



What makes an outstanding Finance Director?

At Xeinadin, all our teams meet many finance directors (FD) on a daily basis, and we've developed a good eye and ear for the qualities a great FD needs.

So, what makes an outstanding Finance Director? Here are five broad key qualities:

- 1. Strong communication** - An FD must explain complex financial information clearly to the board, shareholders, staff, lenders, regulators and other stakeholders. They need diplomacy, but also the confidence to challenge the business when necessary. Trust and openness are essential.
- 2. Commercial acumen** - The FD should understand how the business actually makes money and actively contribute to strategy. They need awareness of market conditions, regulation, tax, legal developments and issues such as foreign exchange.
- 3. Regulatory understanding** - Particularly in travel, the FD needs to understand the regulatory environment and how the business interacts with bodies such as travel regulators and merchant providers. Getting the financial reporting right can have a direct commercial impact - for example, avoiding unnecessary over-bonding.
- 4. Being money-minded** - Cash is king. The FD needs to look beyond profit and focus on working capital, cash generation and returns. More importantly, they should identify changes to the underlying way the business operates that can improve cash flow.
- 5. Confidence in management** - Technical accounting ability isn't enough. An outstanding FD needs to lead, develop and motivate their finance team and positively influence the wider organisation. They need to assess risks and facts but remain pragmatic and willing to pursue opportunities.



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