# Advance Your Integrated Planning to Navigate a Dynamic Business Environment





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# **Executive Summary**

Financial planning and analysis (FP&A) teams must embrace integrated business planning technology to meet their company's evolving needs and set themselves up for success.

# What Is the Current Situation?



To thrive in a world full of disruptions, organizations must be able to:

- Understand and navigate multiple business scenarios
- Plan and report in real time for crossorganization visibility
- React to change quickly
- Achieve new levels of precision when making important business decisions
- Seamlessly connect strategy and execution

# What Are the Challenges?



Since decision-making cycles are shortening and the FP&A role is evolving into a driver of growth, FP&A teams are confronted with several challenges:

- A broader scope, including strategic advisory and regulatory reporting
- More complex environments, in terms of people, tools, and processes
- Disconnects between operations and strategy, leading to a higher chance of failure
- Difficulties in achieving agility

# What Are the Requirements?



To help FP&A teams transform and deliver value to the business, organizations need to implement integrated business planning based on the following foundations:

- Data and tools: Leveraging centralized data sources and integrated, intuitive tools
- Processes: Developing adaptable and business-owned planning processes
- People and culture: Building a culture of learning and collaboration

# What Does Success Look Like?



Integrated business planning and processes allow organizations to gain:

- Improved business metrics, greater cost control, and improved profitability
- Timely, well-informed decisions
- Greater trust in data and decisions
- Enhanced business agility
- Greater forecasting accuracy
- Accelerated plan-to-execution speed
- Enhanced data safeguarding

Ultimately, finance becomes a strategic driver of company growth, resulting in better performance and talent retention.

### Recommendations

- Implement an intuitive, adaptable integrated business planning tool that can grow with the business
- Prepare the organization for this transition by educating stakeholders on the benefits of crossfunctional collaboration
- Prioritize the top use cases for implementation and communicate success criteria transparently throughout the journey
- Update processes as you go, automating repetitive manual tasks and embedding workflows into continuous planning cycles
- Help the organization move through change in a coordinated fashion by creating champion programs and celebrating early wins
- Foster a culture of ongoing learning and upskilling







# Setting Sail: Navigating Business in Times of Change

The last decade has been marked by numerous changes. After significant disruptions from 2020 to 2022, new challenges and opportunities are emerging. Rising energy costs, high inflation rates, and the rise of Al-related use cases are all significantly changing the role of FP&A teams within organizations.

Customer Story: How a global professional services organization embraced multiple strategy pivots amid market changes

**VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER** 

None of the last four years have been normal.

FP&A manager, professional services organization

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2020 "When the pandemic hit, complicated." we had just wrapped up the planning season. Then suddenly, we were in a new world, having to urgently revise all the forecasts and plans we had just started

"When 2021 came, things changed again. We scaled up our business, launched new products, and expanded internationally, acquiring a couple of companies. Our sales skyrocketed, and our business became even more

2021

"There were further disruptions in 2022. By the middle of the year, we saw the signs of a potential recession looming, so we were thinking about whether we needed to hit the pause button yet again. It's a case of always having to plan for the unexpected."

2022

2023

"We've had to replan and plan more often during the year; we cannot stick to an annual planning process. And the expectation is to be faster and be more insightful in your planning instead of spending a lot of time building models."





executing on in Q1 2020."

# The Finance Function's Evolution: Embracing New Horizons

The finance function is under pressure to widen its perspective and transition to a broader business advisory role.

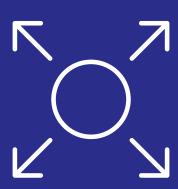
# Strategic Business Advisory and Value Creation

- The finance function strongly aligns with the business to drive the realization of objectives and navigate challenges amid changing market conditions.
- It is positioned to identify new growth opportunities and advise the company on how it should allocate valuable resources, prioritize investments, or cut costs.
- It collaborates with stakeholders and must excel in communication, storytelling, and translating financial insights into action.



