



# Buyers Guide for Financial Consolidation and Reporting Solutions

Performance Management Buyers Guide Series



**2022 Edition**



## Buyers Guide for Financial Consolidation and Reporting Solutions

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## Overview

*The BPM Partners Performance Management Buyers Guide Series is designed to provide an unbiased and up to date view of the latest trends, developments, requirements, best practices, and vendor options in the world of business performance management. The information provided is intended to enable companies to have meaningful and informed discussions as they plan their performance management projects.*

## Financial Consolidation and Reporting Solutions

Financial consolidation and reporting solutions are a key component of performance management systems (BPM, CPM, EPM, FP&A Systems, Extended P&A Systems). The use of these solutions has expanded dramatically over the last several years. Initially seen primarily as a solution for large global statutory reporting systems; today elements of these solutions are included in almost every performance management project. Many organizations require alternate rollups: legal, management, regions, products, etc. Others want detailed audit trails, the ability to enter journal entries, or to collect and report data in multiple currencies. While there are several ways to address these needs, only financial consolidation and reporting solutions are designed and optimized specifically for them. More than 50% of companies today are dealing with multiple GLs or ERPs that need to be consolidated. Add in the need for intercompany matching and eliminations, minority ownership, acquisition modeling, allocations for true costing and profitability analysis, cash flow, and you can see how almost every company could benefit from a consolidation and reporting solution.

In the past few years more companies have started to plan at a more detailed level, and this has created the need for consolidation capabilities such as alternate rollups, intercompany eliminations, currency conversion, and journal entries during the budgeting and planning process. The use cases for consolidation and reporting of actual data have grown as well. Running a trial balance or performing account reconciliation in the performance management system is now a common occurrence. Of course, many companies still use these solutions to meet their external reporting and compliance requirements. From a performance management perspective, the key use of financial consolidation and reporting solutions is to improve management reporting, which is the primary driver for performance management initiatives in the first place. These solutions deliver the one version of the truth that is required for trustworthy performance reporting that executives can rely on to inform key decisions.

To meet these growing consolidation and reporting needs existing vendors have been adding functionality and enhancing scalability, while at the same time making their systems easier to use. Several new vendors have also arrived on the scene with a goal of reducing the cost and complexity of these solutions to make them more accessible to midmarket organizations.

## Requirements



### Financial Consolidation, Reporting & GRC

- Companies still striving to attain 'one version of the truth'
- Users unable to easily produce their own ad-hoc reports and analysis
- Monthly close that takes too long
- The need to address changing regulatory requirements

*Most organizations know why they need a new consolidation and reporting solution, and its usually because they are facing one or more of the challenges highlighted in this graphic. Often it is their existing systems that have caused or exacerbated these issues in the first place. After years of manually cutting and pasting data from multiple systems to produce reports they realize how risky and labor-intensive it is. If they don't have 'one version of the truth', or reports are difficult to create, how will they produce timely and reliable reports to drive decision-making? Once they recognize the need, the challenge becomes trying to define exactly what they require from a new solution. Requirements need to be spelled out with enough detail to be able to differentiate solutions.*

## Financial Consolidation and Reporting Requirements

To help you begin thinking about your own requirements, on the next few pages we will share data from your peers, collected as part of the most recent BPM Pulse Research Study. We will examine their challenges, as well as what they prioritized during their own search for a new budgeting and planning solution. Below is a demographic profile highlighting the largest respondent groups.

### Responses

**457**

### Company Size

Small  
**7%**

Midmarket  
**63%**

Large / Enterprise  
**30%**

### Industries

Financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, higher education, not for profit, construction, government

