

The Last 13 Weeks

Insights, trends, and patterns shaping how businesses manage cash today

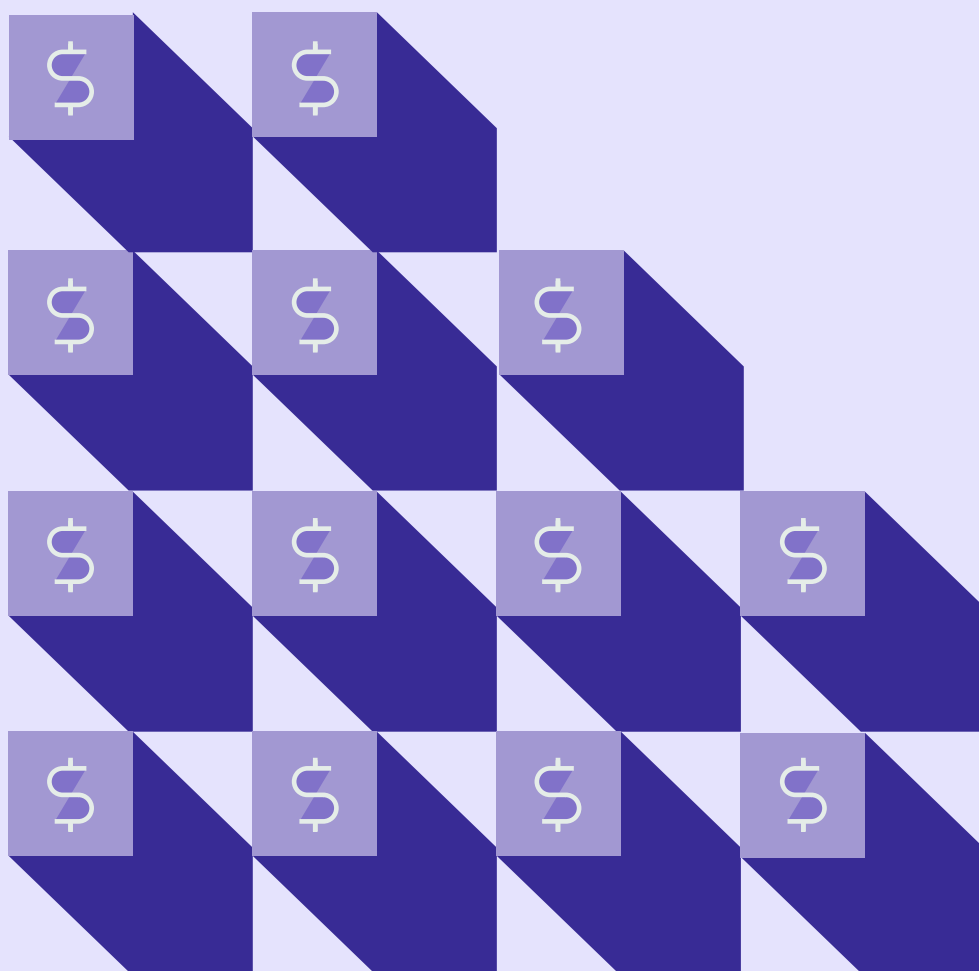




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Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of *The Last 13 Weeks*, a quarterly examination of how businesses are managing liquidity in a world that demands both pace and precision. This report was created to provide a meaningful reflection on how cash flow management is changing structurally, behaviorally, and strategically.

Capital is still expensive. Payment timing is inconsistent. Revenue is less predictable across nearly every sector. For finance teams, that hasn't just meant working harder, it's meant working differently. Cash flow is no longer something that can be reviewed monthly or projected in static models. It's something that now requires constant movement, sharper visibility, and faster action.

This report tracks exactly how companies are responding. From early-stage businesses to mid-market operators and global enterprises, we break down how cash has been managed, where pressure showed up, and what strategies helped companies stay in control over the last quarter.

Our platform data reveals how much spare cash businesses are holding, what the average inflow and outflow cycles look like, and how far ahead companies are actually planning. We also spotlight shifts in short-term forecasting, automation adoption, and the way finance leaders are prioritizing real-time decisions over retrospective reporting.



Across every section, this report is built to do two things: reflect the operational reality of finance teams today, and surface practical strategies that companies are already putting into motion. Because the companies that are navigating uncertainty best aren't the ones reacting fastest; they're the ones planning early, adjusting often, and building systems that keep them close to the numbers when it counts.



Cash in Practice: Q2 Liquidity Trends

In theory, cash is tight. In practice, many companies are holding more than they need—and they don't always know it.

To quantify this, we looked at platform data from a sample of Obol customers, comparing their average monthly closing balances to monthly outflows. The difference reveals how much cash is sitting idle—not allocated, not invested, just held.



