GENCFO IMPACT





THE MASTERCLASS MANUAL

Lessons from the 2025 GENCFO IMPACT Masterclasses

INTRO

This year's Masterclasses were designed to cut through hype and get to the real work of modern finance: how we lead, how we adapt, how we create value, and how we use technology without losing our identity.

The themes were consistent across every session, highlighting a need for clarity, for human-centred leadership, and for a finance function that steps confidently into the front of the business.







INTRO

My hope is that these insights give you practical starting points.

Use them with your team, stress-test them in your own environment, and most importantly, keep pushing forward.

Finance has an extraordinary opportunity right now, and it belongs to those willing to

lead.







GROW YOUR OWN FINANCE FUNCTION: SCALING UP FOR SUCCESS

I'm challenging finance leaders to redefine how we show up in the business. I'm emphasising that transformation doesn't start with tools, but identity. So, here's a question:

"What does your finance function stand for?" Because when we get clear on our value, our influence immediately grows.



"Automation doesn't reduce finance, it reveals finance."





The conversations shift, the expectations shift, and suddenly finance is driving decisions, not reacting to them.

I encourage everyone to stop treating issues as problems and start treating them as signals.

When we surface things early, we create momentum. When we automate intelligently, we elevate our role. And when we step forward with confidence, the business finally sees what finance is capable of.









CAREER STRAGEGY UPGRADED: BUILDING THE SKILLS THAT TECH CAN'T REPLACE

As automation grows, our real value sits in the human capabilities; judgement, communication, empathy, influence, and strategic thinking.

These are the skills that elevate us from number-producers to trusted advisors. They're also the skills no machine can genuinely replicate.



"Your human edge is the skill AI can't copy: judgement."





In the film *Hidden Figures*, NASA brings in one of the first IBM mainframes, a machine that can compute trajectories faster than any person. But the astronauts won't trust it on its own.

That moment says everything. The computer can calculate, but it can't interpret context, can't sense risk, can't see what doesn't look right.

When we pair AI with our human strengths, we become the kind of finance professionals businesses fight to keep.

Julie Wong

Finance & Business Growth Mentor, Fractional FD





HOW TO USE POWERQUERY TO BUILD A FLEXIBLE BUDGET MODE FOR REVENUE AND CoGS

PowerQuery removes fragility and frees us from endless manual fixes. Every update flows through instantly and cleanly, which means finance can spend less time firefighting and more time supporting strategic decisions.



"It's not that people hate change. It's that they hate feeling they have no control over it."





Even the best model fails if people feel excluded or overwhelmed, so clarity, communication and involvement is critical.

When teams understand why the model works this way, and how much pain it removes, they back it fully.

Flexible tools lead to flexible teams, and that combination builds a stronger finance function.



Myles Arnott

Co-Founder | Full Stack Modeller



HOW DO I AI?

Al becomes truly powerful when we stop thinking of it as a chatbot and start using it as an engine for automated workflows.

Al can, and is, streamlining reconciliations, cleaning messy data, extract complex documents, and produce insights in seconds, giving us space to apply judgement, tell the story, and influence decisions.



"Finance teams using AI will replace those who don't."





This isn't a future scenario. It's happening right now.

The teams who embed AI into their daily operations are already moving faster, making fewer errors, and unlocking capacity that used to be impossible.

The question is no longer "if we use Al". It's "how quickly can we adopt it without slowing down the business?"



Ashok Manthena

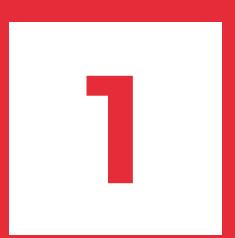
Chief Innovator - Finance Al | ChatFin



THE TAKEAWAYS







CLARITY OF IDENTITY TRANSFORMS FINANCE'S ROLE

When finance defines its purpose, it shifts from a reactive cost centre to a proactive driver of performance. Vision, communication and a strong team culture are the foundations that make a meaningful difference.







TECHNOLOGY ELEVATES, BUT HUMAN JUDGEMENT LEADS

Al, automation and advanced modelling remove manual effort and complexity, but they don't replace critical thinking or context. The future belongs to those who pair tools with the human skills that technology can't replicate.







PROGRESS HAPPENS WHEN FINANCE STEPS FORWARD

Whether implementing AI, modernising processes, or guiding strategic decisions, meaningful change comes from taking action, not waiting for it. Finance builds momentum when it engages early, experiments openly and leads with confidence.





SUMMIT

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Look out for updates on the 2026 GENCFO Summit, taking place between in May 2026.

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