### Geography

North America  
**83%**

Europe  
**14%**

### Business Area

Finance  
**58%**

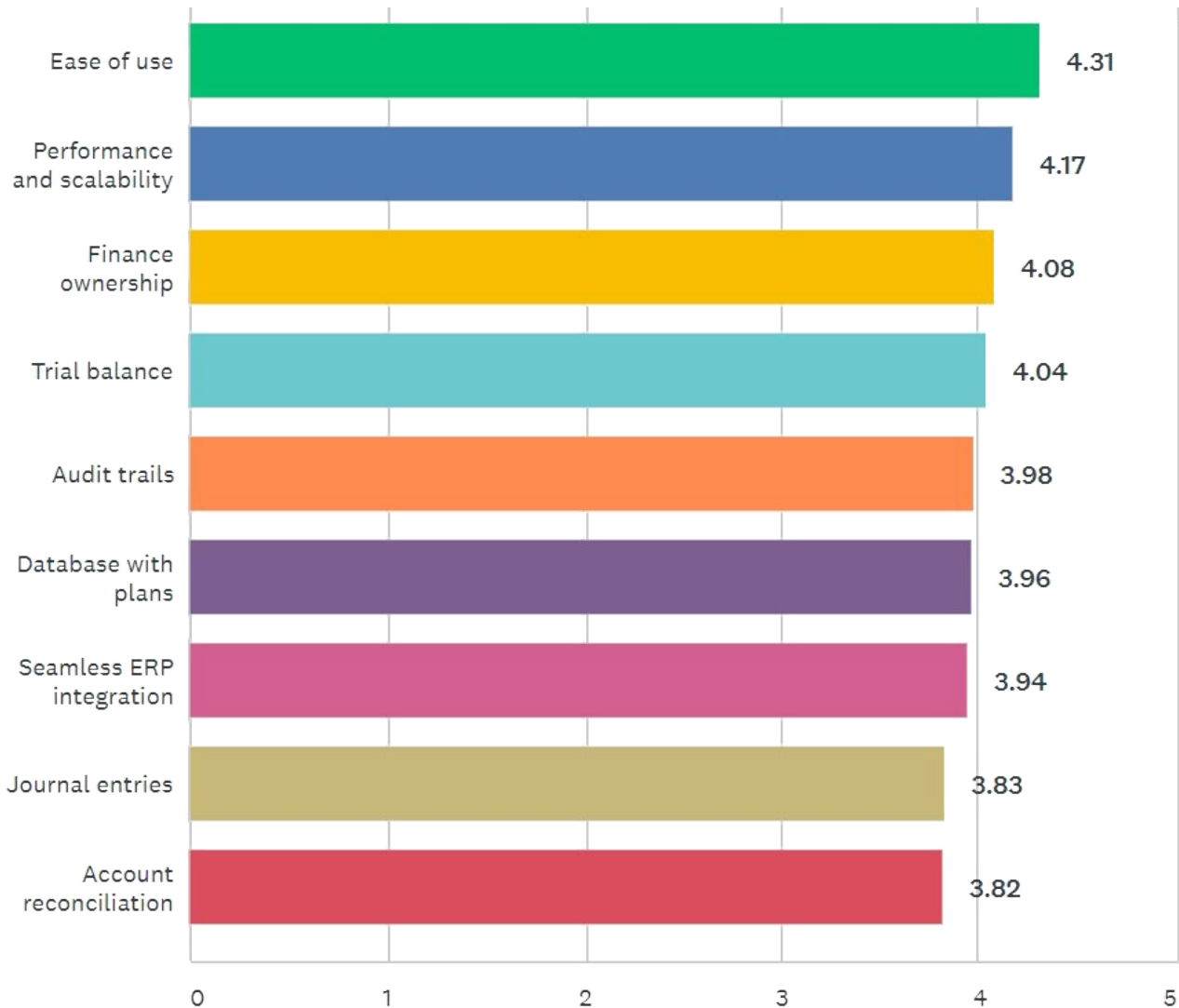
Senior Executive  
**15%**

IT  
**12%**



Date: April/May 2021

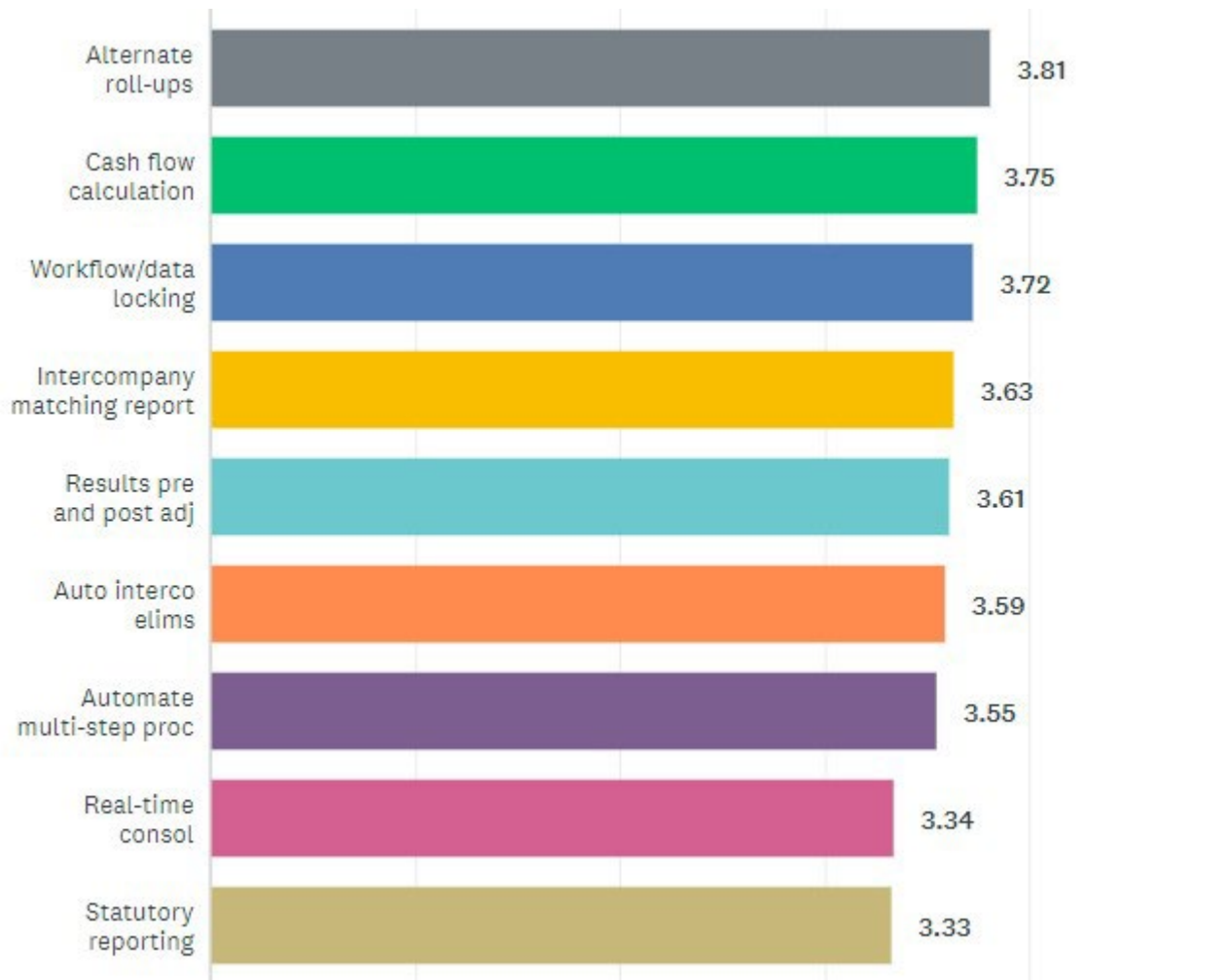
## Key Features of a Consolidation Solution



*Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey*

Respondents were asked to rate a list of features on a 1 - 5 importance scale, with 5 being most important for a new consolidation solution. This graph displays the top-rated items. Ease of use and performance and scalability top the list. While consolidation systems typically have fewer direct users than a budgeting and planning solution, it is still important for the system to be easy for the accountants to use to minimize errors and keep the process moving forward. Performance and scalability is particularly important for these systems. As the number of accounts, cost centers, currencies, allocation rules, intercompany eliminations, etc. grow, you will feel the pain of an underpowered solution. Trial balance and account reconciliation are two capabilities that more and more companies are relying on their performance management consolidation solution for. Support for journal entry capabilities is also a growing demand, even in some cases to post back to the general ledger. Having consolidation solutions in the same unified system with planning makes producing management reports a much more seamless process.

## Key Features of a Consolidation Solution pt. II

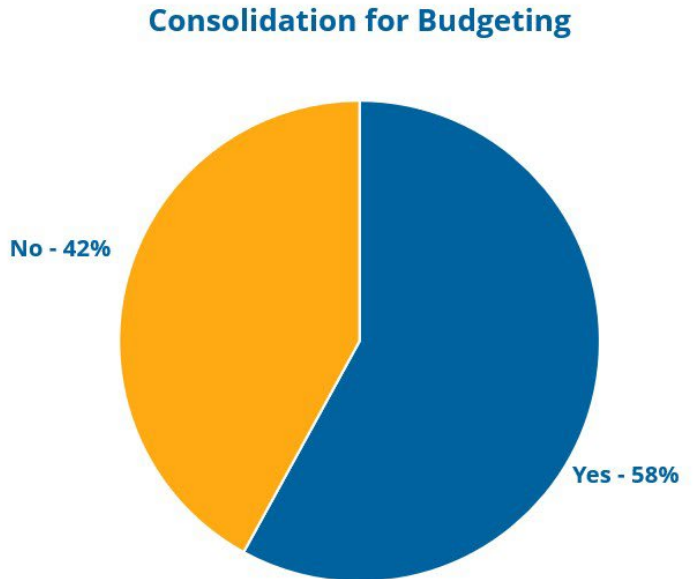


*Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey*

As we continue to look at the list of top requested features we see alternate roll-ups which almost every company requires in some form, and cash flow calculations which have become even more important in the last few years. Workflow and data locking relates to how data is released for consolidation and then locked to prevent any changes after consolidation has taken place, unless unlock permission is granted. For many companies intercompany matching reports and eliminations continue to be critical elements of consolidation. One of the newer items on this list relates to automation of multi-step processes (sometimes called robotic process automation if AI is utilized). This is important not only for ease of use, but to reduce errors by making sure no steps are inadvertently skipped in the loading and processing of source system data for example. Real-time consolidation essentially consolidates as you go as each set of data becomes available, as opposed to consolidating in one big and time-consuming process at the end. Statutory reporting is the lowest item on this list, but that is because not every company requires it. For companies that do, this is a vitally important capability.