Over **84%**

of cash left
unused at
month-end.

On average, companies closed the month with \$370.4M in available cash, after spending \$60.5M. That's more than 6× their monthly outflows, meaning over 84% of their cash wasn't used. Not only does this signal underutilization, but it also highlights how much spare cash is being left inactive.

This data reflects behavior consistent with mid-market companies. Our dataset is grounded in an average closing balance of \$370M, giving us a clear window into how this underdeployment plays out across real operations. It's not hypothetical. It's happening.



Some companies hold higher balances to buffer against volatility, but many are sitting on cash far beyond their operating needs. In most cases, it's structural. Delayed planning cycles, disconnected tools, or outdated processes prevent teams from knowing how much cash they can actually move. The result: liquidity that isn't being used to reduce risk, invest, or grow.

The average monthly inflow was **\$65.6M**, suggesting that most companies are already net cash positive. Yet, the data shows they're still letting that cash sit. That delta between what's coming in and what's going out should be actionable. Instead, it's often invisible, or worse, misread.

When closing balances consistently outpace outflows by a factor of six, it raises a critical question: **what is that cash doing?**

In many cases, the answer is nothing. And that's the problem.

Knowing how much idle cash you're sitting on is one of the most important pieces of financial awareness a company can have. Without that clarity, it's nearly impossible to make informed decisions around investment, growth, or even risk mitigation. The gap between perceived liquidity and actual deployable cash is where missed opportunities and mounting costs live.



Excess cash isn't inherently bad. But without visibility into how much is needed for operational liquidity versus what could be strategically deployed, finance teams are leaving options on the table. Whether it's refinancing debt, capturing early payment discounts, or moving cash into higher-yielding vehicles, the opportunity cost of inaction compounds quickly.

Even more revealing: the average opening balance each month was **\$365.7M**, barely lower than the closing. In other words, companies are starting and ending the month in virtually the same place.

What this tells us is that cash visibility isn't the end goal; it's the baseline. The real value lies in what companies do once they see their position clearly. For most, the next step is rethinking what "enough" really looks like, and using that insight to move faster, deploy smarter, and operate leaner.



Industry Spotlight: Retail

99 Featuring industry insights from *Nicholas Manolelis, former CFO at Liquid Death and Citadel Defense*

Retailers face one of the most structurally complex cash flow environments of any industry. Sales are unpredictable, operating costs are fixed, and the time lag between cash outflows and inflows is often significant.

One of retail's defining challenges is seasonality. Up to 50% of annual revenue for small retailers, and as much as 90% for seasonal ones, is concentrated in a few months¹. While sales may surge temporarily, fixed costs like rent, wages, and utilities persist year-round, creating prolonged periods where outflows exceed inflows.

This makes cash flow planning around peak seasons essential and unforgiving.



As much as 90% of annual revenue for seasonal small retailers is concentrated in a few months.

1 | "How to Manage Cash Flow in Retail Businesses | Paychex." Paychex, 2025, www.paychex.com/articles/finance/retail-cash-flow-management.



Even outside peak periods, capital remains tied up in inventory. Across North America, 41% of retailers reported an average 15-day increase in days inventory outstanding, while 73% of retailers experienced an average 13-day increase². These delays extend the cash conversion cycle, which in retail typically ranges from 79 to 87 days³.

Nicholas Manolelis describes just how critical cash flow planning becomes during high-growth periods. "CPG and beverage is a working capital-intensive business, and cash management is critical during periods of explosive growth," he says. "We implemented a manual 13-week cash flow model during times when cash was tighter, to give leadership a higher level of fidelity than our monthly forecast. This process was very time-intensive and could only be utilized when absolutely necessary."

To tackle these challenges, many retailers adopt aggressive working capital strategies, relying on faster inventory turnover and extended payment terms to maintain liquidity. These tactics help offset one of the retail industry's defining characteristics: structurally low current ratios.

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"CPG and beverage is a working capital-intensive business, and cash management is critical during periods of explosive growth."

Nicholas Manolelis

2 | Unlock Entrepreneurial Success." Ey.com, 2025, www.ey.com/en_ca/insights/consumer-products/buy-into-cashflow-to-ensure-resilience-now.

3 | Ramadan, A, and A Morshed. "Working Capital Management Roles for Multinational Retail Industry Profitability: A Qualitative Study, Worldwide Perspective." <https://doi.org/10.18576/isl/121019>



While a current ratio below 1.0 would raise red flags in most sectors, in retail it's not uncommon and not necessarily a sign of distress.

This is largely because retailers typically carry minimal receivables (due to immediate payment from customers) and depend heavily on inventory, which is their most significant current asset. As long as that inventory turns over quickly and predictably, the business can remain liquid even with a current ratio under 1. In fact, this ratio can dip below 1 and still be acceptable, provided the retailer exercises tight control over stock and vendor terms.

