

Smart Work Solutions: A Guide for Forward-Thinking Finance Leaders



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Introduction

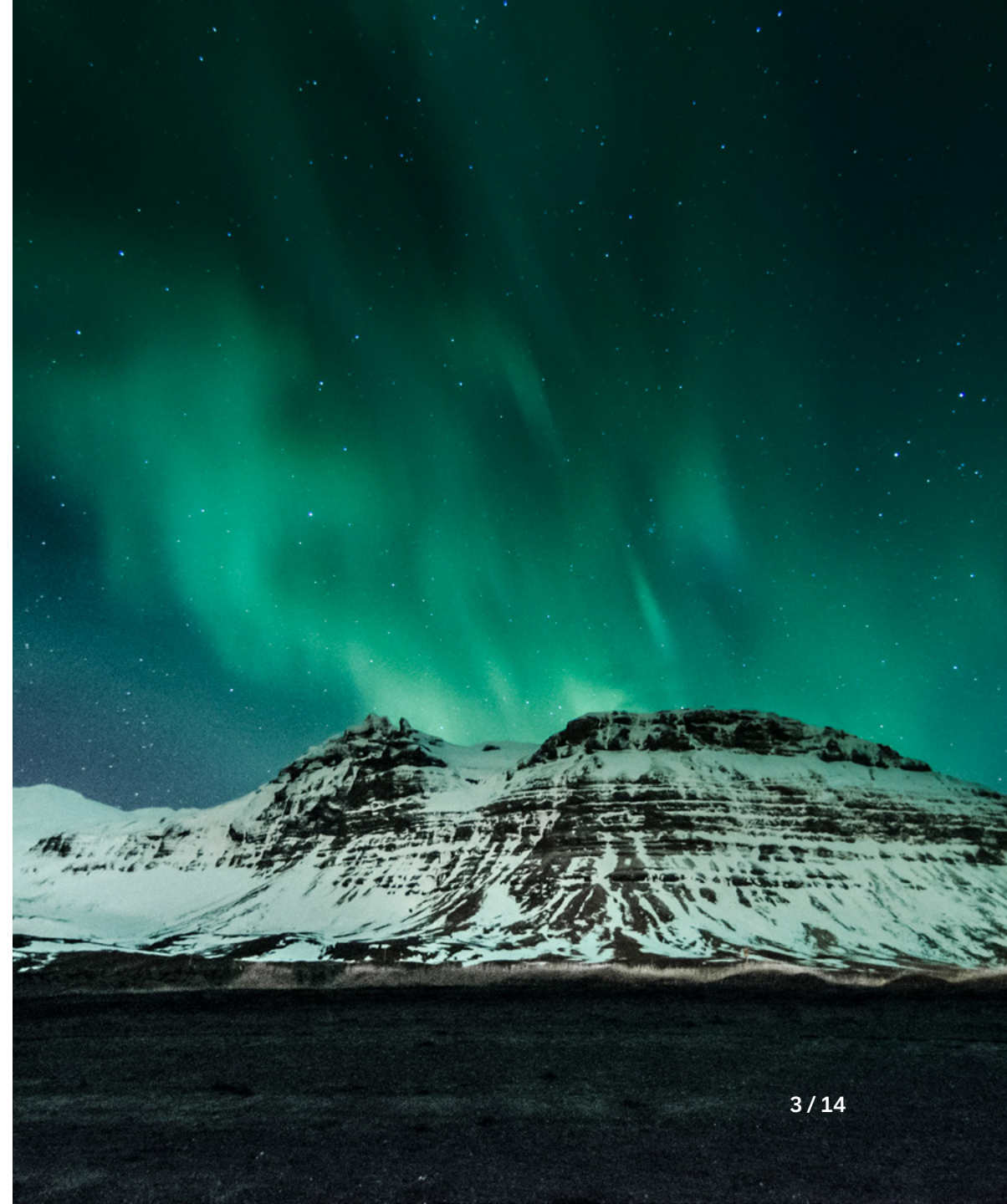
The pressure for organizations to increase revenue and profitability, and improve productivity and efficiency is ever-present. Finance leaders must respond, whether these pressures arise from internal goals and expectations or external circumstances, such as a tight labor market, economic downturns, increased competition, or technological advances.

