

From Chaos to Control: The Hidden Economics of Global Accounting Hubs



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Why tomorrow's shared services won't be judged by roles relocated, but by the knowledge and systems that still work on day two.

The Quiet Shift Underway

For CFOs and COOs, the promise of "global consistency" cuts both ways.

As finance teams are asked to do more with less—faster closes, cleaner audits, quicker insights—the question isn't *whether* to centralize, but *how* to do it without losing what makes the business run.

Centralization promises efficiency, control, and scale.

But over time, those early wins often fade as complexity and knowledge gaps creep back in.

AI and automation will speed this up—simplifying tasks but making good judgment, governance, and local know-how even more important.

The challenge isn't structure or systems—it's the loss of context.

Through our work with large finance transformations, Kebla has found that successful hubs depend not only on how work is consolidated, but on how knowledge moves through the organization.

We call this balance the **3Cs of Sustainable Centralization**.

The 3Cs of Sustainable Centralization

Control

Governance, visibility, and standard processes that keep things running safely.

When it fails: Rules replace judgment, and local nuances disappear—creating blind spots.

Capacity

Scaling output without simply adding more people—through automation, consistent processes, and cross-training.

When it fails: Hubs turn into overloaded factories; exceptions pile up and slow everything down.

Context

Keeping the institutional and local knowledge that helps people make good calls—customer detail, compliance nuance, culture.

When it fails: Expertise drains away, decisions lose depth, and local teams disengage.

A hub built on **Control** and **Capacity** alone delivers volume, not value.

Add **Context**, and it becomes a lasting advantage.

Patterns from the Field: Where Hubs Succeed vs. Stall

- **Succeed:** When governance shifts from *command* to *conversation*.
Legit regulatory differences are recognized, but handled consistently through shared frameworks and open dialogue.
- **Stall:** When technology replaces interaction.
ERP systems can standardize transactions, but not judgment.
- **Succeed:** When the hub focuses on *enablement*, not just execution.
Training and documentation spread outward, lifting capability enterprise-wide.
- **Stall:** When leaders treat "centralized" as *finished*.
Markets, rules, and people change—hub design has to flex with them.
- **Succeed:** When success is measured by *decision quality*, not just cost savings.
CFOs who track cycle time **and** insight accuracy see the biggest pay-off.

Emerging trend: AI will reshape what "centralized" means—automating routine work but increasing the need for oversight, exceptions management, and data discipline.

The Operating Model That Works

- **Design for process maturity, not geography.**
Start with repeatable, well-documented processes (Accounts Payable, Fixed Assets, General Ledger).
Let legitimate regulatory differences—not office locations—determine what stays local.
- **Plan how knowledge will flow.**
Identify key experts, assign transfer owners, and capture tacit know-how before reorganizing.
- **Treat governance as a muscle, not a chart.**
Decision rights and escalation paths need live mechanisms, not static slides.
- **Make symbolic moves that build trust and shared perspective.**
Rotate or cross-post strong performers between regions to encourage knowledge sharing, improve consistency and standardization, and help more people see how the company runs as a whole.
The result: a broader, more connected view that streamlines processes and builds capability.

The Payoff

When **Control**, **Capacity**, and **Context** work together:

- Close cycles get faster without losing quality.
- Audit issues drop because ownership is clear.
- External audit costs fall as processes and documentation improve.
- Institutional knowledge compounds instead of leaking away.
- Morale and retention improve across both hub and field teams.

If your hub isn't improving judgment—not just throughput—it's not transformation; it's relocation.

AI will handle more execution. Leadership still has to design how context and judgment move through the business.

About Kebla

Kebla is a boutique advisory firm founded by former Big Four and industry finance executives. We partner with growth-stage and mid-market companies across technology, media, entertainment, and fintech, to help leaders address complex finance, accounting, and operational challenges through practical, execution-focused advisory.

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