On average, the industry maintains a current ratio around 1.5, but this benchmark varies widely by business model. Fast-moving, high-volume retailers like supermarkets may operate comfortably at or below 1.0, while luxury or specialty retailers with slower turnover might target higher ratios.



Ultimately, it's not just the number that matters, it's the context behind it: how quickly inventory sells, how efficiently cash flows in and out, and how much reliance is placed on vendor financing.

For Manolelis's team, lack of automation made those insights harder to surface. "Our 13-week model was not automated. It placed a significant burden on the team, and we could only justify it when weekly cash projections were essential," he explains.



"Our broader forecast was updated quarterly and relied on balance sheet assumptions, not real-time data that could drive a truly accurate short-term analysis."



In inventory-heavy environments, **the ability to automate and update short-term forecasts is key** not just for operational decisions like purchasing, discounting, and inventory rebalancing, but also for preserving cash, avoiding overstock risks, and reacting quickly to demand shifts before they hit the bottom line.

Retailers also face intensifying macroeconomic headwinds. 29% of consumers reported being financially worse off than the previous year. Consumer spending is shifting downward: 60% expect to cut spending on fashion accessories, 52% on toys and gadgets, 48% on cosmetics and clothing, and 46% on electronics⁴. The result is not only weaker revenue projections but greater reliance on discounts, compressing margins and reducing cash inflow.

Meanwhile, retailers are dealing with operational pressure on returns and refund cycles. Beyond the direct cash outlay, returns create labor and restocking costs, adding friction to liquidity just as inventory rebalancing becomes more urgent.

High return rates combined with mistimed purchases further trap capital in unsold or slow-moving goods.

4 | "Unlock Entrepreneurial Success." Ey.com, 2025, www.ey.com/en_ca/insights/consumer-products/buy-into-cashflow-to-ensure-resilience-now.



And yet, despite how central cash visibility is, many retail teams still struggle to reconcile their data in real time. **"Accurate and timely data was critical to building our short-term cash model,"** Manolelis notes. **"But our systems didn't always align cleanly, so the team would spend time reconciling cash balances and validating forecasts instead of making forward-looking decisions."**

His advice to retail finance leaders is grounded in that experience: **"Cash forecasting tools are getting better every day. Find one you can trust—something that saves time, reduces friction, and helps your finance team deliver the insights your business needs to plan and operate efficiently."**

Retail has always been a balancing act between risk and rhythm; between what's sold today and what needs to be paid for tomorrow.

As cycles stretch and margins compress, the ability to manage liquidity is defining.

The strongest retailers aren't just reacting faster. They're planning smarter, moving earlier, and building systems that give them control when it matters most.

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"Accurate and timely data was critical to building our short-term cash model."

Nicholas Manolelis



Industry Spotlight: Technology

99 *Featuring industry insights from Guido Torrini, CFO at OneTrust*

Capital efficiency has become the new benchmark for operational excellence in the tech sector. Growth is still expected, but it's no longer viewed in isolation. Investors, boards, and operators now examine the mechanics behind that growth: how capital is raised, where it's allocated, and how long it can be sustained. Across SaaS, infrastructure, and hardware, companies are recalibrating their strategies to grow without compromising liquidity.

One of the most significant aspects affecting cash flow is the rapid rise in capital expenditure, particularly across AI and infrastructure.



In 2025, the combined CAPEX of Microsoft, Meta, Alphabet, and Amazon is expected to exceed \$320 billion, driven largely by massive investments in data centers and AI infrastructure⁵.

5 | Goldfarb, Jeffrey. "Breakingviews - Capital Intensity Will Reprogram Big Tech Values." Reuters, 7 May 2025, www.reuters.com/breakingviews/capital-intensity-will-reprogram-big-tech-values-2025-05-07/.



What once were asset-light models are now CAPEX-heavy operations, with capital investments accounting for nearly a third of revenue at some firms. These outlays extend the cash conversion cycle. Cash goes out long before returns materialize, placing pressure on short-term liquidity and heightening the importance of accurate forecasting and real-time planning.

Guido Torrini notes that his team has moved away from static models and toward operationally integrated cash planning. **"We've built more agility into our models to reflect shorter-term volatility, especially as macro conditions continue to influence customer behavior and payment timing,"** he explains. **"The emphasis now is on aligning cash planning more tightly with operating plans, so we can adjust proactively as business conditions evolve."**

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Guido Torrini

For finance teams, this means navigating cash flow under tighter conditions. Depreciation and amortization are increasing, returns on invested capital are falling, and treasury strategies must evolve to protect operational flexibility. Planning cycles are shorter, risk exposure is broader, and maintaining liquidity while managing long-term commitments has become a core part of the financial playbook.