## Consolidation for Budgeting and Planning

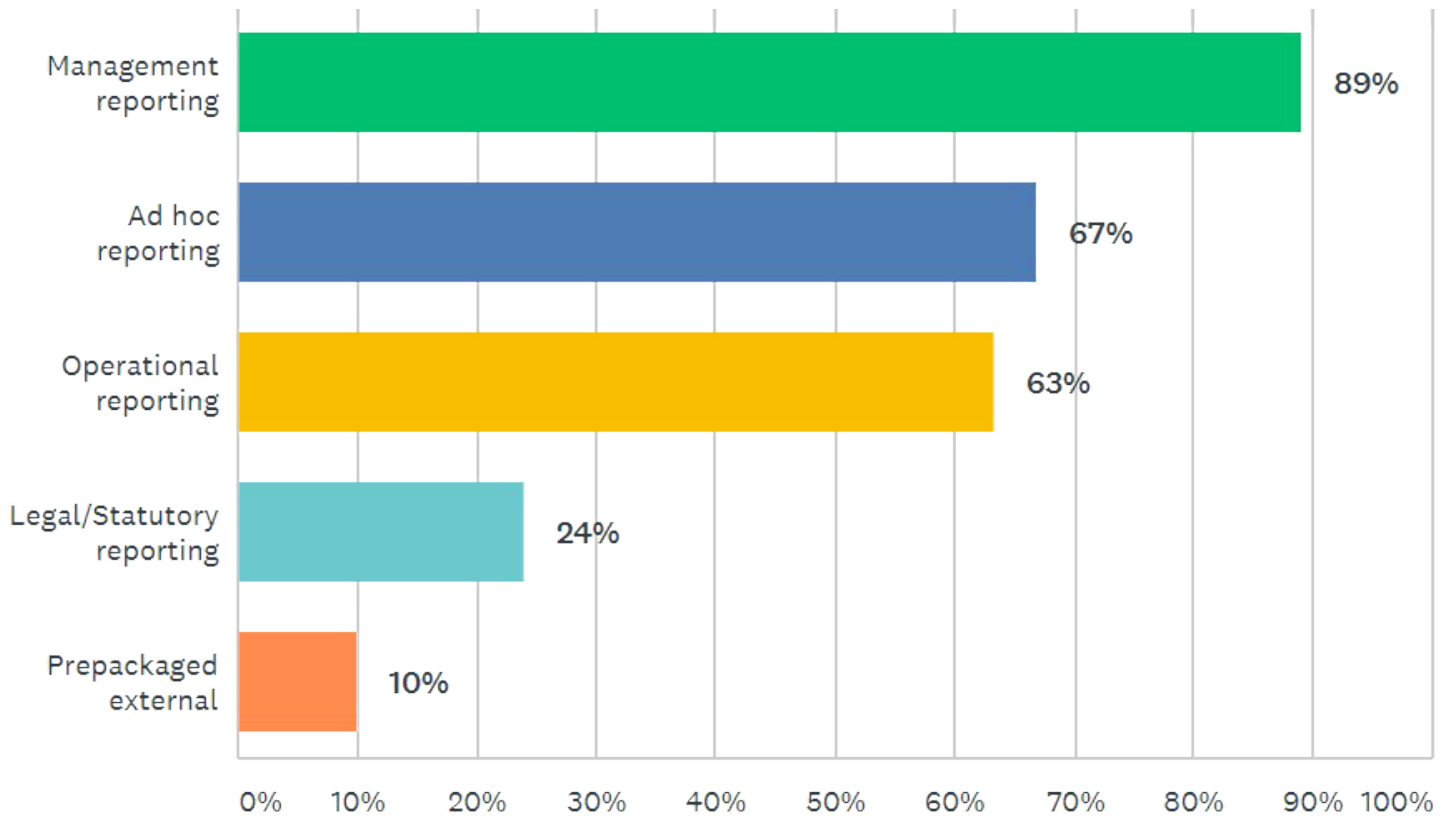
- The majority of 2021 survey respondents see the need for robust consolidation capabilities during the budgeting and planning processes.
- The primary uses:
  - 76% - Intercompany eliminations
  - 52% - Alternate roll-ups
  - 47% - Journal entries
  - 46% - Currency conversion



*Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey*

The consolidation process is usually associated with the loading and processing of actual transactional data from source systems to provide 'one version of the truth' to enable management reporting and support external statutory reporting. While those are the primary uses, another key use case has evolved over time. More and more companies are budgeting at a very detailed level and they want to use consolidation functionality on budget and plan data. In the most recent survey that was the case for almost 60% of the respondents. More specifically, they need the solution to perform intercompany eliminations and support alternate roll-up paths. As noted above, even in the budgeting process a sizeable group wants the ability to create journal entries. Currency conversion clearly adds value for those companies collecting budgeting and planning data in local currencies. We have been tracking this trend for several years now and 50-60% of survey respondents consistently ask for the ability to use consolidation functionality during the budgeting and planning process. It's something to think about as you consider your own requirements for a consolidation and reporting solution.

