

# THE FINANCE LEADER OF TOMORROW 2020 SURVEY

## BEFORE COVID-19

### A world of optimism

When asked how they felt about their role in the year ahead, 70% of respondents listed at least either confident or optimistic.

### Technology was a key driver of past and future optimism

#1 New technology was the #1 driver of optimism amongst finance leaders

78% said new technologies had positively impacted their business in the past 12 months, more than any other trend we covered

### New technologies were a top priority for CFOs

#1 New technologies would be the #1 priority for investment if businesses were to take on more debt

42% said that understanding new technologies should be a top technical skill of CFOs

### Payment delays were finance leaders' most pressing concern

44% cited payment incidents as a common occurrence

39% said the frequency of payment incidents had got worse in the past 3 years

44% said they felt 'fully prepared' to deal with payment incidents

69%

thought turnover would improve

67%

thought profitability would improve

When thinking about their role in 2020, finance leaders felt...

50%

Confident

48%

Optimistic

30%

Comfortable

28%

Secure

28%

Excited

## DURING COVID-19

### How have things changed since the Covid-19 outbreak?

**Optimism has fallen:** Covid-19 has had a clear impact on finance leaders perspectives of the coming year. This is both from a finance perspective - with significantly fewer expecting turnover and profit to improve - and a personal one - with the number of people saying they felt 'confident' about 2020 falling substantially.

#### Before and after the outbreak

% expecting turnover to improve

69%

% expecting profitability to improve

67%

% feeling confident about 2020

50%

52%

48%

36%

65%

**Payment delays:** Payment delays have accelerated to become an even more significant issue in the current climate. When asked in May, two thirds of finance leaders said they had been impacted by payment delays in the preceding two months.

### The top soft skills considered critical for a finance leader

**Soft Skills:** Prior to the outbreak, being flexible and adaptable ranked highly amongst required soft skills. These traits have only become more vital as finance leaders seek to guide their business through the current uncertainty, with each growing in importance by more than any other trait when compared to before Covid-19.

#### Before and after the outbreak

Flexible

44%

54%

Adaptive

38%

50%

Collaborative

41%

42%

Confident

38%

35%

Detail-oriented

34%

32%

Networking

29%

29%

Sociable

24%

23%

Academic

22%

19%

Both before and after the outbreak, finance leaders were asked for the "top three" traits they considered critical to be a successful finance leader currently.

## THE FUTURE

CFOs are still looking to the future beyond Covid-19. To mitigate against future risks that may impact businesses, they recommend three things:



#### Planning

This involves planning for specific scenarios and proactive cash management, but also re-enforcing measures that help reduce risk at the customer on-boarding stage.



#### Diversification

Companies that have a wide range of product types, who sit across multiple industries or have a good range of customers will be best placed to deal with major risks in the future.



#### Insurance

CFOs believe insurance will – and should – become more important. Working closely with trusted insurance providers to best protect your business is crucial.

There is clearly a difficult time ahead, with a negative economic outlook for the next couple of years. However, with the right preparation and investment, CFOs believe that optimism can eventually return to the market.

To read the full survey report, please visit [eulerhermes.com](https://eulerhermes.com)