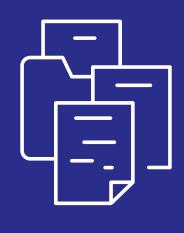
# **Expanding the Finance Function's Role**

- The finance department is a major driver of digital business transformation, supporting new business models, and co-creating the technology agenda.
- It plays a pivotal role in the connected enterprise by optimizing and automating end-to-end processes.
- It is also critical in ensuring compliance and supporting ESG activities.



# **Reporting and Record Keeping**

- The need to execute core financial activities never disappears they are the foundation supporting finance's expanding role.
- Now the expectation for finance teams is to advise on the financial impact of every decision and to be able to provide insights
- Finance must bring together different business units, removing silos to create a full picture of past performance and future expectations.





49% of C-level finance executives admit it is very important or critical for the finance function to transform in the next 12 months by leveraging technology.

### **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER**

Now the expectation for finance teams is to advise on the financial impact of every decision and to be able to provide insights. Ultimately, the automation of reporting processes will give us more time to perform other functions and become more of a strategic partner to the business.

FP&A manager, professional services organization





# Unleashing Potential: Empowering the Modern Finance Role

The finance function needs these new capabilities to perform a strategic advisory role:

# **Understanding Multiple Scenarios**



Ongoing scenario planning is now the norm. In today's markets, businesses need to be able to react to new insights and opportunities quickly.

For example, by creating simulated forecasts and conducting multidimensional analyses, organizations can answer multiple whatif questions and predict the impact of various events on key business metrics.

# A New Level of Precision



Turbulent times require a new level of precision. Whether reducing costs, allocating resources, or prioritizing investments, organizations must be aware of precisely what impact changes will have and when.

For example, a picture of salesforce productivity at an individual level may facilitate a deep dive into the factors driving success and the preparation of detailed action plans.

# **Connecting Strategy** and **Execution**



Rapidly changing conditions require organizations to be more agile. Not only do they need to create a plan, but they must also set it in motion as soon as the decision is made.

The alignment of strategy and execution is crucial and requires close collaboration between finance and other functions.

For example, by integrating planning and execution, organizations can see the immediate impact of top-line scenario changes on other operational components. Moreover, business leaders can immediately see the impact on their models and flag any concerns.

**Delivering the right insights:** Putting the right metrics in front of the right people at the right time



66% of organizations say delivering the right insights to all workers has a significant or major impact on improving the most important business outcomes.

### **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER**



We don't need more data — we need more precise, more accurate scenarios delivered in the right way to drive the right outcomes.

CFO, retail company

Traditional financial planning processes are not well placed to deliver an accurate view of future business scenarios.





# Re-Introducing Integrated Business Planning

The finance function requires integrated business planning to enable data-driven decisions, agile scenario planning, and seamless plan execution. A step-change in business urgency and technology is finally making this possible.

### **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER**

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As our company was getting bigger, we strongly felt that we needed to give business owners direct visibility on the decisions they were making and the numbers they needed to plan against. This is where integrated planning came in.

FP&A manager, professional services organization





# Building a Strong Foundation: The Pillars of Integrated Planning

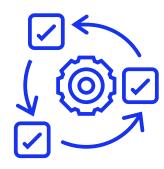
The move to integrated business planning represents a significant change in the way finance works with the business. Successful deployments of integrated planning are backed by a focus on the following pillars:



### **Data and Tools**

A modern integrated business planning platform is the key to integrating data in a single repository and conducting cross-functional analysis and planning.

The platform should be adaptable to ensure it meets changing business planning needs, and it should be intuitive to drive user adoption.



### **Processes**

An integrated planning process can enable more reliable and future-proof planning that can be easily crosschecked against real-time business operations and adapted as necessary.

Organizations need to engage nonfinance employees to establish connected, collaborative, crossfunctional planning processes. The key to success is that everyone knows their role, understands the benefits, and has the necessary tools and time to fulfill new responsibilities.



### **People and Culture**

The impact of cultural transformation that embraces integrated planning cannot be understated and must be prioritized.

It requires cross-functional collaboration and new skillsets. Organizations will need to adjust their talent strategies and redefine their recruitment and retention activities to ensure they have the right people with the right skills.

### **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER**



The ideal scenario is that all planning is based on the same platform, and everybody has access to it. FP&A and business users, everybody engaged in planning, all connected and collaborating — only then can you get full acceptance of plans. You can make changes and there are no complaints, because everybody understands why this is happening.