## Reporting Focus

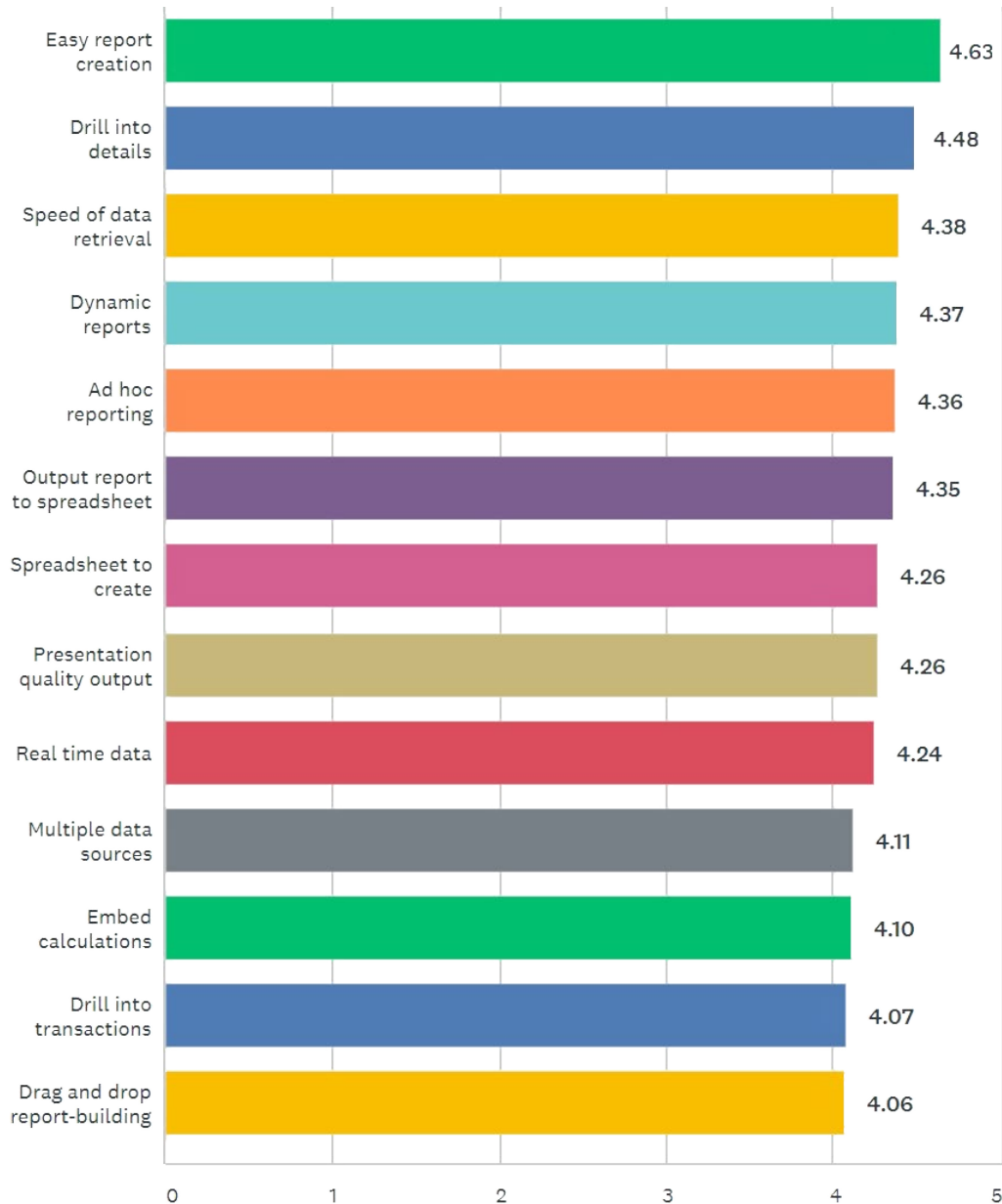


*Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey*

The key deliverable for a performance management system is providing reliable and timely information to enable better informed decision-making. That is reflected in this chart with management reporting being important to almost 90% of survey respondents. To produce these reports you need a very capable consolidation solution with powerful but easy to use reporting functionality, in a unified system with planning which provides the data that actual performance is measured against. Ad hoc reporting has become more important in the last few years due to rapidly changing market conditions. The ability to quickly pull selected data out of the system as needed enables companies to respond to changing conditions in real time. This can be done without having to create a new, formal production report as is used in management reporting. Operational reporting has also been growing in importance as it has become more apparent that the best planning processes take a holistic view of the business that enables you to understand the full impact of changes as they ripple through the system. Legal reporting as previously mentioned is very important to those who require it. Pre-packaged external SEC reporting with XBRL/iXBRL tagging is low on this list because most companies that need this capability already utilize a third-party solution, and therefore don't need performance management systems to supply it.



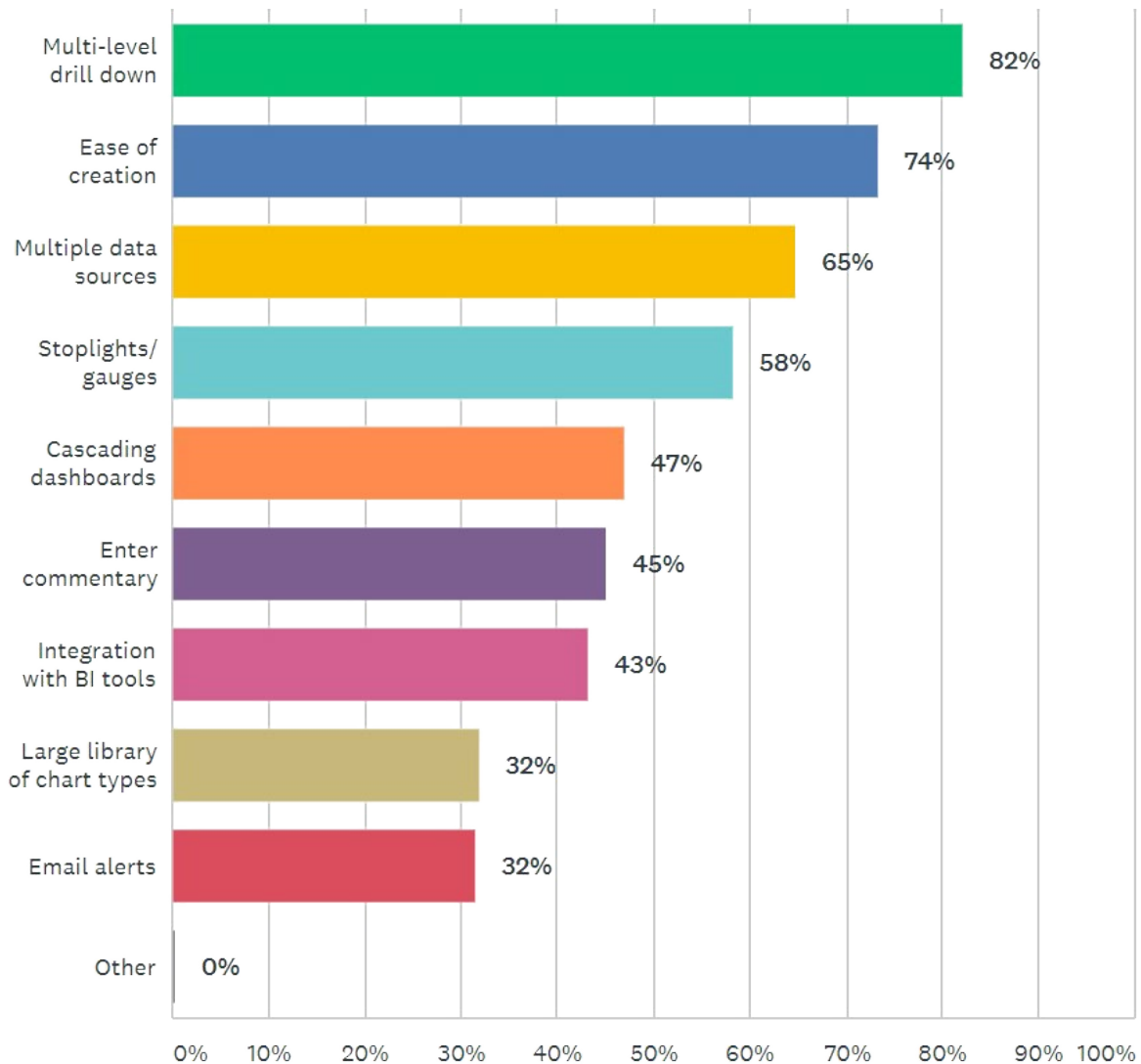
## Key Features of a Reporting Solution



**Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey**

This chart uses the 1 - 5 importance scale and shows reporting capabilities that scored a 4.0 or above in importance. The list is fairly self-explanatory, but a couple of highlights: as we have seen everywhere else ease of use (in this case easy report creation) and performance (speed of data retrieval) are high on the list. Unique to reporting is the importance of being able to drill down into details. This could mean drilling from a consolidated entity into the cost centers that roll up into it, or from a major account into the subaccounts that make it up. In some situations it could also mean drilling down into the transactional details. Although there is some expectation of drilling back to the source system to retrieve this data, the reality is more often drilling into details already pre-loaded into the performance management system for this purpose.

