



83% of UK CFOs Say Spend Management Is More Manual Than It Should Be

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- 84% of UK CFOs say their organisation has been too slow to modernise payments
- 91% say they are concerned competitors are ahead on payment automation while a confident few are already setting the pace
- Card-led payments are widely seen as a competitive advantage say 81%

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 16, 2026-- Research commissioned by global S&P500 corporate payments company, [Corpay](#), finds that many organisations continue to rely on manual or partially manual spend processes, while finance leaders increasingly view automation and card-led payments as strategically important.

The research of 300 CFOs including those in retail, wholesale, manufacturing, and IT sectors found that more than eight in ten CFOs (83%) agree that spend management within their organisation is more manual than it should be. A similar proportion, 84%, say their business has been too slow to modernise how it pays suppliers and manages expenses while card-led payments could turn the dial, with 81% saying that they are a competitive advantage.

The findings suggest a difference between current processes and the priorities CFOs have identified for the coming years. While finance leaders recognise the importance of digitised, card led and automated payment solutions, many organisations still report a mix of manual and automated processes.

The operational impact of this gap is significant. More than eight in ten CFOs (86%) say their finance teams spend over six hours per person, per week on expense, invoice and supplier payment administration, with more than a quarter reporting between 11 and 15 hours. When asked how they would use 25 to 50% of reclaimed finance time, the top three responses were not cost-cutting. Instead, CFOs cited business partnering, cash flow forecasting and strategic planning, highlighting the opportunity to redirect capacity toward higher value activities.

The research also highlights mounting competitive pressure. Nine in ten CFOs (91%) say they are concerned that competitors are ahead in adopting automated, card led payment processes. For many organisations, the issue is no longer simply operational efficiency. Card-led payments are also widely seen as a competitive advantage, with a majority of CFOs agreeing with this statement.

Looking ahead, CFO priorities for 2026 are firmly focused on financial resilience and visibility. Improving working capital management, strengthening spend controls and increasing real time visibility rank as the top three areas of focus.

Almost all respondents, 99%, say that additional working capital flexibility would be at least somewhat valuable to their organisation. This underlines the growing importance of modern payment methods that can support improved working capital and greater visibility over outgoing spend.

Piero Macari, VP Product Corporate Payments at Corpay, said: *"The message from UK CFOs is clear. Payment automation is increasingly being viewed as a strategic priority. When so many finance leaders believe competitors are ahead, we can see that there are a competitive few that are setting the pace. Many view card-led payments as one of the most practical ways to begin modernising spend management, improving how spend is controlled and analysed. This reflects the growing importance of more automated and integrated payment infrastructure."*

He added: *"We recently launched Corpay Complete to bring accounts payable, domestic and international payments, and corporate card spend into a single digital environment. By reducing reliance on manual processes, strengthening controls and delivering full visibility across transactions, it helps CFOs improve working capital management while lowering risk and administrative burden. For those looking to stay competitive, card-led payments with integrated and automated spend management is now fundamental to financial resilience and growth."*

The research suggests growing attention among UK CFOs on modernising spend and payment processes, with automation becoming a more prominent strategic priority.

For more information, visit: [The Card-First Approach to Spend Modernisation](#)

Notes to editor:

- The research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of 300 CFOs (aged 25+) with a turnover of £20m+

About Corpay

Corpay (NYSE: CPAY) is a global S&P500 corporate payments company that helps businesses and consumers pay expenses in a simple, controlled manner. Corpay's suite of modern payment solutions help its customers better manage vehicle-related expenses (like fuelling and parking), travel expenses (like hotel bookings) and payables (like paying vendors). This results in our customers saving time and ultimately spending less.

Corpay – Payments made easy.

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Media Contact
Scott Girling-Heathcote
Account Director
SkyParlour
scott@skyparlour.com
Tel +44 (0)330 043 1315

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