CFO, financial organization



We need to work on connectivity to the business. The right business planning tool can be a huge facilitator of integrated planning adoption to the extent that it contains easy-to-use portals where the business can easily embed and model out some of their assumptions, so they can see what the impact is and arrive at where they think they need to be.

CFO, financial organization





# Assessing Your Journey: Integrated Business Planning Maturity Model

To thrive as a finance leader in this environment, it is critical to understand your planning setup and assess your maturity stage.

### **INTEGRATED PLANNING MATURITY**



Data and Tools



**Processes** 



Culture

### Stages of Maturity:

Traditional 1	Transitional 2	Advanced 3	
<ul> <li>Data in functional silos, often inconsistent</li> <li>Manual data consolidation, no automation</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>First attempts to integrate financial and operational data</li> <li>Semi-automated data inputs and updates (e.g. weekly</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Automated data integration to allow for a real-time "single version" of the truth</li> <li>Cross-team planning and reporting on a single platform</li> <li>Access to intuitive interface for less tech-savvy users</li> <li>Embedded visualization and predictive capabilities</li> <li>Business-owned solution that can be adapted in house based on business decisions</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Reliance on spreadsheets</li> <li>Difficulty in collaborating with data</li> <li>Poor visualization and reporting</li> <li>Poor user experience, especially for users outside of finance; reliance on external resources for plan changes</li> </ul>	reminders)  Siloed implementation of planning solutions  Basic BI tool in place  Limitations arise (e.g. scalability, adoption, and reliance on third parties)		
<ul> <li>Reactive, short-term, or ad hoc planning; no approach to defining and exploring business scenarios</li> <li>Planning concludes after fiscal cycle begins; very challenging to change plans during planning period</li> <li>Plans outdated and forgotten as soon as planning ends</li> <li>Finance team plans alone; little synchronization with the business</li> <li>No clear governance on data, roles, and responsibilities; finance is the guardian of data; disorganized protocol to access data</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Periodic planning</li> <li>Increased use of analytics to support decision making</li> <li>Introduction of medium-term planning and scenario analysis</li> <li>Better understanding of the importance of agile planning, but hurdles to implementation remain</li> <li>Identifying connected planning opportunities launching pilot programs</li> <li>Introduction of data access and governance strategy</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Data-driven decision making; easy drill-down to see the "why"</li> <li>Strategic, long-term, multidimensional, scenario-based planning, backed by in-depth analysis</li> <li>Seamless transition from plan to execution through workflows</li> <li>Continuous planning, with agile implementation of mid-cycle plan changes</li> <li>Connected and collaborative planning processes</li> <li>Advanced data governance with granular data access; not reliant on finance as gatekeeper</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Lack of C-level engagement</li> <li>Poor data literacy, lack of soft skills development</li> <li>Most of FP&amp;A's time spent on data preparation and reporting</li> <li>Finance seen as a data broker</li> <li>High attrition across finance</li> <li>Lack of career and expectation matrices by role and seniority</li> <li>Limited cross-functional relationships and alignment between financial and operational goals</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Increased engagement from C-level executives starting to see the value of integrated planning</li> <li>FP&amp;A consulted on strategic decisions</li> <li>Introduction of upskilling and talent management programs</li> <li>FP&amp;A starts actively seeking collaboration with other business units for joint planning initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Full C-level engagement; advanced change management programs to drive adoption</li> <li>Majority of FP&amp;A time spent on proactive opportunity identification; repetitive, time-consuming tasks fully automated</li> <li>Comprehensive talent management, data literacy, and soft skills programs in place</li> <li>Strong cross-functional collaboration; strong alignment between financial and operational goals</li> </ul>	

# Charting a Course: Crafting Your Action Plan

The following steps will help you mature your integrated planning capabilities.

# INTEGRATED PLANNING MATURITY



Data and Tools

mensions



**Processes** 



People and Culture

**Transitions Between Stages of Maturity:** 

From Traditional to Transitional

by a **siloed** approach to planning.

update to increase plan reliability.

organization. Launch pilot programs.

and agile planning across the business.