Automation is enabling that shift. "As our volume and complexity grows, automation allows the team to spend more time on scenario analysis and strategic decisions, rather than data prep," says Torrini.

This is especially important in multi-entity, cross-currency environments. "Traditional reporting tends to lag reality," he adds. "It's great for historical auditability, but doesn't always reflect the nuance of timing... The disconnect is usually around systems not talking to each other in real time, which creates friction when trying to make forward-looking decisions based on partial or outdated inputs."



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Guido Torrini

Deferred revenue adds another layer of complexity. Common in SaaS, deferred revenue can improve short-term cash flow through upfront annual payments. But this liquidity is conditional. Relying on deferred revenue can create a false sense of cash availability, as these funds are contractually obligated. Improper handling can lead to overextension, especially if teams budget against cash instead of earned revenue.

For more mature companies, working capital efficiency is becoming a lever for reinvestment.



Better receivables and payables management can unlock **5–10% of total revenue**.

A 10–30% reduction in receivables alone can release cash equivalent to 2–4% of revenue, while extending payables improves free cash by another 1–2%⁶.

Torrini's advice to finance leaders is clear:

"Invest in systems that give your team time back. As the business scales, the complexity of cash planning increases exponentially—but the available time to manage it doesn't. Creating a foundation that allows your team to operate with real-time data and automation unlocks the bandwidth to move faster, model better, and support the business more strategically."

Cash flow management in tech has become more dynamic, more detailed, and more essential. With heavier investment cycles, shifting revenue timing, and tighter capital markets, liquidity planning is now central to how companies operate and grow. The strongest finance teams are those treating cash as a daily discipline—adjusting with intent, planning with precision, and staying clear on what it enables.

Better receivables and payables management can unlock

+5%-10%

of total revenue.

6 | KPMG. (2025). How Leading PE Sponsors Leverage Working Capital to Fund Strategic Initiatives.



The Rise of Fractional CFOs

99 *Featuring industry insights from Chris Ortega, Fractional CFO, Founder and CEO of Fresh FP&A*

In 2025, the demand for fractional CFOs and advisory firms continues to grow across the U.S., particularly among small and mid-sized businesses seeking strategic financial leadership without committing to a full-time hire. But beyond cost-efficiency, what's driving this shift is a deeper operational need: better cash flow discipline.

Fractional CFOs are often brought in to make sense of liquidity and build visibility fast. **The top reason businesses hire fractional CFOs is to stabilize and manage cash flow, especially in periods of uncertainty⁷.** Their first task is often to build a rolling forecast that moves with the business, replacing static models that fail to reflect real-world volatility. Weekly and biweekly updates are becoming the norm, giving founders and operators a tighter grip on what's ahead.

Cash conversion timing is a growing area of focus for fractional CFOs. From invoicing and collections to vendor terms and expense pacing, every element is fine-tuned to support liquidity. Fractional CFOs are increasingly expected to monitor short-term cash positioning with accuracy by tightening forecast windows, modeling multiple scenarios, and aligning spend decisions with real-time operational needs⁸.

7 | Paro Team. (2025, May 8). Fractional CFOs: Smart financial leadership during uncertain times. Paro.

8 | ECA Partners. (2025). A Guide to Fractional CFO Services in 2025.



Technology enables much of this speed. Fractional CFOs are often more tech-native than traditional finance teams, using dashboards and automated tools to consolidate bank accounts, track inflows and outflows, and generate real-time visibility into a client's financial health⁹. **"Automation is important for data aggregation and classification,"** emphasizes Chris Ortega. This is especially crucial for smaller companies without dedicated finance teams, where automation creates the foundation for timely and accurate decisions.

What sets fractional CFOs apart isn't just their technical skill, but their ability to translate cash flow insight into business action. They play a hands-on role in determining whether a company can afford to hire, expand, or invest, and they build internal habits that persist well beyond their engagement.

Fractional CFOs are helping businesses embed working capital thinking into daily operations, turning cash into something not just to monitor, but to manage proactively¹⁰.

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Especially crucial for smaller companies without dedicated finance teams, automation creates the foundation for timely and accurate decisions.

9 | Francisczok, M. (2025, January 27). Here's how fractional CFO services tackle your cash flow problems—Head on.

10 | RSI International. (2025). Fractional Chief Financial Officer (CFO), a catalyst to SMEs' survival.



Ortega expresses that the traditional reporting model often misses the mark. **"The US GAAP statement of cash flows, indirect approach, provides little to no value on true cash flow performance. The direct method should be the gold standard for businesses."**

Fractional CFOs are elevating how companies think about cash. They bring structure where there was uncertainty, and turn liquidity into a tool for better decisions. Their growing role reflects a broader move toward financial control as a foundation for long-term strength. Demand for this kind of financial leadership is accelerating.

