

BUSINESS GUIDE

How AI Helps CFOs Close Faster, Forecast Smarter, and Gain Deeper Insights

Three ways to extend NetSuite to support a more strategic finance function

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Overview

Your business leaders need answers faster. Your board wants deeper visibility into performance. Forecasts must reflect current conditions, not last month's assumptions. And your finance team is increasingly expected to explain not just what happened, but why it happened and what's likely to happen next.

If your company runs NetSuite, these demands create real opportunity. Your foundational business system is in place, with AI embedded throughout the suite. Your financial data, core processes, and operational visibility live inside the system that runs your business. In many cases, your finance team has adapted to rising expectations by making smart use of capabilities available in NetSuite ERP—improving reporting with saved searches and dashboards, increasing visibility with role-based KPIs, using AI to detect anomalies, standardizing accounting processes, and reducing spreadsheet dependency by keeping more activity in the system.

These efforts have taken your finance team a long way, and now you're ready to go to the next level to help stakeholders do more with the data they trust. After all, there are more entities to consolidate, tighter close timelines, more dynamic planning needs, and a growing appetite for insights.

With NetSuite, the close, planning, and analysis can be brought together on a single set of trusted data, where AI can take on more of the assembly so your team spends less time on numbers and more time interpreting them. Forecasts can respond more fluidly to change. Trends and anomalies can be surfaced automatically, giving your team room to guide the business forward rather than react to what has passed.

That is why the office of the CFO should be about extending the AI-enabled financial foundation you have in place. By building on NetSuite with additional capabilities designed for close automation, more advanced planning, and deeper analytics, you can create a connected approach.

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CHAPTER 1

Accelerate and Strengthen the Close With AI

Your team has used NetSuite to create a more disciplined close process. Standardized workflows, built-in reporting, account visibility, and centralized data reduce the chaos that comes from disconnected systems. AI is part of that foundation, too—NetSuite ERP can already flag anomalies in transactions during the close and generate narrative insights that explain what's driving the numbers, so your team starts each cycle with a clearer picture of where to focus. Compared with spreadsheet-heavy environments, that's a major improvement.

As your business expands, new possibilities arise. Your finance team may be ready to take on more sophisticated allocations, recurring accounting treatments, and larger volumes of activity across entities or business units. What used to be handled manually can be elevated with powerful automation—the kind that lets your team focus on analysis rather than mechanics and that produces the consistent, well-structured data AI needs to make that analysis sharper.

And because the close drives everything downstream, faster close cycles unlock faster reporting, more timely planning, and deeper analysis.

This is where NetSuite Advanced Financials becomes especially valuable. It extends the foundation you have in place with capabilities designed to further reduce manual effort and improve control in your close processes. One of the clearest examples is the ability to cut close time and improve accuracy with automated amortizations and dynamic allocations that reduce manual journal entries and reconciliation headaches.



Automation is woven into the close experience

NetSuite Advanced Financials builds automation directly into the workflows your team uses every day. Recurring amortization schedules run on their own rather than being rebuilt each period. Allocations distribute costs and revenue according to rules you define, updating automatically as underlying data changes. Statistical accounts let you drive allocations off operational measures like headcount or square footage without standing up spreadsheets outside the ERP. Automation is built into the same workflows your team already uses, producing the kind of standardized, consistent data that makes the close faster and informs the AI built on top of it.

Together, these additional capabilities help your finance team improve consistency, reduce errors, and shorten close cycles. Just as important, they free your people from low-value, repetitive tasks so they can focus on exceptions, reviews, and higher-level analysis.

NetSuite Advanced Financials deepens the value of the ERP you depend on, rather than asking your team to build new processes outside of it.

Signs your close process is ready for more

- Month-end journal entry volumes keep climbing.
- Allocation logic is getting harder to maintain in spreadsheets.
- Reconciliations are taking more of your team's time than you would like.
- Reporting could start sooner if the close moved faster.
- Your team needs more capacity for review and analysis than processing currently allows.

Make Planning and Forecasting More Agile

With a stronger close process, the next opportunity is using those numbers to plan more effectively. NetSuite gives you access to current financial data, native reporting, and operational visibility that can improve planning conversations. Many NetSuite customers use exports, reports, dashboards, and internal models to build budgets and forecasts informed by ERP data. That approach has served finance teams well.

As the pace of the business picks up, the appetite for richer forecasting grows with it. Leaders ask more “what if” questions. They want forecasts based on the operational drivers of the business—headcount,

units sold, customer churn—not just extrapolations of last year’s numbers. And there’s an opportunity to bring planning closer to actuals so your finance team can respond with confidence and speed, without maintaining a parallel universe of spreadsheet models only loosely connected to the ERP.

This is where NetSuite Planning and Budgeting enters the picture. Rather than operating as a stand-alone planning tool, NetSuite Planning and Budgeting works directly with your financial and operational data, creating a unified, companywide approach to forecasting and decision support.



NetSuite Planning and Budgeting creates forecasts and runs scenario models using real-time actuals, so results reflect the very latest data. This is especially powerful in more complex organizations with multiple business units, entities, and operational drivers. Instead of relying on static extracts, now your team can plan using continuously updated data. That improves both agility and relevance. Rather than simply extending historical trends, you can forecast based on operational and financial drivers that influence performance, and vary those drivers to model scenarios and test assumptions at scale, compare outcomes, and respond as business conditions change.

