



THE DNA OF THE FUTURE CFO
by Kathy Graham

**Classic corporate financial steward CFO, Strategic CFO, or CFO, Partner to the CEO.
Who are you? How do you change? What's best for your company and your career?**

The future CFO exists today in many companies, especially those firms that have experienced a successful digital finance transformation. This future CFO replaces the prior Strategic CFO, who emerged with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) era. The Strategic CFO replaced the Classic CFO of all yesterdays, the record-keeper, the corporate financial steward.

Today, all three types of CFOs exist. However, those companies who have a future CFO—a Partner to the CEO—enjoy a competitive advantage because these companies are prepared to outwit disruptions and disruptors due to their ability to pivot more quickly and accurately to changing situations than companies with Strategic CFOs or Classic CFOs.

How does a CFO evolve his/her corporation to undergo a digital finance transformation? Does a CFO need to evolve personally and professionally to become the future CFO, the Partner to the CEO?

My INNOVATION ROUNDTABLE, The DNA of the Future CFO, next Tuesday at the AICPA & CIMA Finance Transformation Conference in NYC, focuses on these topics by first defining what is that DNA, i.e., those instructions carrying the information driving the behaviors of each type of CFO. What is that DNA?

D is for Dialogue: the language and communication changes as a CFO evolves from Classic to Strategic to Partner to the CEO.

N is for Numbers: the key performance indicators (KPIs) tracked by Classic CFOs versus Strategic CFOs versus CFOs who are Partners to the CEO—those KPIs change significantly in scope, process, accuracy, and timelines according to the CFO's evolution stage.

A is for Approach: almost all processes in some significant way that are used by Classic CFOs are different than those used by Strategic CFOs versus CFOs who are Partners to the CEOs. The underlying accounting and financial principals remain the same, but the approach, the processes, are dramatically altered along this CFO evolution.

Is it the process change that is driving the change in the type of CFO at a company? Yes, technological change is behind what's changing a CFO's DNA: Dialogue [language/communication internally, externally, up/down the chain of command(s)], Numbers (ability to track KPIs and react in ever shorter time periods), and Approach.

However, the CFO personally and professionally also needs to add numerous soft and hard skills to successfully grow his/her evolution because the #1 cause of failure of digital financial transformations is the lack of digital culture change, a people transformation that needs to occur first...and the CFO is the leader of those groups of people most important to a successful financial transformation.

Our focus at my INNOVATION ROUNDTABLE next Tuesday afternoon will be on identifying the resources, tools, and training required to drive the change most appropriate for your company, including how CFOs can best Dialogue internally/externally their Numbers and Approach to gain the most for their careers and their company's growth.