

Sergio P. Mendes on Why Finance Leaders Must Go Beyond the Numbers

Sergio P. Mendes, a Connecticut-based VP of Commercial Finance, outlines the shifts reshaping what financial leadership means in modern organizations.

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For most of its history, corporate finance operated as a reporting function. Teams closed the books, produced monthly outputs, and answered questions when asked. That model is under real pressure now, and not because the fundamentals of finance have changed. The pressure comes from the speed at which business leaders need answers and the complexity of the questions they are asking.

Sergio P. Mendes, who serves as Vice President of Commercial Finance and Revenue Management in New York, has watched this shift play out across nearly two decades of work in sales analytics, pricing, revenue management, and commercial finance. His observation is straightforward: the organizations that are moving fastest are the ones where finance is embedded in the decision rather than downstream from it.

Three Shifts Defining Commercial Finance Today

The first shift is the move from historical reporting to forward-looking analysis. Mendes notes that the most useful finance function is one that helps leadership understand what is likely to happen, not just what has happened. Forecasting has always been part of the role, but the expectation that forecasts will be accurate, current, and acted upon has grown substantially.

The second shift is the demand for data literacy at every level of an organization. Finance leaders are increasingly expected to translate complex datasets into plain language for audiences that include sales teams, operations managers, and executive leadership. The ability to explain a financial model in terms that a non-finance audience can act on is now a core leadership skill.

The third shift is the closer integration of finance with commercial operations. Revenue management, trade spending analysis, and pricing strategy are no longer separate disciplines. They are increasingly part of the same planning cycle. Mendes has worked at the intersection of these functions throughout his career and sees that convergence only continuing.

What This Means for Organizations

For companies that have not yet adjusted to these expectations, the risk is not catastrophic failure. It is slower decisions and missed opportunities. When financial insight arrives after the window for action has closed, its accuracy becomes irrelevant.

Organizations that adapt treat their finance leaders as partners in planning rather than providers of post-event documentation. They invest in data infrastructure that makes real-time analysis possible and in the communication skills that make it usable.

A Framework for Finance Teams Moving Forward

Mendes suggests that finance teams evaluate their own function against three questions: Are we

providing information before decisions are made, or after? Can we explain what our data means to someone in sales or operations without jargon? Are we part of the planning process, or are we reviewing its outcomes?

The answers to those questions reveal whether a finance function is positioned for the environment organizations currently operate in.

About Sergio P. Mendes

Sergio P. Mendes is the Vice President of Commercial Finance and Revenue Management, based in Norwalk, Connecticut. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Sacred Heart University and an MBA from Southern Connecticut State University. With nearly twenty years of experience across pricing, revenue management, and commercial finance, he has held senior roles at organizations including Pernod Ricard USA, Diageo Spirits, and Southern Wines and Spirits. More information is available at his [website](#).

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