Imagine if your finance team had the intelligent technology tools it needs to spend less time on mundane tasks and more on driving strategic growth. According to a 2023 survey, business leaders are prioritizing automation (76%), employee experience (72%), business growth and scaling (67%), and improving their ability to innovate and adapt (61%).¹ These priorities align closely with finance leaders' top concerns.²

Smart work solutions can help organizations save time and maximize resources. For finance teams, this means more time for forecasting, managing cash flow, and controlling costs. For employees, this means engaging in work that brings satisfaction and advances their careers. For organizations, this means being better positioned to focus on growth, innovation, and building adaptability and resilience to not just survive but thrive, even in challenging times.

¹ [Empower the Future of Work With Intelligent Travel and Expense Solutions](#), a Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper commissioned by SAP Concur, May 2023.

² Deloitte, [CFO Signals, Q1 2024](#).



Smarter spend management: A single platform with far-reaching benefits

Finance leaders can collaborate with HR and IT to find smart work solutions that deliver new and more efficient processes, not just in finance but across the entire organization.

Spend processes—travel, expense, and invoice—affect almost every employee. For most, submitting an expense report, approving an invoice, or booking travel is an extra administrative task that detracts from more important work. When spend processes and technologies are tedious and frustrating, employees tend to delay these tasks. And, as finance and accounts payable (AP) teams know, every delayed expense report, missing receipt, data entry mistake, or poorly tracked expense can lead to big headaches and data problems for everyone.

Unifying all spend processes on a single platform can be a major win for finance and help organizations achieve important strategic goals. **Your spend solution should bring simplicity, thoughtful automation, and artificial intelligence (AI) to every spend-related task, from the mundane (e.g., tracking expenses and booking travel) to the complex (e.g., regulatory and tax compliance, audits, and strategic overview of organizational spend).**

When employees can complete their spend-related work more efficiently with minimal energy-draining tasks, productivity flourishes. Managers can more easily stay on top of their budgets, AP is freed from paperwork backlogs and data entry, finance can focus on top priorities, and the organization can better meet its duty of care responsibilities.



59%

of business decision-makers say employee frustration with business expense processes have a large or negative impact on the entire company.³

³ [Empower the Future of Work With Intelligent Travel and Expense Solutions](#), a Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper commissioned by SAP Concur, May 2023.



How SAP Concur solutions help organizations work smarter

SAP Concur offers an integrated solution for all aspects of spend management, including travel booking and duty of care, spend requests and budget management, expense reporting and analysis, invoice handling, auditing, and cost oversight. This seamless experience across travel, expense, and invoice (TE&I) can enable finance leaders to:

- Improve employee productivity and the employee experience.
- Strengthen spend management processes and policies to increase compliance and minimize overspending.
- More effectively track and manage the money flowing in and out of the organization.
- Access near real-time, holistic spend data to fuel more accurate analytics and forecasting.
- Manage a more efficient finance team that has more time to focus on high-value, strategic work.

Moreover, SAP Concur solutions help finance leaders prepare their organization to be ready for anything.

Let's look at how SAP Concur unifies and simplifies TE&I, enhances productivity with automation, scales with intelligent AI, and saves the organization even more time with expert help.

A unified and simplified travel, expense, and invoice experience

SAP Concur provides a fully integrated travel, expense, and invoice solution. Employees have one login and a consistent, intuitive interface whether they book a trip, submit an expense report, or review vendor invoices. Whether accessed on a laptop or mobile device, the experience remains the same—it's easy to learn and use, reducing frustration and procrastination. Plus, all spending activities occur on the same platform, providing connected and accurate data to help finance leaders make informed decisions.

End-to-end, SAP Concur has built TE&I processes with a unified data architecture, business logic system, and robust payment integration capability. Multiple currencies, exchange rates, and regional compliance rules are built in to prevent global spend complexity. Unified TE&I data flows in near real-time and integrates seamlessly with all common enterprise resource planning (ERP) and finance systems.



78%

of decision-makers want a single solution to manage their entire travel and expense process.⁴

⁴ Ibid.

Sample spend scenario

SAP Concur solutions automate the manual busywork and workflows that slow teams down. When tasks no longer drain energy, employees can finish them faster and more mindfully, rather than in a “check the box” manner.

Here’s a common example of how this plays out in real life—enabling employees to work smarter.

1 An employee submits a business travel request to their manager.

The request includes an AI-built cost estimate and is automatically checked for compliance against internal policies and external regulations.

2 The approved request flows into the manager’s budget tracking tool.

Managers can track spend, even before it happens, for better planning.

3 The employee books their travel, aided by AI guidance.

Employees can choose favored vendors, while also being led to cost-conscious and sustainability-minded choices. SAP Concur solutions can even capture off-channel bookings.

