

80% of companies are investing in AI to improve cash flow despite budget cuts

"Cash Maturity 2024" Study by Sidetrade and PwC France and Maghreb, reveals that the integration of smart automation, generative AI, and internal upskilling are driving efficiency gains, while companies shift from outsourcing to cultivating in-house talent with essential tech and leadership skills.

London - Tuesday December 17, 2024 | In collaboration with consulting and audit firm PwC France and Maghreb, **Sidetrade**, the global leader in AI-powered Order-to-Cash applications, reveals a significant shift in investment and renewed boldness within the finance function, driven by a sharpened emphasis in 2024 on cash flow generation and EBITDA preservation amid a challenging economic landscape.

"Cash Maturity 2024" by Sidetrade and PwC provides a perspective on finance transformation trends across Europe, revealing how companies are rethinking Order-to-Cash strategies amid significant interest rates and tighter credit conditions. Now in its second year, the report shows businesses adopting generative AI and cultivating in-house talent to build finance functions that drive measurable value.

The study serves as a guide for finance leaders to assess their cash maturity and take proactive steps to optimize their finance functions. As finance departments continue to evolve into dynamic, value-generating units, the road to success lies in embracing change, setting clear priorities, and making bold, informed choices in the face of economic uncertainty.

The complete Cash Maturity 2024 study **can be accessed** [here](#).

Arthur Wastyn, Partner PwC France and Maghreb commented: *"Through technology - AI and process automation primarily - companies are now embracing a more systematic and ambitious transformation of their Order-to-Cash processes, moving beyond the aspirations of 2023. Yet, the success and sustainability of this transformation depend not only on technological foundations but, above all, on identifying bold, visionary leaders able to deliver complex projects in a volatile environment."*

Key findings of "Cash Maturity 2024"

- Even as budget increases shrink, down 30% from 2023, finance leaders are pressing ahead with transformation efforts; 87% are actively engaged in projects for 2024 (compared to 59% in 2023), with nearly all of these active projects (98%) making optimized Order-to-Cash (O2C) processes a focal point of their investments. This push aligns with a 79% increase in priority for initiatives targeting cash flow acceleration and EBITDA growth which is critical as businesses navigate rising interest rates and constrained credit conditions.
- Generative AI has emerged as a high priority within this transformation landscape. Over 80% of companies are investing in it, despite financial constraints, placing it just behind ERP systems in deployment plans. Yet, with more than 55% of O2C tasks still handled manually, many companies are recognizing the need to automate these processes. In fact, three-quarters of respondents are planning significant automation upgrades over the next 18 months, seeking to boost productivity and cash flow efficiency.
- Accompanying these technological moves is a notable pivot in HR strategy within finance teams. Rather than outsourcing, companies are emphasizing internal upskilling, addressing the rising demand for technical, analytical, and leadership skills. This year, 50% of respondents report prioritizing talent development—up from 27% in 2023—reflecting a substantial commitment to building both the hard and soft skills essential for today's finance strategy.

Jean-Claude Charpenet, Sidetrade Partner added: *"In today's climate, budget limitations aren't slowing down investment in generative AI – in fact most business leaders see it as essential to drive Order-to-Cash transformation. For today's CFOs, smart technology isn't just about productivity; it's a strategic move to stabilize cash flow and protect EBITDA. Finance transformation is now a must, fueling growth and resilience in a market that demands agility. The real challenge is no longer 'if' but deciding 'how fast' and 'where to focus'."*

Methodology

"Cash Maturity 2024" was co-authored by PwC and Sidetrade between Q2 - Q3 FY24.

The research encompassed responses from a sample of 180 companies across a range of industries and represented a diverse spectrum of functions, including CEO, CFO and Financial Manager.

To ensure the robustness of our findings, it intentionally designed the survey sample to be highly heterogeneous, encompassing companies of varying sizes, from Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to large corporations, and spanning across a multitude of industry sectors.

This methodological approach was undertaken to provide a comprehensive and representative analysis of the finance transformation landscape, offering insights that cater to a wide range of organizations.

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About PwC France and Maghreb

In France and the Maghreb, PwC provides consulting and audit services, as well as tax and legal expertise, with the strategic ambition of being the benchmark in trust and business transformation industry-wide. More than 6,750 people work in PwC's entities in France and the Maghreb, sharing their expertise across an international network of more than 364,000 people in 151 countries. For more information, visit www.pwc.fr.

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About Sidetrade

Sidetrade (Euronext Growth: ALBFR.PA) provides a SaaS platform dedicated to securing and accelerating cash flow. Sidetrade's next-generation AI, nicknamed Aimie, analyzes \$6.1 trillion worth of B2B payment transactions daily in the Sidetrade Cloud to predict customer payment behavior and the attrition risk of more than 38 million buyers worldwide. Aimie recommends the best operational strategies, intelligently automates actions on the entire Order-to-Cash process, and dematerializes customer transactions to enhance productivity, performance, and working capital improvements.

Sidetrade has a global reach, with 315+ talented employees based in Paris, London, Birmingham, Dublin, Houston, and Calgary, serving global businesses in more than 85 countries. Amongst them: Bidcorp, Biffa, Bunzl, Engie, Expedia, Inmarsat, KPMG, Lafarge, Manpower, Opentext, Page, Randstad, Saint-Gobain, Securitas, Sodexo, Tech Data, UGI, Veolia.

Sidetrade is a participant of the United Nations Global Compact and adheres to its principles-based approach to responsible business. For further information, visit us at www.sidetrade.com and follow @Aimie on LinkedIn.

In the event of any discrepancy between the French and English versions of this press release, only the English version is to be taken into account.