Implement relevant data access and governance

• Ensure **C-level buy-in** to change the existing planning

team can focus on more value-adding activities.

Set up relevant talent management and upskilling

programs, including internal knowledge sharing.

• Work on **automating** time-consuming tasks so the FP&A

Develop cross-functional teams and ensure dedicated

time for team members to work on the connected

their expectations and needs.

Implement a BI tool.

strategies.

process.

planning initiative.

Identify priority data sources to regularly import and

Introduce the integrated planning concept across the

Engage stakeholders from different departments to build

O Communicate the importance of **data-driven decisions** 

**new planning and scenario analysis processes** based on

# Understand how financial and operational models should be connected and mapped to the planning process. Investigate where the greatest inefficiencies are caused Investigate where the greatest inefficiencies are caused Invest in a single integrated planning platform that facilitates collecting data in a single repository and enables cross-functional analysis and planning, as well as continuous feedback loops.

It should have an intuitive interface; enable the automation of repetitive, time-consuming tasks; facilitate advanced analytics and visualization and real-time collaboration. It should also be adaptable, allowing organizations to easily change models as needed.

From Transitional to Advanced

- Ensure the planning and analysis process becomes more "business owned", with more customizable, adaptable methods empowering employees to make informed decisions and solve problems more quickly and independently.
- Establish a connected, collaborative, continuous planning process.
- Ensure the **smooth execution** of plans by implementing relevant workflows.
- Excel in terms of data access and governance.
- Expand the scope of automation and invest the time saved in upskilling and strategic activities.
- To drive adoption, communicate the effects on people and their roles by addressing key issues, including:
  - Expected benefits
  - How the transition period will proceed
  - The anticipated learning curve
- Business leaders should become "plan owners", with defined accountability, taking responsibility for building trust in data and decisions and facilitating change.

- From Advanced to Continuous Improvement
- Ensure that data from new systems, tools, and platforms is quickly connected with the integrated planning platform.

• Continuously balance the **security** of sensitive data and its

availability to all stakeholders in the planning process.

- Work with business stakeholders to establish best-practice processes around:
  - Data access and governance
  - Planning cycles and moments for plan revisions
  - The number/depth of planning scenarios
  - Data-driven problem solving
  - The execution of plans
- Foster a culture of learning and cross-functional collaboration, with FP&A playing a central role in strategic planning.
- Build on your integrated planning capabilities to create an employer brand that is modern and innovative, boosting the retention and recruitment of top talent.



3

# Embracing Innovation: Essential Components of a Modern Business Planning **Platform**

The latest generation of integrated business planning tools serve as the foundation of the advanced integrated planning stage and are invaluable for navigating uncertainty.

	Business Challenge		Platform Capability	Platform Capability
$\otimes$	Making timely, well- informed decisions		Up-to-date, real- time data	The seamless import of data across multiple sources (e.g. ERP, CRM, HRIS, and data lakes) and regular syncing allows the centralization of trusted data in one repository. Stakeholders can instantly see the output of their work to make decisions faster.
مر <u>()  </u>	Creating more accurate forecasts		Advanced modeling capabilities	Advanced forecasts based on historical data and what-if scenarios can be run instantly to adjust business assumptions quickly and make predictions more accurate.
	Ensuring comprehensive, up-to-date visibility		Flexibility	Data can be sliced and diced through different dimensions as required. Dynamic models can be manipulated based on multiple parameters (e.g. geographies, product lines or departments) based on business needs.
	Improving business agility		Scalability	The tool should scale as the business grows. If the business model has changed or operations have scaled significantly due to acquisitions and organic growth, the tool should still be relevant.
	Increasing the speed of execution	<b>⊘</b> 0⊗	In decision makers' hands	The solution is collaborative by design — different users and functions can input data, comment, and automate approval workflows. Changes to plans or scenarios can be managed in house. The tool is not difficult to understand, and business users find it intuitive.
	Ensuring more employee time for value-added activities		Task automation	The automation of labor-intensive, time-consuming tasks (e.g. data import, data cleaning, approval workflows, or model building) minimizes direct human involvement and allows employees to spend more time on gathering insights, solving problems, and ultimately making better decisions.
	Enhancing tool adoption and longevity		Intuitive user experience	A modern and easy-to-use interface, possibly enhanced by AI, can minimize ramp-up time and make business insights accessible to all relevant stakeholders.
	Data safeguarding		Access controls and security	Data protection must follow the highest standards to keep critical business data safe. There should be a balance between accessibility and security, and only the right people should have access to sensitive business information.



