

Sergio P. Mendes Urges Stronger Data Literacy Among Connecticut Professionals

Norwalk, Connecticut, finance leader Sergio P. Mendes highlights how gaps in data understanding are affecting local businesses and everyday decision-making.



Norwalk, Connecticut Apr 17, 2026 (IssueWire.com) - Sergio P. Mendes, a commercial finance and revenue management executive based in Norwalk, Connecticut, is raising awareness about a growing issue affecting professionals across the region: the lack of practical data literacy in everyday business decisions.

As organizations across Connecticut rely more heavily on performance metrics, forecasting, and analytics, many teams still struggle to interpret the information in front of them. Mendes says this gap is not just a corporate issue—it affects how individuals contribute at work and grow in their careers.

“Almost every decision connects back to data,” Mendes said. “The challenge is not access to information. The challenge is understanding what the numbers actually mean.”

A Growing Local Challenge

In Connecticut and the broader Northeast region, businesses are investing heavily in analytics tools and reporting systems. However, adoption has outpaced understanding.

- A 2024 Northeast Business Survey found that 68% of mid-sized companies in the region rely on data-driven reporting, but only 32% of employees feel confident interpreting those reports
- In Connecticut specifically, over 60% of managers report difficulty linking financial metrics to operational decisions
- A regional workforce study showed that data-related roles have grown by 35% over the past five years, yet training programs have not kept pace
- Small and mid-sized businesses in the state report losing up to 15% in efficiency due to misaligned planning and unclear reporting structures
- Nearly 1 in 2 professionals say they rely on others to interpret key performance data, slowing down decision-making

Mendes sees this firsthand in his work across cross-functional teams.

“Data by itself isn’t enough,” he explained. “You have to connect analysis to real decisions. When teams understand the drivers behind performance, they can move faster and operate with more clarity.”

Why It Matters for Local Professionals

For individuals, this issue goes beyond technical skills. It affects confidence, communication, and career growth.

When employees cannot interpret key metrics, they rely on others to explain results. This creates bottlenecks and limits opportunities to contribute.

Mendes emphasizes that finance teams are not the only ones responsible.

“Finance shouldn’t be isolated,” he said. “When different teams understand the same information, the organization works better.”

He also notes that confusion often comes from overcomplication.

“I think most companies have too much data, not too little,” Mendes added. “The real skill is knowing what actually matters.”

Local Action List: What You Can Do This Week

Mendes encourages professionals to take small, practical steps to improve their understanding of data and business performance:

- Review one weekly report and identify the top three key metrics
- Ask a colleague to explain how those metrics are calculated
- Connect one metric to a real business outcome
- Spend 15 minutes learning a basic financial concept (forecasting, margins, or trends)
- Write down one question about your team's performance data
- Attend or request a performance review meeting
- Compare this week's results to last week's and note changes
- Focus on understanding trends, not just numbers
- Simplify one report into plain language
- Ask "Why did this change?" at least once during a meeting

"These are small actions," Mendes said, "but they build awareness quickly."

How to Find Trustworthy Local Resources

Professionals looking to improve their data and financial literacy can start locally:

- Community colleges and universities in Connecticut often offer short courses in business analytics and finance
- Local business associations host workshops on performance metrics and planning
- Public libraries provide access to free learning platforms and business resources
- Industry meetups and networking groups offer peer learning opportunities

When evaluating resources, Mendes suggests focusing on practical application.

"Look for content that explains how to use information, not just what it is," he said.

A Call to Take One Step Today

Mendes believes that improving data literacy does not require major changes. It starts with small, consistent actions.

"Curiosity is the most important skill," he said. "If you ask better questions, you'll get better answers."

He encourages professionals across Connecticut to take one step today—review a report, ask a question, or learn one new concept.

"Clarity doesn't happen all at once," Mendes said. "It builds over time."

About Data Literacy

Data literacy is the ability to read, understand, and use data to inform decisions. As businesses generate more information, the ability to interpret and apply that data has become a critical skill across all roles and industries.

About Sergio P. Mendes

Sergio P. Mendes is a commercial finance and revenue management executive based in Norwalk, Connecticut. He serves as Vice President of Commercial Finance and Revenue Management at Palm Bay in New York, where he leads financial planning, performance analysis, and strategic modeling

across national operations. With more than a decade of experience, Mendes focuses on helping organizations translate complex data into clear, actionable insights.

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