enhanced so the team collectively has an adaptable, curious mindset that embraces new challenges.

2 Ask your CFO for feedback on your leadership style and personal brand. Find out how treasury is perceived within finance and beyond. Develop a plan to address these perceptions so that treasury better engages with other functions across the organization.

3 Collaborate extensively. Get involved with projects and initiatives where you can collaborate with the C-suite and other senior leaders. By doing so, you will establish treasury as a true business partner for the organization, enabling it to strike the appropriate balance between risk management and supporting value creation.

Citigroup:
Supporting the business through balance sheet management

"Treasury is a critical strategic enabler of the business's go-to-market, client-focused strategy," explains Andrei Magasiner, Treasurer at Citigroup.

> "My role is to be a financial steward who understands the risks the bank is taking, ensuring those risks are within risk appetite and that we appropriately price for them.
>
> **Andrei Magasiner**
> Treasurer, Citigroup

What are your treasury's business priorities?

"We are focused on three dimensions of balance sheet management. First, we source the financing for the money that Citigroup lends to customers. So, we spend a great deal of time analyzing mismatches, looking at how cash flow profiles are likely to evolve, and undertaking robust liquidity stress-testing. Second, we monitor the risk inherent in the bank's underlying exposures using scenario and stress-testing tools, then we calculate our loss-absorbing capacity and how that compares with the risk we've taken. Finally, we manage market risk. As well as having oversight of the financial risk undertaken by the bank's sales and trading business, we compare the interest rates we charge customers and the interest rates we pay on our financing to identify mismatches that may affect the bank's margin."

How does your treasury support Citigroup to achieve its strategic objectives?

"Treasury sits at the heart of the bank. We often call ourselves the 'bank within the bank.' Our businesses that lend money to customers come to us first and we provide the liquidity for them to lend. Separately, our businesses that source financing bring it to us and we pay them for it. We make sure that both sides of the balance sheet work and the bank generates appropriate returns. My role is to be a financial steward who understands the risks the bank is taking, ensuring those risks are within risk appetite and that we appropriately price for them."

Does your treasury help to align Citigroup's financial objectives with its complementary objectives of supporting the communities in which we work and live?

"We issue bonds on behalf of Citigroup and raise financing in the wholesale funding markets to complement the funding that comes in through our deposit-taking. Many investors have dedicated funds set up to invest explicitly in ESG-linked bonds. So, we've developed product bonds that are linked to ESG-related activities, such as social housing programs. We also work with product development teams across the business to develop new ESG-linked products in both the lending space and the deposit-taking space."

How does AI help treasurers to create value?

"AI can do a lot of heavy lifting by identifying interesting trends in a large volume of analytical output. It is the last leg of a long technology process that starts with understanding your data, having disciplined governance around your data, doing modeling and quantitative analysis, and reaching a set of outputs. AI can provide extremely useful insights in a very efficient way."

You lead a large, global treasury of 1,350 people. How do you inspire them?

"I try to develop a personal brand for the treasury function, which is human-centered, meaning there's a high level of empathy. I walk the floors between meetings and ask people questions about what they're working on. From that process, I learn an amazing amount about how people are feeling, which informs what I say and do at the next staff meeting or "town hall." I also encourage my leadership team to do the same. During my career, I've enjoyed going into roles where I can make things better. Satisfaction, to me, is seeing people realize that the profile of their function is becoming more prominent and they are winning."

CHAPTER 5

The future treasurer: recommendations for CFOs and treasurers

Following the example of the transformative treasurers showcased in this report, the treasurer of the future will be a proactive value creator who realizes new value for the enterprise.

They will do this by building organizational resilience through financial risk and cash management, harnessing the transformative power of data and technology, and nurturing talent and driving collaboration.

To seize this exciting opportunity, treasurers should adopt forward-thinking approaches to cash and liquidity management, enhance their risk management expertise, invest in new technological tools and develop their teams. They should also enhance their own mindsets and skill sets, positioning treasury as a key strategic player that brings valuable insights to enterprise-level decision-making rather than a niche silo within the finance function.

CFOs

How can CFOs empower their treasurers to fulfill their potential as value creators in an age of uncertainty?

1 **Set a strategic vision for your treasury team.** Challenge your treasurer to increase their impact at a personal, functional and enterprise level over time. Establish key performance indicators that empower your treasury to create real value.

2 **Engage your treasury team with commercial and strategic decisions.** When treasury has broad input to conversations across the organization, it becomes a more effective business partner, particularly in relation to working capital management.

3 **Incorporate your treasury team into your wider transformation journey from the outset.** Treasury can have the greatest strategic impact when treasury data is integrated with other financial data to inform organizational decision-making.

4 **Support your treasury team to enhance their value-creating capabilities.** Treasurers will only be able to create value for their organization if they are supported by people, skills development and advanced technological tools.