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# Thriving Through Change: Key Elements for FP&A Modernization

Integrated business planning tools must be implemented well and adopted by both financial and non-financial users to have the desired impact.

### The Right **Tools**



You can have the best functionality in the world, but if it's not user friendly, people simply won't use it. It all comes down to ease of use and instant value to the user. Having the right tools is key to ensuring financial and operational consistency. The choice of the tool is so important, because many solutions aren't quite right.

CFO, financial organization

As the market becomes more crowded with more vendors rolling out FP&A-focused solutions, identifying the correct tool, application, and/or platform is essential to ensuring successful FP&A modernization.

- Is the tool seamlessly integrated with other tools and datasets?
- Does the tool have longevity? Will it be accessible to anyone who needs it?
- Are there any hidden costs? Do we need to rely on third-party support for updates, high training costs, and so on?
- Is the tool secure?

## The Right **Implementation**



We rolled out a new tool about 18 months ago in what we thought was a cost-effective way. But in everyday use, it's clear that some functions are simply not operating as we want or need. A totally new implementation of the tool is necessary, so that we can actually use it to its fullest and realize an effective return on investment.

CFO, financial organization

Even with the right solutions, a well-planned, wellintegrated, clean implementation process is required to make the most of the investment.

- Have you built a clear internal business case?
- Have you gained buy-in from all internal decision influencers?
- Are you clear on the priority use cases you will deliver?
- Have you allocated the necessary resources, so the implementation is delivered in time and on budget?

# The Right **Adoption**



Rolling out new tools built around a single repository can be challenging. Everyone has already developed their own processes for their own data. So, it's a case of showing why the new system is better, while also managing the removal of older systems, tools, and applications.

CFO, financial organization

No matter how good a new solution is, it will only be as effective as people allow it to be. Proactive change management is paramount to the success of new application/process adoption.

- O Have you evaluated the full impact of the changes and developed plans to enhance the positives and mitigate any risks?
- Have you started identifying end users who will be internal champions?
- Have you identified an executive sponsor who will be vocal in their support?
- What training plans do you have to bring users along on the adoption journey?

# The Right FP&A-**Business Relationship**



FP&A is seen as an essential resource for the business, but there is also a level of mistrust from different functions, with each having its own datasets and views. Being more collaborative can help change that, A modern FP&A setup can empower functions to better understand their own data, access other relevant information and make better, more educated decisions.

CFO, financial organization

Transitioning the FP&A function from reactive planner to proactive strategic advisor and value creator will impact the entire business. Collaboration and communication is key to an effective transformation of the FP&A function.

- Have you involved all the relevant stakeholders across the business?
- Are the measures of success clear and aligned across business units?
- What steps do you need to take to facilitate and encourage collaboration?
- How are you going to articulate the benefits of modern FP&A specific to the different areas of the business?





# **Success Stories: Finance Transformation**

A professional services organization has deployed integrated business planning to enable painless plan revisions, freeing up time for the FP&A team to focus on strategic activities.

Integrated planning helps organizations quickly understand how changes at the top level affect the bottom line, enabling them to take immediate action as needed.

### The Need



- When seeing an unexpected change in top-line data during the planning period — a pipeline decrease — the professional services organization wanted to know the immediate impact of this deviation on other financial and operational models, including:
  - **HR model:** To predict the impact on salesforce headcount
  - Capacity model: To forecast the impact on customer support headcount
  - Commission model: Smaller sales should reduce sales commissions. What would the impact on savings be?