## Key Features of a Performance Dashboard



**Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey**

For many senior executives, as well as casual users of the performance management system, the performance dashboard is where they see the results of all that has gone before. As with standard reports, being able to drill into the details is important. Ease of use, in this case related to dashboard creation, continues to be a key requirement for all areas of performance management systems. A couple of newer requirements noted here are worth considering for your own project. The ability to enter commentary allows users to begin a discussion around specific key performance metrics. Ideally, the person responsible for the metric could offer up an explanation of why it is outside of its tolerance range. This saves time and helps avoid many back and forth emails. Integration with BI tools recognizes the fact that you may already have a business intelligence solution that your organization has standardized on and would like to use to create your dashboards. Some requirements that were more popular in the past have returned to prominence. Cascading dashboards are a series of linked dashboards that start at a more detailed operational level and tie back to corporate level key performance indicators. The iconography of stoplights and gauges has been replaced in recent years by standard graphs, but there is clearly interest in the return of these intuitive visual performance status indicators.

## General Financial Consolidation and Reporting Solution Requirements



*While your detailed list of requirements should focus on your unique business needs, this chart highlights key capabilities to consider when evaluating a Consolidation and Reporting solution.*

**Easy to Use:** What does that actually mean in terms of product capabilities? Some companies believe familiarity equates to ease of use, so using a spreadsheet interface would be viewed as easy since many employees are already comfortable working in that environment. Another way to think about ease of use is to ask yourself this question – will the team be able to pick up this product and start using it without any special training or user manuals? Finance self-sufficiency means that most tasks could be handled by the business users themselves, but not all tasks. Connecting new source systems for example will almost certainly require IT involvement, as it should. Workflow enables everyone to know where they are in the process and who is responsible for the next step. Out of the box functionality is a key differentiator in consolidation solutions – how much is pre-built vs. coded by the implementers. Pre-built functionality is easier to use and maintain.

**Rich Functionality:** Which particular consolidation and reporting capabilities you need today will depend on your specific requirements. However, you will hopefully be using this system for many years to come, and your needs will likely grow. That’s why it makes sense to select a solution that contains the core set of functionality spelled out here. As your business evolves and management requirements change, its reassuring to know you have a consolidation and reporting solution that will be to handle whatever the future holds.

**Cloud-based:** It’s not much of a debate anymore: from the smallest start-up to the largest financial institution or government agency, and everywhere in between, a cloud-based performance management solution is the preferred choice. The chart above highlights the benefits of this approach which have only grown in importance with the increased number of people now working from home all or part of the time. Also, while every vendor in this guide offers a cloud-based solution, less than a third still have an on-premise option.

**Technology/Architecture:** No matter how many accounts, entities, and source systems you start with, it is almost a certainty that they will grow. Make sure that your system can handle today’s volume as well as tomorrow’s, with adequate performance. Impacted (only re-consolidating impacted branches), or real-time consolidation (consolidating each entity as its data is approved) can speed up the process when it matters most. An integrated close management process can streamline the last mile of finance. A solution that unifies budgeting and planning with consolidation and reporting ensures a consistent set of data, at the same level of granularity, for timely and accurate report production as soon as the period is closed.

## The Core Vendors

*The BPM Partners Core Vendors for Financial Consolidation and Reporting are your best choice for selecting successful, proven, and trustworthy vendors for your evaluation shortlist. They have met the following criteria:*

- BPM Pulse Customer Satisfaction Rating of Good, Very Good, Excellent, or Outstanding for Financial Consolidation Functionality (4.0 or better out of 5)
- Positive BPM Partners Analyst Assessment of Management Team, Product Roadmap, Strategic Direction, Growth Rates, Customer Retention, Employee Retention
- Positive BPM Partners Field Consulting Assessment of Ease of Doing Business, Accuracy of Product Representation, Responsiveness to Prospect Requests

## Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendor Categories

Most vendors will claim to offer consolidation capabilities. While that may be technically accurate, it can be very misleading. Some vendors simply add things up, which fits the dictionary definition of consolidate (to combine), but not the performance management definition. Those vendors are not included in this guide. The remaining consolidation vendors fall into two major categories which we have labelled 'focused' and 'comprehensive'. The key difference between the two comes down to the depth and breadth of out of the box functionality. The focused consolidation vendors can address several key consolidation requirements through a combination of product functionality and implementation design. The comprehensive consolidation vendors address a broad range of consolidation requirements, from the simplest to the most complex, primarily through pre-built product functionality. The following table shows some examples of how these vendor categories may differ.

## Focused vs. Comprehensive Consolidation Solutions

<b>Capability</b>	<b>Focused Solution</b>	<b>Comprehensive Solution</b>
<b>Aggregation</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Alternate Roll-Ups</b>	Yes, but usually only in reports	Yes, true alternate hierarchies
<b>Currency Conversion</b>	Yes, but usually through calculation set-up	Yes, with auto calculation of gains/losses; actuals at budget rate, etc.
<b>Intercompany</b>	Yes, but through complex account design and calculations	Yes, built-in with standard matching reports and auto eliminations
<b>Legal/Statutory Consolidation</b>	No	Yes
<b>Regulatory Compliance</b>	Limited	Yes
<b>Disclosure Management</b>	No	Yes
<b>JE Capabilities</b>	No, or limited	Yes
<b>ETL</b>	Basic, with selected pre-built connectors	Streamlined integration, data quality
<b>Ease of Use</b>	Usually easy for end users, but can be challenging to modify/maintain calculations	Usually easy for end users, but can take time to implement all capabilities
<b>Acquisition, Disposal, Discontinued Ops</b>	No, handled manually	Yes
<b>Complex Allocations</b>	Either done outside of consolidation or with poor performance	Yes
<b>Minority Ownership</b>	No, handled by partial entry	Yes
<b>Account Reconciliation</b>	No, or limited	Yes
<b>Optimized for High Performance</b>	No	Yes

### Key to Core Vendor Chart

*Consolidation Category* – *focused* or *comprehensive* appears under vendor name to indicate which category their solution most closely aligns with (see table above for details)