Interim CFO hiring rose 103% year over year driven by a growing recognition that strategic cash management requires more than traditional reporting¹¹. Accounting and advisory firms are amplifying this trend.

Firms offering fractional CFO services improved client cash flow by an average of 30% within six months¹², and businesses partnering with such firms saw 2–3X return on investment within one year through working capital optimization¹³.



11 | Wilke CPA. (2025). The rise of fractional CFOs in small businesses.

12 | TGG Accounting. (2025). Benefits of a fractional CFO for business growth.

13 | Kordis. (2025). ROI of fractional CFO services for growing businesses.



Beyond cash, firms are helping clients reduce days sales outstanding and move away from slow payment methods. 91% of U.S. firms still use checks, slowing cash cycles significantly¹⁴. Advisory firms are also spotlighting the cash conversion cycle, helping clients unlock an estimated **\$1.8 trillion in working capital** across U.S. markets¹⁵.

Fractional CFOs and advisory firms now stand at the center of financial operations: they are trusted partners in forecasting, structure, and strategy. Chris Ortega notes that **"profits are a dream, but cash is a reality,"** capturing the mindset driving this shift. Their rise speaks to a gap they fill; bridging execution with expertise, and turning imperfect liquidity into managed strength.

¹⁴ | AFP. (2025). U.S. business payments report. Associated Payments Forum.

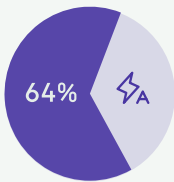
¹⁵ | Hackett Group. (2025). Cash conversion cycle study.



The Automation Advantage

99 *Featuring industry insights from Bob Parker, CFO and Investor*

In high-performing finance teams, automation has become foundational. It is the infrastructure behind strategic clarity, reframing how cash flow is managed, planned, and reinforced under pressure. When liquidity tightens and decisions move fast, finance leaders cannot afford blind spots. The ability to streamline receivables, eliminate reconciliation delays, and maintain real-time cash visibility is an operational imperative. Automation delivers that edge with precision, scale, and speed.



Today, 64% of finance teams already leverage automation tools, and another 17% plan to implement them in 2025¹⁶.

Yet critical inefficiencies persist in the very systems responsible for cash. 35% percent of mid-sized firms still manage AR entirely manually, and 75% of SMBs continue to resolve disputes through email¹⁷.

16 | AvidXchange. (2025). 2025 Finance Focus: 7 Trends in Accounting and Finance Departments. <https://www.avidxchange.com/resources/2025-finance-focus/>

17 | PYMNTS. (2025). The AR Automation Imperative in 2025.



This reliance on manual processes continues to delay collections, introduce errors, and create uncertainty in cash flow, often at the exact moment businesses need predictability most. 86% of businesses report that up to 30% of monthly invoiced sales are overdue, while only 23% of CFOs say their teams are fully up to date on invoices¹⁸. Delays like these not only weaken short-term liquidity — they destabilize operating plans, increase financing needs, and extend the working capital cycle.

Bob Parker has experienced the consequences of running cash operations manually. **"We didn't have any automated tools at our disposal. We used Excel and our best understanding of inflows and outflows,"** he recalls. **"Whether you are growing or not, cash is the most important item to keep on top of."**

Without automation, even experienced teams are vulnerable to false confidence. **"I've worked for companies that were in 'hope mode' for all aged receivables. They kept pushing unpaid receivables out and published cash forecasts. Cash looked fine, but it was far from realistic. Hope is not a strategy."**

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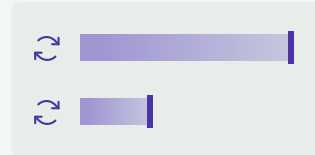
18 | Ibid.



Meanwhile, 27% of finance leaders say that at least half of their AR team's time is spent resolving invoice disputes, a significant operational cost for what should be a streamlined function¹⁹. For firms that prioritize automation, collection cycles can be reduced by up to 67%²⁰.

But automation isn't just about collections. Parker emphasizes that inbound cash visibility is often the weakest link. **"All the cash flow data you need exists—likely somewhere else,"** he explains. **"You have access to the outflows—compensation, rent, payables—but what you don't have is the inbound. Some sense of customer payment profiles, yes, but industries are volatile now. Some companies are holding back or delaying payments. The result is soft cash flow forecasts."**

He warns that internal misalignment only compounds the issue: **"There is the recurring problem of commitments being made—especially in smaller companies—that the finance team wasn't aware of or they were made a long time ago."** His solution is clear: **"Put a system and rules in place that link all inbound and outbound activity. That's critical to success."**



For firms that
prioritize automation,
collection cycles can
be reduced by up to
67%.