### **The Process**



- Since the data and different planning models were all interconnected in one central repository, any topline changes flow through the entire P&L and alter the bottom line (financial and operational models), immediately reflecting the impact.
- Through collaborative portals, the finance team and business leaders were able to discuss potential options to increase field productivity, adjust forecast expectations, and pressure-test assumptions.
- The team ran scenarios and immediately saw the impact on their top-line results before communicating it to leadership.
- The team then reused dashboards and reports to inform leadership, drilling directly into the numbers on the platform or producing board-ready communications.

### **The Outcome**



- With an updated P&L and a full grasp of different scenario outcomes, the leadership team could decide on which route to take.
- Communication with the involved teams (sales, HR, and marketing) started immediately, with clear documentation on the decision-making process.
- Since this process was conducted "with the click of a button," the FP&A team had more time to focus on ways to improve key metrics (e.g., profitability) by finding potential cost savings or additional opportunities.

### **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER**

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If the pipeline data that we're seeing suddenly starts to decline and come in softer, that's an immediate flag for us. By having the top-line pipeline model automatically funnel into the bookings model, commission model or HR model, we can immediately see the impact of this change.

- FP&A manager, professional services organization





# Guiding the Way: Actionable Recommendations for Integrated Business Planning

The shift to integrated planning requires a fundamental change in how we work — it goes beyond deploying a new tool. Organizational buy-in and change management are critical to success.

## **Prepare Finance for FP&A Transformation**



- Ensure the finance team understands precisely how investments in integrated planning fit in with the organization's vision and the future of finance.
- Identify the most time-consuming, recurring tasks and prioritize their automation to free up time.
- Understand the "what's in it for me?" for every individual in the finance team who will be involved in the transformation.
- Define clear measures of success and accountability within the finance organization.

# **Secure Business Support for the Concept of Integrated Planning**



- Build a stakeholder map to identify a non-finance team to guide the selection and adoption of more advanced integrated planning.
- Gain executive sponsorship from a key business ally such as IT, HR or sales, who will benefit from and be instrumental in a successful transformation.
- Demonstrate accountability by setting expectations regarding success measurement, key milestones, timelines, and regular communication cadences.

### **Plan Your Transition**



- Map existing planning processes with an eye to identifying ways of working that will need to be retired or replaced.
- Synchronize your transition with existing planning cycles.
- Select priority use cases for implementation and ensure the core team involved has the necessary capacity.

### **Invest in the Right FP&A Platform**

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To be future-proof and support the business in agile decision making, the right advanced business planning solution should be:

- Integrated: The tool must be able to maintain an evergreen source of data by integrating with CRM, HRIS, and ERP sources; automating data imports; and keeping applications connected to each other.
- Intuitive: A solution that is modern and easy to adopt will foster collaboration with non-finance teams and encourage long-term adoption.
- Adaptable: Consider a tool that can be molded around your business model, that can handle numerous what-if scenarios, and that will be valuable both today and for the next decade.

### **Drive Adoption**



- Develop a quick-start guide for people deeply embedded in building plans and for those who will contribute, keeping in mind specifically how they will use the tool.
- Invite contributors to the platform, with the right access permissions, so they can feed into the plans and understand the implications for themselves.
- Identify a group of champions who can informally promote the use of the tool and help others troubleshoot.
- Share early successes, highlighting benefits such as greater autonomy and access to information, better decision making, and increased time savings.





# The time for FP&A to take the spotlight is now

Our vision for Pigment is a relatively simple one to explain: to help people and organizations make better business decisions.

Businesses today exist in a rapidly-shifting environment that's forcing them to demand more from finance. Companies are being held back because they don't have the right tools in place to get a full view of their business, manage changes, and grow. But new tools can introduce complexity, and a platform only works as far as people are willing and able to use it.

It's for that reason that we've designed Pigment to allow finance teams to take confident, sensible steps forward by:

- Bringing teams together to collaborate in one place, with tools that enable them to communicate effectively about their work.
- Connecting business databases and applications to build a complete picture of the organization.
- Promoting adoption across the company by ensuring every user has an intuitive, feature-rich experience whether they're a modeler or end user.

With more effective tools, we're confident that FP&A can step into the spotlight and pursue higher-value undertakings — shifting focus from tasks like reporting and record keeping, to strategic advisory and value creation.

### **Discover Pigment**





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