*Solution Summary* – brief description of the vendor’s offerings, highlighting the main components and unique elements

*Target Customer* – company size (by revenue), and specific verticals that the vendor primarily sells and markets to

*Selected Strengths* – four defining attributes of the vendor’s solution, as determined by BPM Partners based on its annually updated list of fifteen possible choices; vendor input (where provided) is taken into account

*Learn More: Info* – this hyperlink takes you to a BPM Partners curated page for that vendor containing a further description of their offering, their overall BPM Pulse rating, links to analyst reports, the latest news on product releases, key partnerships, growth and revenues, acquisitions, as well as articles, blogs, whitepapers, and webcasts related to that vendor

*Learn More: Details* – this hyperlink allows you to request a custom report comparing any two vendors that includes detailed write-ups, feature checkboxes, all sixteen BPM Pulse attribute ratings, referenceability ratings, and typical price ranges; also included is a comparative rating chart for the two selected vendors

## The Core Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendors

Vendor	Solution Summary	Target Customer	Selected Strengths	Learn More
<i>Board comprehensive</i>	Unified decision-making platform for planning, consolidation, analytics, and BI	Midmarket to Large	Complexity Handling, Scalability, Integration, Depth/Breadth of Functionality	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>deFacto focused</i>	Unified, integrated planning, consolidation and analysis, built within Excel and Power BI	Midmarket	Ease of Use, Low TCO, Scalability, Depth/Breadth of Functionality	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>Fluence comprehensive</i>	Consolidation-first platform, management reporting, cash flow, with Excel UI	Midmarket to Large	Ease of Use, Complexity Handling, Out of the Box Functionality, Depth/Breadth of Functionality	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>IBM comprehensive</i>	Planning, analytics, consolidation, and BI that is ERP independent	Midmarket to Large	Flexibility, Scalability, Expandability, AI	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>Jedox focused</i>	Planning, analytics, consolidation, and BI with Excel, web, and mobile UIs	Midmarket	Ease of Use, Flexibility, Integration, Quick Implementation	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>OneStream comprehensive</i>	Planning, consolidation, and analytics that can address complex requirements	Midmarket to Large	Ease of Use, Scalability, Operational Analytics, Depth/Breadth of Functionality	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>Oracle comprehensive</i>	Full suite of planning, consolidation, analytics, and BI modules	Midmarket to Large	Scalability, Operational Analytics, Depth/Breadth of Functionality, AI	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>
<i>Place focused</i>	Planning, modeling, consolidation with revenue focus, built on Salesforce platform	Small SaaS Tech	Flexibility, Quick Implementation, Scalability, Operational Analytics	<a href="#">Info</a> , <a href="#">Details</a>

## The Core Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendors (continued)

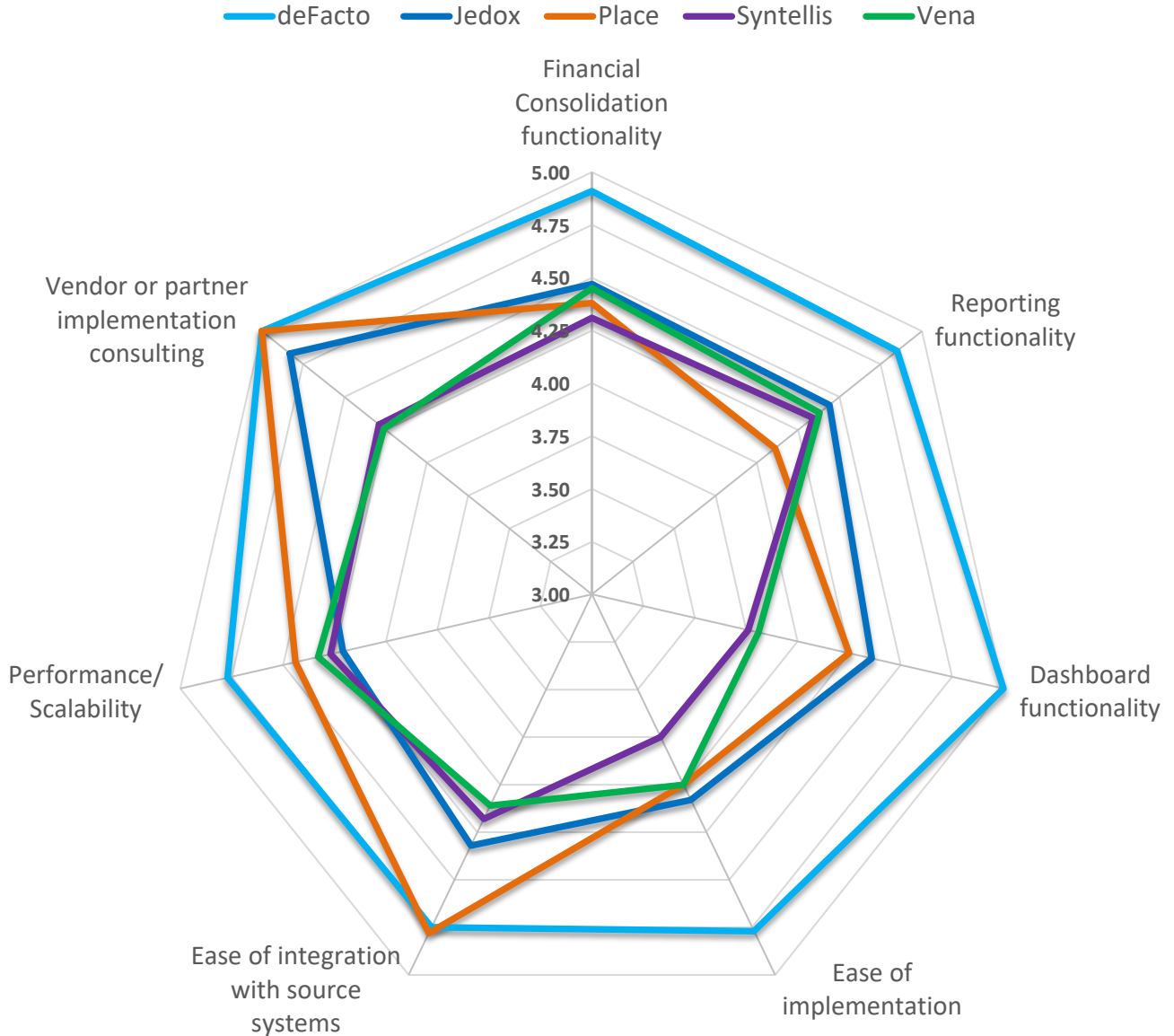
Vendor	Solution Summary	Target Customer	Selected Strengths	Learn More
<i>Prophix</i> <i>comprehensive</i>	Planning, consolidation, and analytics for Finance and operations	Midmarket	Ease of Use, Low TCO, Operational Analytics, AI	<a href="#">Info, Details</a>
<i>Syntellis</i> <i>focused</i>	Unified planning, analytics, consolidation and benchmarking with industry-specific content	Midmarket to Large Healthcare, Higher Ed, Banks	Flexibility, Vertical Content, Depth/Breadth of Functionality, AI	<a href="#">Info, Details</a>
<i>Vena</i> <i>focused</i>	Planning, analytics and consolidation solution leveraging native Excel as a complete planning platform	Midmarket	Ease of Use, Flexibility, Complexity Handling, Scalability	<a href="#">Info, Details</a>
<i>Wolters Kluwer</i> <i>CCH Tagetik</i> <i>comprehensive</i>	Unified financial and operational planning, analytics, consolidation and regulatory compliance	Midmarket to Large	Flexibility, Operational Analytics, Depth/Breadth of Functionality, AI	<a href="#">Info, Details</a>