19 | McLeod, Ashley. "From Friction to Flow: AR Automation in 2025." PYMNTS.com, 3 June 2025, www.pymnts.com/tracker_posts/from-friction-to-flow-ar-automation-in-2025/. Accessed 16 June 2025.

20 | Ibid



Across businesses, 81% report they must follow up between one and four times to collect a single overdue payment²¹. For companies managing dozens or hundreds of invoices, the inefficiency compounds fast.

This isn't about saving hours. It's about regaining control at scale. CEOs can reclaim up to 20% of their time by automating financial operations²². Over half of executives in the banking and finance sectors have simplified their workflows using automation²³. Among finance professionals, 73% say automation enhances productivity and frees up capacity for strategic work²⁴.



Over half of executives in the banking and finance sectors have simplified their workflows using automation.

However, only 17% of firms have fully automated their payment systems, despite the availability of mature AR automation tools, including digital invoicing, virtual cards, and push payments. Most finance teams are still dependent on manual entry and follow-up emails²⁵. This leaves critical revenue streams exposed to delays and dispute risk.

21 | McLeod, Ashley. "From Friction to Flow: AR Automation in 2025." PYMNTS.com, 3 June 2025, www.pymnts.com/tracker_posts/from-friction-to-flow-ar-automation-in-2025/. Accessed 16 June 2025.

22 | Coolest-Gadgets. (2025). Workforce Automation Statistics. <https://www.coolest-gadgets.com/workforce-automation-statistics/>

23 | Ibid

24 | Ibid

25 | McLeod, Ashley. "From Friction to Flow: AR Automation in 2025." PYMNTS.com, 3 June 2025, www.pymnts.com/tracker_posts/from-friction-to-flow-ar-automation-in-2025/. Accessed 16 June 2025.



Parker's advice to finance leaders is direct: **"Automate. Remove as much of the human in the loop as you can. Save your people resources to pressure test the CF estimates. You need to run scenarios on 'what if' this or that doesn't happen."**

He shares the consequences of poor forecasting from experience: **"You don't want to be in a position where you need to call the board to make payroll. I have done that a number of times in my career, and will not do it again."**

In financial terms, the cost is clear. According to surveyed CFOs with customers on net 30+ terms, businesses attributed 4.6% of annual revenue — roughly \$19 million — to payment uncertainty²⁶.

When payments are late, every aspect of the operation feels it: from treasury to planning, from vendor trust to investment pacing.

But Parker highlights a deeper benefit of automation: retention. **"If you can develop a CF operating system using a platform like Obol, you not only improve the predictability of your forecasts—you increase the retention and commitment of your finance team."**

Bob Parker explains that strong forecasting infrastructure isn't just for leadership optics—it's for team stability:

26 | Ibid



"Few people really think about the level of attention and retention a CFO must give their team during tough financial times. In any company, a select subset of the finance team is the only organization that really knows how much time is left at the company." And if that trust breaks? "They will be the first ones to start looking for new jobs. Reassuring them with a solid cash flow forecast and options if the forecast doesn't work is what keeps your best finance employees in their seats."

For Parker, automation is how finance earns confidence internally and externally. "Having a platform and process you all agree with that is mostly automated is key to managing your own team—let alone the expectations and dreams of the executive team, board, investors, and employees and their families."

The impact reaches beyond internal teams. More than a quarter of companies (26%) have ended B2B relationships due to late or inconsistent payments²⁷, a signal that inefficient AR processes can damage long-term commercial health.



27 | Ibid



Even small process gaps create vulnerability. In today's economic environment, where capital costs are rising and working capital is tightly managed, unchecked payment delays can affect payroll, purchasing timelines, and downstream obligations.

Globally, \$497 billion is estimated to be locked in accounts receivable among median-performing companies²⁸, a staggering figure that highlights the scale of the problem and the opportunity available to those who solve it.

\$497B

is estimated to be locked in accounts receivable among median-performing companies globally.

Moreover, recent disruptions, from natural disasters to infrastructure shutdowns, have exposed the fragility of legacy systems. Nearly 40% of B2B payments in the U.S. are still made via check²⁹, limiting resilience and hindering remote operations when speed is most critical. The result is not just slower payments, it's reduced visibility, increased friction, and missed opportunities for early intervention.

