Five ways that AI is changing finance

SAP

New research commissioned by SAP Insights finds that intelligence tools are poised to exceed human capabilities in five key financial disciplines: accounting, data management, planning and strategy, controlling, and analysis. These five disciplines show some of AI's common strengths and weaknesses but also some of its unique traits.

1

Accounting: Automated transactions, improved cash flow

AI tools can handle continuous transaction monitoring, ensure accurate cash flow management, and enforce real-time tax compliance with minimal human input.

While AI systems require new implementation and control efforts, human roles are shifting toward strategy and compliance instead of recordkeeping. Data entry is decreasing, but human oversight remains crucial for compliance, ethical decisions, and strategic financial management.

2

Data management skills: Speed and accuracy

AI tools are transforming data management with their superior speed and accuracy, enabling real-time data processing and reducing manual entry.

However, humans are still essential for interpreting data to guide business strategy. AI will create new demands for managing data systems, while people will focus more on data supervision, analysis, and decision-making.

3

Planning and strategy: Better forecasting

AI tools excel at identifying trends, making accurate forecasts, managing risk, and automating budgeting through predictive analytics, though they focus on quantitative data.

However, humans are better at strategic thinking, using intuition, and applying experience. They define inputs and parameters for AI models, with their role shifting to interpreting AI forecasts and formulating strategic responses.
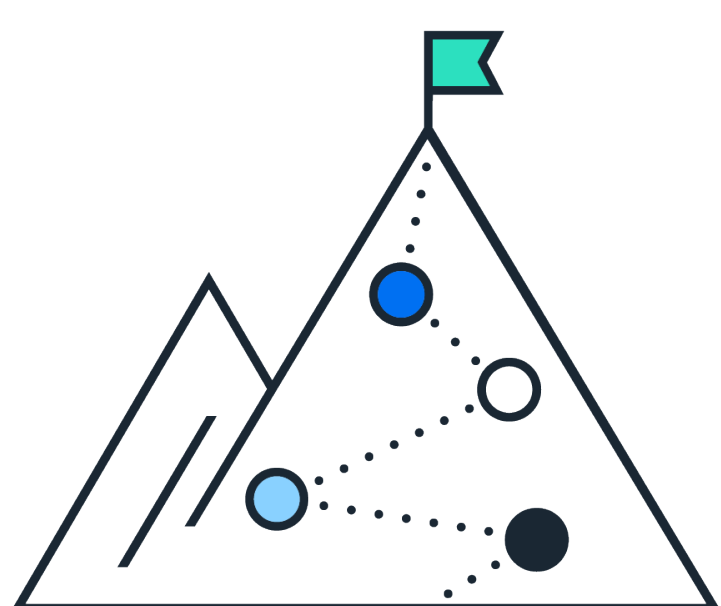
4

Controlling: Found discrepancies

AI tools can quickly detect data discrepancies, suggest fixes, create realistic budgets, and perform real-time monitoring to control parameters and identify deviations.

Humans will still need to analyze AI findings and take corrective actions. While AI can monitor tasks, human oversight of AI systems remains essential.

5

Analysis: Insights and modeling

AI tools can rapidly synthesize and analyze large data sets, providing insights and supporting decision-making through advanced data modeling techniques.

Humans will focus on critically assessing AI recommendations and implementing them. As AI advances, training and developing models will also become a key human responsibility.
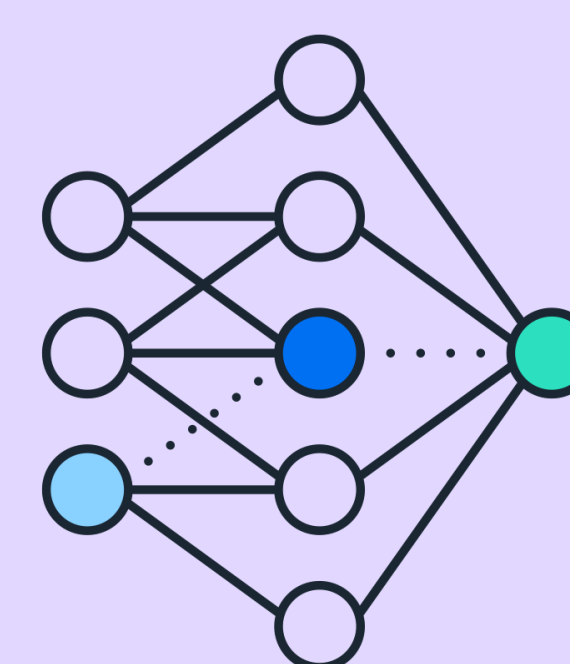
The expanded view of AI's impact on finance

For a closer examination of our research findings, read our complete report on how companies are scaling their ERP and finance operations with AI.

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