## The Core Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendors Customer Ratings: Focused Solutions

*This chart compares key customer satisfaction ratings related to budgeting and planning for the Core Vendors primarily targeting the small and/or midmarket market segments.*

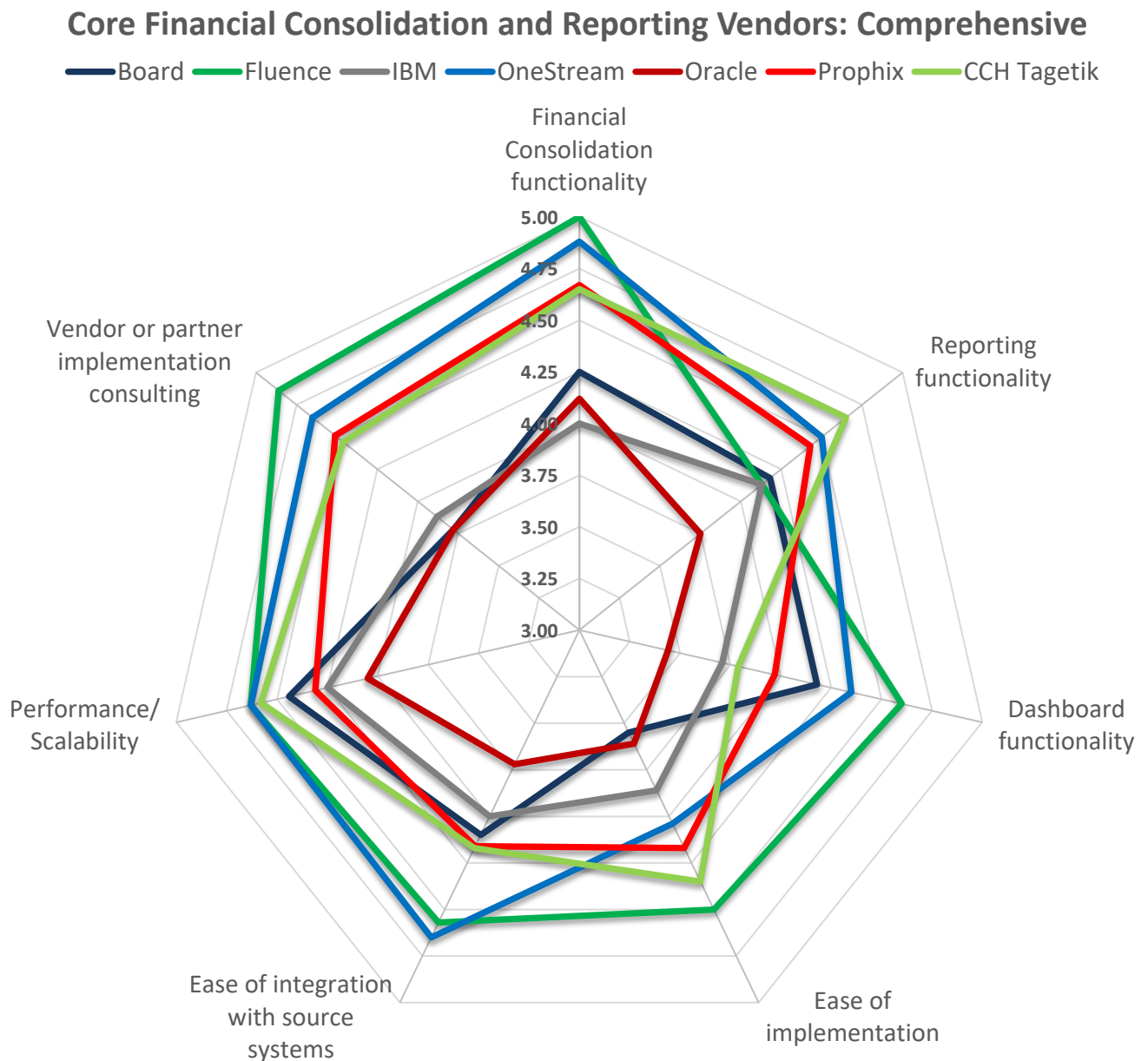
### Core Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendors: Focused



**Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey**

## The Core Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendors Customer Ratings: Comprehensive Solutions

*This chart compares key customer satisfaction ratings related to budgeting and planning for the Core Vendors primarily targeting the upper midmarket and/or large/enterprise market segments.*



**Source: BPM Partners 2021 BPM Pulse Survey**

## Additional Vendors

*The following vendors have been evaluated by our team but did not meet one or more of the BPM Partners Core Vendor criteria. While this does increase the risk somewhat, it is still likely you will find additional vendors that fit your requirements on this list. If you decide to include them in your evaluation you will need to allow extra time for a more thorough due diligence process:*

- Several of these vendors are so new that there is limited feedback from analysts and customers to confirm their product and market success claims
- Some established vendors on this list have reduced their interactions with analysts and industry surveys in recent years so reliable up to date assessments are not readily available
- Other vendors on this list simply did not achieve the high ratings and/or positive assessments required to make the Core List for Financial Consolidation and Reporting Solutions

## Additional Financial Consolidation and Reporting Vendors

**Acterys** – Unified planning, *focused consolidation* and analytics, leveraging Excel and Power BI with low TCO and quick implementation [Info](#), [Details](#)

**Centage** – integrated budgeting, forecasting, *focused consolidation* and reporting, for small to midsize businesses [Info](#), [Details](#)

**FYIsoft** – offers financial reporting and *focused consolidation* that integrates with a wide range of GL source systems, coupled with analytics and budgeting [Info](#)

**insightsoftware** – provides reporting, planning, *comprehensive consolidation*, equity management and tax solutions for small to large organizations [Info](#), [Details](#)

**Planful** – midmarket FP&A platform for financial and operational planning and modeling along with *comprehensive consolidation* [Info](#), [Details](#)

**Talentia** – midmarket solution that emphasizes *comprehensive consolidation* and close with planning, management reporting, and quick implementation [Info](#)

**Unit4** – solution combining planning, analytics, *focused consolidation*, and BI with a vertical focus [Info](#), [Details](#)

## The Vendor Selection Process

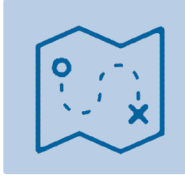
*Note: If you have read other guides in this series you can skip this section which is largely unchanged (other than the examples used).*

