

LEADER

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**"CFOs will
need to work hard at their
influencing skills"**

Traditionally over the years, Chief Financial Officers have enacted the role of a controller. But like most traditions, this one has changed too. In fact the role has undergone a radical transformation in recent years. Today a top CFO is a business partner.

He is the facilitator and not just a controller. For example the working capital for a department or a vertical doesn't just have to be controlled.

The CFO has to analyse the numbers and the data and then sit with the concerned business

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head and show him the way out.

He needs to show the person that he cares and he is willing to help whereas the traditional perception was that of a CFO merely throwing the rule book and the by-laws at other departments and telling them they doing things wrongly.

Now the CFO needs to offer a solution instead. This is an era of collaboration when all functions work together to improve the organisation's bottom-line.

The moment the other person realises the CFO's willingness to help, he too will open up and co-operate. What I am trying to say is that CFOs will need to work hard at their influencing skills. And this influencing skill will come from knowledge, analytical ability and honing communication techniques where he learns how to put the same data to different people so that each of them understand what the numbers mean to him or her.

This will also mean that the best CFOs will need to communicate and collaborate effectively with his fellow C-Suite colleagues. To do this, he must first understand and then appreciate the work that other departments do.

The CFO has the unique advantage today of not just knowing more about the overall business than most others, but being in a position to help others.

Quite some years back, when I was a CFO, I would see how all C-suite executives would want to help the business but there were many who would not understand

the financial aspects of the business.

It needs a good CFO to cast aside his ego as also old habits to help and collaborate with other senior colleagues.

A person who plays this dual role of the custodian of governance, compliance and risk along with being a strategist and a key communicator – will be a great CFO in my book.

Of course, he has to show genuine intent and gradually imbibe an understanding of other areas of the business. He should help without showing off!

A top CFO should be someone who understands the different levels of the business and have knowledge of the ongoings of different business units.

If a CFO does this, then he won't need any rubber stamp from the top. The system itself will appreciate such a CFO and it will show in the overall results of the organisation. **CFO**



FACT FILE

Vinod Aggarwal's career story should inspire the younger generation not to job hop too much. He started his career at Eicher in 1983 and over the last three decades, has risen from a Finance Manager to the CEO's chair. He has been Director-Finance at Eicher Group, CFO at Eicher Motors and President of Eicher Trucks & Buses before taking over as CEO of VE in 2010