4 An itinerary is automatically built from the booking, for both the traveler’s use and duty of care.

The itinerary stays updated, even with travel changes, and includes valuable information for the traveler, like safety reports and flight updates.

5 An expense report is initiated, prefilled with data from partner eReceipts.

Even before travel, the employee’s expense report begins to write itself.

6 Employees can automate the entry of other expenses by snapping photos of receipts and tracking and auto-filling mileage with a GPS-based app.

Employees can save time and avoid mistakes with the reduction of manual data entry.

Benefits

7 **The submitted expense report undergoes an automatic AI check.**

Anomalies and potentially non-compliant spend are flagged for human review, and an automated workflow alerts managers for approvals.

9 **As spend occurs, the data is accessible in near real-time and can be synced with the organization's ERP/financial system.**

Finance gains a holistic view of all spend, streamlines reporting and forecasting work, and uses robust analytics to tighten controls and costs.

8 **Value-added tax (VAT) reclaim and taxable employee benefits can also be automatically identified.**

Finance, HR, and AP reduce tedious audit work, minimize tax risk, and return VAT money to the business.

- Employees complete everyday tasks faster, improving productivity and the employee experience.
- Organizations can more easily scale expense- and invoice-related work as they grow, reducing overwork and minimizing the need to expand teams.
- Automation minimizes manual data entry errors, data discrepancies, and lost receipts and invoices—plus the time and headaches finance suffers because of these issues.

Leverage the power of AI

Leveraging the advanced AI and machine learning (ML) embedded in SAP Concur solutions can help protect your organization from risk, scale your processes, and provide employees with personalized guidance.

SAP Concur has been building AI models for its solutions for nearly a decade. Organizations can audit every expense with AI, identifying potentially non-compliant spend after checking items against company policies and tax and compliance regulations around the world—all at a scale and speed that humans alone can't accomplish. Instead of spot-checking expense reports, your teams receive intelligently

prioritized notifications of anomalies to investigate. AI can also infuse more intelligent insights into analytics, surfacing spend patterns and insights to guide policy improvements and cost-saving measures.

Generative AI can offer step-by-step workflow instructions and answer employees' policy-related questions quickly, saving busy administrators time and increasing the likelihood that spend will be compliant. It can even analyze past travel and expense behaviors to provide personalized spending suggestions and help travelers estimate trip costs when submitting a request.

Benefits

- Organizations can lower risk, reduce fraud, and increase policy compliance with AI-driven audits.
- Finance and AP teams can rely on SAP Concur to keep pace with changing laws, spend categories, and regulations.
- Generative AI smooths the employee experience, answering questions quickly and reducing friction.
- AI and ML help finance teams scale and adapt when work gets more complex, whether due to business growth or changing expense categories, travel patterns, or regulations.
- Organizations can proactively react to change when new spend trends are surfaced by intelligent analytics.

Over 60%

of business owners believe AI will increase productivity. Specifically, **64%** stated that AI will improve business productivity, and **42%** believe it will streamline job processes.⁵

64%

of CFOs agree AI will help automate mundane tasks for the finance team and **61%** believe it'll improve efficiency.⁶

⁵ Forbes Advisor, "How Businesses Are Using Artificial Intelligence In 2024," 2023.

⁶ SAP Concur, CFO Insights Report: A New Role in Managing Uncertainty, 2023.

Expert help to take the pressure off

Doing business globally is complicated. No matter how large your finance team is, it's nearly impossible to have all the right staff and expertise you need in-house to optimize how you track and manage spend, enforce internal policies, comply with countless regulatory rules, and analyze data to find cost savings and other efficiency opportunities.

Fortunately, SAP Concur offers personalized assistance for the most complex aspects of spend, pairing intelligent automation and a unified experience with human experts who:

- Ensure your TE&I system is always referencing the most up-to-date regulatory information.
- Increase audit efficiency by leveraging AI to improve compliance and documentation, as well as provide professional insight and actionable advice based on audit analytics.
- Help create bespoke reporting strategies that meet your exact organizational needs to maximize business results.
- Manage time-consuming audit tasks with a blend of AI and human intelligence, providing day-to-day assistance, even working out exceptions, to remove this task from your finance team's plate.

⁷ Gartner, "Gartner Survey Shows That a Third of Accountants Make Several Financial Errors Per Week Due to Capacity Constraints," 2024.