5 **Raise the visibility of treasury at board level.** Ask your treasurer to talk to the board about their strategy for managing the organization's cash and mitigating its financial and enterprise risk. Exposure to the board and the C-suite will enable treasury to contribute more effectively to setting strategy and achieving organizational objectives.

Treasurers

How can treasurers seize the opportunity to become proactive value creators who deliver on the expectations of their CFOs to help shape the future with confidence?

1 **Be a transformative treasurer.** To create the greatest value for your organization, you should develop the characteristics of a transformative treasurer. This means being technology savvy, a data-driven decision-maker, a risk management expert, a strategic collaborator, a sustainability champion and an outstanding mentor and leader.

2 **Drive growth through impactful corporate initiatives.** Treasury can create immense value when it extends its remit beyond traditional activities such as managing banking relationships, overseeing cash and liquidity, and mitigating financial risk. Help to drive growth through involvement in impactful initiatives such as major investments in AI, enterprise-wide change programs and M&A activities.

3 **Lead on technology adoption within the finance function.** Demonstrate how finance can save time, operate more efficiently and generate better insights through the deployment of powerful new tools such as AI. Ask your CFO for sufficient budget and resources to effectively deploy these tools.

4 **Support your organization in delivering on its sustainability strategy.** You can help your organization to succeed over the long-term and achieve its environmental and social goals, by considering sustainability as an important component of your funding strategy. Choose banking providers and other partners with strong sustainability credentials.

5 **Establish treasury as the ultimate business partner.** Shift treasury's mindset to prioritize value creation as much as value protection and value optimization. To drive the business forward, identify the barriers that prevent treasury from being a value creator and systematically address them – whether that's overhauling the organization's bank account structure or investing in a new analytics tool to interpret data.

About the research

Between 2 April and 14 July 2025, the global EY organization conducted research to understand the evolving role of the treasurer. The research explored how treasurers can shape their roles to meet changing business requirements and deliver greater impact at personal, functional and enterprise levels. Through an anonymous online survey, responses were collected from 978 treasurers. Of these, 43% of respondents were group treasurers or heads of treasury, 28% were divisional treasurers or heads of treasury, and 30% were regional treasurers or heads of treasury. Additionally, responses from 249 senior finance leaders, including CFOs and heads of finance, were collected to understand their perspectives on the treasurer's role.

Respondents were from 27 countries – 36% from the Americas, 45% from EMEIA and 19% from Asia-Pacific – and 26 industry segments. To participate in the survey, respondents were required to work for organizations with US$1b or more in annual revenue, or gross written premium, or assets under management.

In addition, 11 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with treasurers from global organizations and EY subject-matter professionals. These interviews specifically explored the role of the treasurer in relation to value creation, data quality and digital leadership, financial risk management, cash and liquidity management, and people and skills.

Our thanks go to all those who contributed their insights:

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Appendix

What is a transformative treasurer?

A transformative treasurer typically embodies six characteristics, which were identified through quantitative insights from the survey. While these characteristics are essential qualities of a transformative treasurer, they do not represent the exact data points used for the statistical index creation. The characteristics were mapped to data points from the survey, providing a structured understanding of the transformative treasurer's role.

The six characteristics are:

1. Technology savvy

Proficient in advanced technologies such as machine learning and AI to enhance treasury operations.

Advocates for robust data processes to provide timely insights.

Involved in major technology investments, particularly in AI.

Frequently utilizes AI, data analytics and treasury management systems.

Actively advocates for technology improvements in treasury functions.

Prioritizes the adoption of new financial software and technologies.

Incorporates AI-driven solutions for predictive analytics in cash management.

Consistently integrates advanced technology and analytics.

2. Data-driven decision-maker

Prioritizes data quality and visibility for strategic financial decisions.

Uses data analytics to identify trends and assess risks.

Values data insights for recommending strategic opportunities.

Incorporates advanced analytics for cash flow insights.

Leverages data and technology for financial agility.

Involved in major technology investments, especially in AI.

3. Strategic collaborator

Collaborates with CFOs and executives to align treasury goals with organizational objectives.

Engages in cross-functional initiatives to enhance financial performance.

Consistently collaborates with organizational leadership.

Collaborates routinely with CFOs and CEOs.

Involved in company-wide strategic initiatives.

4. Champion of sustainability

Frequently supports sustainability or ESG reporting.

Collaborates with sustainability officers on ESG initiatives.

5. Mentor and leader

Invests in team development and fosters a culture of mentorship.

Encourages innovation and strategic thinking among team members.

Collaborates with human resource officers.

Values hiring for innovation.

Actively develops digital and analytical skills within the team.

Focuses on team building, mentoring and career development.

6. Risk management expert

Possesses strong skills in financial risk management.

Proactively identifies and mitigates financial risks.

Actively works to mitigate financial risks to the organization.

Engages in risk management activities at least annually.

Consistently manages financial risk.

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