

Why M&A Integration Fails

Why M&A Integration Fails—And What High-Performing CFOs Do Differently

The Problem:

CFOs often enter M&A transactions with airtight models, a polished investment thesis, and detailed integration roadmaps. But somewhere between Day 1 and the first quarterly close, things start to unravel.

Forecasts become unreliable. Close processes grind. Talent leaves. Synergies shrink. Not because the deal was flawed—but because integration was treated as a checklist, not a strategic transformation.

From our experience leading M&A integrations for Fortune 30s and high-growth ventures alike, here's what distinguishes high-performing CFOs in the post-close chaos.

1. Integration Isn't Just an IT or Finance Problem—It's a Cultural and Decision-Making Problem

Most integration issues don't start in the general ledger. They start in how decisions get made.

When two companies merge, they often bring very different operating norms—centralized vs. decentralized structures, competing approval hierarchies, or even conflicting KPI frameworks. These differences surface fast, especially during close, planning, and capital allocation cycles.

CFOs who lead successful integrations go beyond aligning systems and reporting—they drive alignment on **how decisions will be made, who owns what, and what good looks like.**

They ensure functional leaders, controllers, and FP&A teams aren't working from misaligned assumptions. And they build shared expectations with the Board and CEO early.

2. Speed Kills—Unless Paired with Sequencing

There's always pressure post-close to integrate quickly. But rushing into full systems mergers or policy alignment without clear priorities is a recipe for rework—or worse, misstatements.

Top CFOs sequence their integration.

They begin with non-negotiables: intercompany processes, revenue recognition alignment, and close calendar synchronization. They defer lower-risk areas and stagger major system changes to avoid disrupting business continuity.

This isn't about slowing down—it's about avoiding self-inflicted complexity by integrating in the wrong order.

3. Reporting Isn't Just Compliance—It's the New Narrative

Once the deal closes, reporting becomes the most visible sign of integration success—or failure. Forecasts, board packages, external disclosures—these tell the story of how well the new organization is functioning.

CFOs should treat reporting redesign as a **strategic exercise**, not a downstream output.

Are you recalibrating KPIs for the combined business? Aligning thresholds for disclosures and adjustments? Planning how results will be communicated externally—and why those changes make sense?

This is the moment to **set a new performance narrative**. Don't just reconcile—redefine.

The Takeaway

In M&A, financial integration is never just about systems, controls, or policy alignment. It's about clarity, trust, and how quickly the combined organization can operate as one.

The CFOs who succeed don't treat integration as a project—they treat it as a transformation. They know the first 100 days post-close aren't a sprint—they're a series of decisive choices that shape the future of the business.

If you're gearing up for—or recalibrating midstream in—an M&A integration, the question isn't:

“Are we following the plan?”

It's: **“Are we building the right foundation for what comes next?”**

Final Thought

Integration is not a function—it's a leadership moment.

CFOs who treat it as more than a technical exercise don't just deliver clean financials—they shape how the business performs going forward.

We've led these integrations ourselves—from aligning policies across global entities to managing SEC filings, financial reporting transformations, and post-merger team transitions. We know what it takes to turn complexity into clarity.

If your team is preparing for integration—or needs to reset—it's time to lead from the front.

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.

www.kebla.co | info@kebla.co

Disclaimer

This publication contains general information only and Kebla LLC is not, by means of this publication, rendering accounting, business, financial, investment, legal, or other professional advice or services.

This publication is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business.

Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your organization, you should consult a qualified professional advisor.

Kebla LLC shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this publication.