73%

of accountants report that their workload has increased in the past three years because of new regulations, and **82%** say economic volatility has increased demands for their work.⁷

The SAP Concur portfolio of solutions

PRODUCT NAME

	<u>Concur Expense</u>	<u>Expenselt</u>	<u>Concur Travel</u>	<u>Concur Request</u>	<u>Concur Invoice</u>	<u>SAP Concur mobile app</u>
FUNCTION	Provides expense tools that are easy and intuitive to use to manage spend, compliance, and risk	Enables employees to take photos of receipts for automatic expense entry—powered by optical character recognition (OCR), ML, generative AI, and user history	Offers a consumer-like travel booking and tracking process that embeds your organization’s internal policies and global regulations, while providing employees with smart guidance and the option to use their favorite vendors	Incorporates pre-spend approval into the travel workflow and removes inefficient and untraceable spend request methods like email and work chat	Automates and digitizes AP processes from end to end, including capture, coding, three-way match, and approval workflows	Allows employees to access travel bookings, expense tracking, and expense and invoice approvals on mobile devices
WORK SMARTER BY...	Automating expense processes, infusing intelligence into compliance and analytics, and providing a 360-degree view of spend	Letting employees snap a photo of receipts (even in airplane mode) and skip data entry	Streamlining travel bookings, tracking, and duty of care, while unifying all of that with Concur Expense and Concur Invoice for a single data set and user experience	Bringing spend into the system to be vetted, tracked, and approved, even before it happens, so employees know up front how much they can spend and on what	Reducing invoice processing times and errors to increase AP productivity and improve the accuracy of invoice data	Providing employees with the tools they need to electronically capture receipts and instantly create expense reports from anywhere

PRODUCT NAME

FUNCTION

WORK SMARTER BY...

<u>Concur User Assistant solution by WalkMe</u>	<u>Intelligence</u>	<u>Consultative Intelligence</u>	<u>Verify</u>	<u>Concur Detect by Oversight</u>	<u>Intelligent Audit</u>	<u>SAP Concur solutions for global tax management</u>
<p>Provides self-service guidance and step-by-step content via an on-screen user interface</p>	<p>Offers a unified view of spending through simple, yet powerful dashboards</p>	<p>Creates custom, bespoke reporting strategies with the help of SAP Concur consultative experts</p>	<p>Adds intelligent technology that enhances and automates audit processes for greater efficiency, speed, and visibility</p>	<p>Uses AI and ML to automatically check expense reports for fraud and compliance issues in near real-time</p>	<p>Outsources necessary but time-consuming audit tasks to subject matter experts</p>	<p>Equips organizations to build and enact strong compliance strategies, including receipt digitalization, document and reporting compliance, VAT reclaim, and taxable employee benefit tracking and reporting</p>
<p>Easing adoption of new tools and saving employees and administrators time answering user questions</p>	<p>Empowering finance with a holistic view and intelligent, AI-infused analytics</p>	<p>Gaining the exact insights the finance team needs to rein in costs, strategically improve policies, and address change</p>	<p>Better scaling auditing capabilities, resolving discrepancies before they become problems, and finding spending patterns that manual processes can't</p>	<p>Minimizing manual audit work and enabling you to focus only on the issues surfaced by Concur Detect</p>	<p>Saving time for other tasks, while improving compliance, reducing fraud, and ensuring proper documentation</p>	<p>Minimize compliance risk and support global growth, as well as automate tedious and complicated work</p>

Here are a few real-world examples of how SAP Concur solutions help finance teams and employees work smarter, not harder.



Uber

5,000+

employee hours saved

70%

of expense-related help desk tickets resolved automatically

90%

corporate card adoption rate

[Check out the case study](#)

TUNGSTEN AUTOMATION

2x

more efficient expense processing

50%

less time spent preparing/submitting expense reports

20%

decrease in total travel spend with more in-policy bookings

[Check out the case study](#)

PETRONAS

30+

minutes saved per transaction (to complete a travel booking and submit an expense claim)

20%

reduction in expense costs

[Check out the case study](#)

Contact an SAP Concur representative to explore opportunities to work smarter.

For more information, download the Improve Back-Office Productivity and Employee Experience with SAP Concur Solutions brochure or explore more case studies.

Intelligent spend automation for smarter work

With the rapid pace of global change, today's organizations need to be ready for anything. With a solution like SAP Concur, finance leaders can empower finance teams to work smarter, improve productivity across the organization, scale processes for growth, and provide the data, control, and AI-infused analytics needed to make it easier for finance leaders to be agile and strategic in the face of change.



Learn more at concur.com or at the SAP Concur [blog](#).

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