AI turns planning into a continuous, decision-ready process

Embedded AI in NetSuite Planning and Budgeting helps your team generate predictive forecasts by considering historical patterns, seasonality, and current performance trends, all at once. Machine learning models highlight the drivers that have the greatest impact on outcomes, allowing your team to focus on what matters most.

Planning becomes more interactive and responsive. Using natural-language queries and AI-assisted insights, finance teams can quickly explore variance drivers, test scenarios, and refine forecasts without rebuilding models from scratch. As new actuals are ingested, forecasts continuously improve, keeping them aligned with current business conditions.

Together, these capabilities help you shift from periodic, cycle-based planning toward a more continuous and strategic planning motion. For the office of the CFO,

Signs your planning process is ready for more

- Leadership is asking “what if” questions faster than the current process can answer.
- Scenario planning is slowed by manual assembly, limiting the number of scenarios that can be assessed.
- There’s appetite to plan from current actuals rather than old snapshots.
- Planning cycles require significant manual coordination across teams.
- Different parts of the business are working from uncoordinated and unrelated assumptions.

this matters because planning is no longer just about producing a budget. It’s about helping your leadership team and board of directors understand what is likely to happen next, what is driving outcomes, and what actions the business can take in response.

NetSuite Planning and Budgeting extends the value of the platform you use by turning reliable actuals into better forecasts, more responsive planning cycles, and stronger business alignment. If the close gives you trusted numbers, NetSuite Planning and Budgeting puts those numbers to work.

Turn Data Into Insight With AI-Powered Analytics

With a stronger close and more integrated planning process, another opportunity is to broaden the data your finance team uses to understand the business and then apply AI to bring that wider picture into focus.

No doubt, NetSuite's standard reporting, dashboards, and KPIs are essential. They can support day-to-day monitoring, help with benchmarking against competitors, and provide the transparency needed by regulators and stakeholders for informed decisions. Today's CFOs, however, do much more than provide numbers. They explain and steer operations based on what's driving performance, the bottlenecks to growth, and predictions for what's likely ahead.

This is where NetSuite Analytics Warehouse comes in. It broadens visibility and deepens your understanding of risk by capturing your most critical data, wherever it resides. By combining your core NetSuite data with information from other critical business systems—such as your CRM, ecommerce platforms, or historical records—it creates a richer, more complete view of the business. AI can then mine this unified data set to generate actionable insights.

Traditionally, centralizing and analyzing disparate data from a range of sources requires heavy IT integration work that slows down finance teams. NetSuite Analytics Warehouse helps eliminate this bottleneck. It arrives with prebuilt data models and an understanding of NetSuite business logic, so your team never has to start from a blank page. From there, built-in AI assistants and visual data-blending tools make it easy to connect and map all your data. This shortens the path from raw, siloed data to clear, usable analytics.

AI sits at the center of the analysis experience

Stay current with automated monthly reports and dashboards that aggregate data across departments and

Signs your reporting approach is ready for more

- Analysis requires blending core NetSuite data with information from external platforms to see the full picture.
- You want emerging risks surfaced automatically.
- External signals matter to your decisions but don't show up in standard reports.
- You want intelligent tools that automatically explain the “why” behind the numbers, rather than just displaying static dashboards.

subsidiaries, saving days or weeks of manual work. Discover more, faster, with embedded AI and ML capabilities that automatically surface insights on performance anomalies and correlations. And make strategic decisions on customer retention, inventory, and upselling with predictive analytics from ML models built for common use cases.

The value of NetSuite Analytics Warehouse goes beyond finance. It can fuel data-informed decisions in sales, marketing, and operations. Users can ask questions using natural language prompts, like “What are our fastest moving inventory items this quarter?” and get an answer drawn from the same governed data finance trusts. Questions that depend on outside information, such as benchmarking against competitors, draw on the third-party data feeds you choose to connect to the warehouse.

If NetSuite ERP shows you what's happening inside your business, NetSuite Analytics Warehouse helps you see what's happening around it—across more data points and with AI that surfaces what's worth a closer look.

What Changes for the Finance Function?



With AI embedded across finance workflows, the role of the CFO evolves:

- **From reporting to prediction:** Forecast outcomes and guide decisions proactively.
- **From manual effort to exception management:** Focus on reviewing and interpreting results.
- **From siloed analysis to broad insight:** Form insights using data from across systems and functions.
- **From periodic cycles to continuous processes:** Operate with real-time visibility and responsiveness.

AI lets finance operate with greater speed, consistency, and confidence.

When to extend your NetSuite capabilities

Organizations typically see the greatest value from AI when:

- Close cycles heavily rely on manual processes.
- Forecasts aren't based on the most current business data.
- Scenario modeling is time-consuming and limited in scope.
- Data preparation complexity limits analytical capacity.
- Leadership requires faster, more actionable insight.

NetSuite Automation and AI in Practice

NetSuite delivers automation and AI through integrated modules:

- **NetSuite Advanced Financials:** Automates close processes and reduces manual effort.
- **NetSuite Planning and Budgeting:** Enables predictive forecasting and AI-driven scenario modeling.
- **NetSuite Analytics Warehouse:** Provides AI-driven insight across all available data.

Together, these modules create a connected approach across close, planning, and analytics, with AI embedded throughout.

The bottom line: A more strategic finance function

AI in NetSuite helps finance teams operate more efficiently and deliver greater strategic value.

By embedding AI into core workflows, NetSuite enables organizations to:

- Automate routine tasks.
- Improve accuracy and consistency.
- Generate real-time insights.
- Make faster, more informed decisions.

The result is a finance function that does more than report on the past. It helps the business understand the present and prepare for what comes next.



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