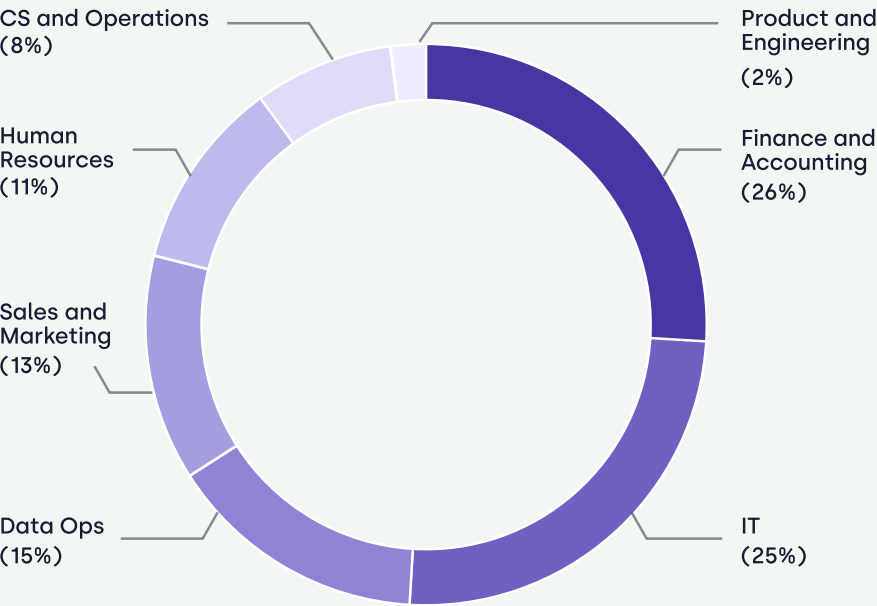
28 | Ibid

29 | Ibid



Workflow Automation for Department Statistics

Automation Adoption by Department



Reference: [automationedge.com](https://www.automationedge.com)

Automation is not just about efficiency. It's how modern finance teams regain control, deliver faster insight, and elevate their role from reporting the past to shaping what comes next.

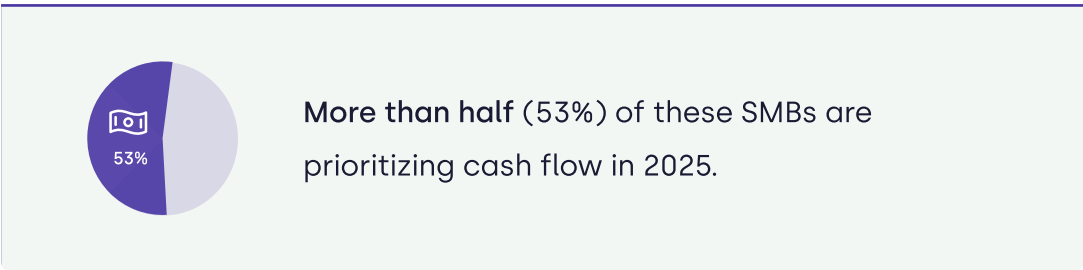


Cash Flow Challenges Across the Business Spectrum

99 *Featuring industry insights from Surbhi Vaidya, CEO of ValleyXServices*

Cash flow management in Q2 2025 looks different depending on where a business sits on the maturity curve. From small businesses to enterprises, the pressure to stay liquid is universal, but how that pressure shows up, and how finance teams respond to it, varies widely.

Small and medium-sized businesses are entering the year with cautious optimism. Many are prioritizing growth, often leaning on external financial guidance and data-backed decision-making. **More than half (53%) of these SMBs are prioritizing cash flow in 2025, and 48% intend to adopt new cash management tools, a rate five times higher than other companies³⁰.**



30 | "2025 Business Survey: What Businesses Are Gaining from Financial Insight"



They're also relying more on CPAs, attorneys, and bankers to guide financial decisions³¹. Despite this optimism and willingness to adopt new tools, SMBs continue to face specific, persistent cash flow challenges:

- Customer payment delays continue to disrupt cash availability, limiting flexibility and slowing operations³².
- A portion of SMBs still depend on manual spreadsheets, delaying decisions and masking potential risks³³. Surbhi Vaidya adds "My client's approach has become more structured and forward-looking over the past year, even though we still rely on manual Excel-based models. As a small SaaS business with predictable recurring revenue, our cash flow isn't overly complex—but we've learned that timing still matters a lot, especially when it comes to payroll, vendor payments, and managing cash reserves for growth initiatives."

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"As a small SaaS business with predictable recurring revenue, our cash flow isn't overly complex—but we've learned that timing still matters a lot."

Surbhi Vaidya

31 | Ibid

32 | Dimitrova ("Top Cash Flow Challenges for Small Businesses in 2025 and How to Overcome Them")

33 | Ibid



- Access to capital remains uneven. Many are turning to non-bank lenders for speed and flexibility, with adoption at its highest recorded level³⁴.

- Seasonality creates sharp swings in liquidity, particularly for businesses without a buffer strategy in place³⁵.

- In Q1 2025, there was a notable shift in SMB cash management behavior: a decline in maintaining a minimum checking account balance equal to one month's revenue (from 41% to 25%) and an increase in making just the minimum credit card payments (from 28% to 42%)³⁶.

This suggests a more reactive, less strategic approach to short-term liquidity management for some.

Vaidya adds **"...as the business grows and things become more dynamic, I definitely see the value in adopting a tool to streamline forecasting, improve visibility, and save time."**

Q1 2025 SMB cash management behavior

25%

maintaining a minimum checking account balance equal to one month's revenue.

42%

making just the minimum credit card payments.

34 | ("Small Business Cash Flow Trend Report | OnDeck")

35 | Dimitrova ("Top Cash Flow Challenges for Small Businesses in 2025 and How to Overcome Them")

36 | ("Small Business Cash Flow Trend Report | OnDeck")



Mid-market companies face a different kind of challenge: scale. As operations expand, so does complexity: more entities, currencies, and banking relationships. Yet many still rely on static, annual forecasts that can't keep pace with real-world volatility.

54% of mid-market CFOs report their 2025 forecasts are worsening, attributing this decline to economic and policy uncertainty³⁷.



Many mid-market businesses are still building forecasts in spreadsheets. Aggregating data across subsidiaries remains manual, making it harder to spot timing issues in payables or receivables. Scenario planning is underused, which leaves teams exposed to supply disruptions, customer delays, and interest rate swings.

Vaidya points out a related challenge: "Traditional cash flow reporting, especially the indirect method used in financial statements, is helpful for compliance and historical analysis but not very useful for operational decision-making. It doesn't reflect the timing of actual cash inflows and outflows, nor does it provide the level of detail needed to manage working capital on a day-to-day basis."

37 | Zaki, Adam. "54% of CFOs Say 2025 Forecasts Are Worsening: Trial Balance." CFO.com.



She adds that real-time visibility into short-term liquidity, upcoming obligations, and expected collections is far more valuable: **"Traditional reports don't account for things like customer payment delays, changes in vendor terms, or the actual cash impact of deferred revenue in SaaS."**



These gaps aren't just procedural, they're costly. Missed early-payment discounts, higher borrowing rates, and deferred investments add up. For many, the absence of real-time visibility translates directly into financial inefficiency.

Larger enterprises face a different set of pressures. In 2025, the conversation has moved beyond visibility and into optimization. Global treasury leaders are fine-tuning centralized cash operations to support faster allocation decisions across entities, currencies, and regions. A growing number are leveraging real-time data to rebalance working capital across business units daily, rather than monthly³⁸.

Many of these companies are also contending with the cash flow impact of large-scale AI and infrastructure investments. Enterprise CAPEX is now not only bigger—it's faster. AI models and compute capacity are evolving so quickly that capital plans must stay fluid³⁹.

38 | J.P. Morgan. (2025). Global Treasury Insights: The Next Era of Cash Optimization. J.P. Morgan Corporate & Investment Bank.

39 | Deloitte. (2025). Tech Infrastructure Outlook 2025: Capital Planning in an AI-Driven Economy. Deloitte Insights.



At the same time, balance sheet resilience is back in focus. With refinancing risks rising and interest rates holding, enterprise finance teams are doubling down on liquidity buffers.

Over 70% of Fortune 500 companies have updated their cash governance policies since Q4 2024—many now include live dashboard reviews at the CFO level⁴⁰. For enterprises, cash isn't just about continuity anymore. It's a strategic asset, actively managed to support agility.



"Treat cash flow forecasting with the same rigor as your P&L. Too often, cash is managed reactively."

Surbhi Vaidya

Across company sizes, a shared challenge persists: the gap between awareness and execution. Businesses need platforms that are intuitive enough to adopt, powerful enough to scale, and demonstrably effective in reducing risk.

Vaidya offers a clear recommendation to finance leaders: **"Treat cash flow forecasting with the same rigor as your P&L. Too often, cash is managed reactively. As complexity grows, don't hesitate to adopt a tool that can integrate data and reduce manual work. The goal should be to shift from reactive cash tracking to proactive cash management."**

40 | EY. (2025). CFO Imperatives: Strengthening Liquidity Governance in Enterprise Finance. Ernst & Young Global Limited.

About Obol

Obol is the modern cash flow platform for businesses.

Built to automate, plan, and manage all cash flow operations in real time, Obol connects directly to bank accounts, ERPs, and payment systems. From small business owners through to CFOs and enterprise finance teams, operators choose Obol to gain control, move faster, and stay ahead of cash flow—not react to it.

Trusted by startups and global enterprises alike, Obol helps finance teams move faster and make better decisions with their cash.

Learn more at obol.app.