*In prior sections of this guide we have given you some ideas to think about in terms of your requirements, as well as an overview of some of the best vendors available to meet those requirements. This is where it all comes together. How do you finalize your requirements and make sure you choose the best vendor for your unique needs? In this section we are going to share some proven best practices. First, some general guidance:*

- This solution is part of a high visibility, mission critical front office system that the company will rely on to make key decisions. You don't want to be stuck with a sub-optimal choice for the 8 - 10 years (or longer) that these systems typically remain in place. That is why it is essential to go through a formal evaluation process.
- The starting point for any performance management vendor selection project is to identify an executive sponsor. They should be a senior executive with the authority to make decisions for the team. Among other tasks, they will need to do the following:
  - o Create a vision that considers the full potential of performance management and doesn't limit the focus to a current pain point
  - o Initiate and enable change, to prepare the company for revised processes, new roles and responsibilities, the transition to a new system
  - o Make the tough decisions as there will be trade-offs that have to be made
- To get the necessary buy-in and adoption required to make this initiative a success you will need to assemble a cross-functional team of key stakeholders from Finance, IT, and operations. They will need to be actively involved throughout the process.
- Some organizations may be required to go through an RFP process. That step is not covered in this guide.

*Learn how to ensure you get the right product, at the best price, while minimizing risk and maximizing buy-in and adoption: [BPM Partners process benefits](#)*

## The Vendor Selection Process for Financial Consolidation and Reporting Solutions



**Roadmap:** This is where you define the overall project scope and lay out a 3 – 5 year phased rollout plan. Without a roadmap you will inevitably focus on today’s most pressing issues and potentially select a solution that falls short when it comes to the other elements of performance management you may need in the coming months and years. While you may be focused initially on consolidation and reporting to create ‘one version of the truth’, if your vision also includes adding budgeting and planning, performance dashboards, account reconciliation, cash flow, profitability analysis, or anything else, you need to capture that up front through a roadmap. This roadmap leads into your requirements and ensures that you select a solution that can continue to meet your needs as your use of the system grows and evolves over time.



**Requirements:** While your requirements do not need to be at the level of detail required to build a custom system from scratch, they do need to be detailed enough to differentiate vendors. For example, just saying that “the new solution needs to support intercompany” does not go far enough. You would need to explain your planned usage: an intercompany matching report, automated intercompany eliminations, integration with journal entry capabilities, etc.

The best way to start gathering requirements is to interview your key stakeholders from the cross-functional team discussed earlier. They should be asked to share the unique challenges they face in their business area, what they like about the current systems and processes, and where they see the opportunity for improvement. These conversations should cover all areas included in the roadmap.

The next step is to consolidate these business requirements into a unified list organized by common themes, and then work with the team to define priorities (hint: they cannot all be the highest priority). These business requirements then need to be converted to functional requirements; what capabilities does the new solution need to address these business requirements. In addition, you will need to document all the required system integrations. The last key element to include is related to volume and dimensions (which impact performance and pricing): number of users, accounts, entities/cost centers, currencies, allocation rules, products, and more.



**Vendor Identification:** Armed with your requirements and this guide you are now ready to identify the vendors to evaluate. At this stage you should select 6 – 8 vendors to consider. To decide on this list you need to consider several factors: which vendors offer the type of consolidation you need (focused or comprehensive), does the vendor target companies of your size (or industry), do they seem to address all of the areas of performance management contained in your roadmap, do their strengths line up with your requirements, and how did their customers rate them for the attributes that are most important to you. At this stage you should cast a wide net and consider vendors you may not be that familiar with. They could turn out to be the best fit, at the best price.

If you have not already done so, for each of the selected vendors you can gather additional information at their [Info](#) and [Details](#) links in this guide. In addition, you should visit their websites, take a look at a standard demo, and get some basic questions answered including ballpark pricing for software and services. After doing this preliminary research bring the team together to compare notes and reduce the list to a final 3 – 4 to advance to the next stage.

*Not sure which vendors to include? Get help [here](#).*



**Vendor Evaluation:** It's now time to determine how well each vendor finalist meets your unique requirements. Everyone will have strong opinions, so you need to follow a formal process that ensures a level playing field for the vendors, and equal input from each of your team members. It also needs to be transparent and self-documenting. At the end of the process you want everyone in agreement and fully supporting the company's selection.

The best way to accomplish this is to have each of the vendor finalists follow the same Proof of Concept custom demo script, created by you, that ties back to your requirements. Your cross-functional team members will each be scoring the vendors on how well they meet your detailed requirements in each major area (consolidation, reporting, planning, UI, system administration, technology, etc.). The demo script should be divided into an end user portion and a system admin/technology portion. Not everyone on the team will need to participate in both portions of the demo.

After the demos you should collect and consolidate the scoring sheets to prepare for the final step in the process.



**Vendor Selection:** This is the step where you and the team select the winning vendor and a backup (in case there are contract or pricing issues with your first choice). The consolidated scoring results should show an overall winner as well as the vendor with the second-highest total score. These should be the two that you move to final steps with. You can also consider individual section scores for the most important areas if the total scores are very close.

Once you are down to the final two you will need to do the following with each of them. First, determine if one or both of them require any final proof steps. Were there key questions not answered during the demos? Is there a particularly complex calculation or report you would like to see them demonstrate? Do you need to load some data and do a volume/performance test? The next step is to request 2 - 3 references from each. Try to ask probing questions during the reference calls as it is unlikely vendor-provided references are going to voluntarily discuss issues they have encountered. You can ask them something such as “has the system been rolled out to the number of users originally planned, if not, why?”.

The final step is to get proposals with software and service pricing from both vendors, along with a sample agreement to review. When asking for software price quotes make sure to be clear and consistent in terms of modules/components, users by type, number of years for cloud subscription, required connectors, etc.

For implementation quotes you may need to have a scoping discussion with the vendor or their implementation partners. Be prepared to discuss the volume of work to be done, any specific complexities, and the scope to be included in their estimate - is it just phase 1 (which you need to clearly define), or the full implementation. From a resource side, what will you be able to bring to the table in terms of FTEs, and what type of implementation are you looking for: 50/50 joint implementation, customer-led implementation, or a consulting turnkey implementation?

All that is left to do is review the contract. Besides any legal concerns, pay attention to any year to year price increases in a multi-year subscription agreement and what the terms are for renewal. Assuming your top choice is still on top after these final steps you are now ready to move forward. If you need to go with your backup instead, make sure the reasons are communicated clearly to the team.

*To complete all of the above vendor selection process steps with minimal work disruption in just 4 – 8 weeks: [BPM Partners vendor selection packages](#)*

## About BPM Partners

BPM Partners is the leading independent authority on business performance management (BPM) and related business intelligence solutions. The company helps organizations address their budgeting, planning, forecasting, financial reporting, consolidation, regulatory compliance, profitability optimization, key performance indicator development, and operational performance challenges. Vendor-neutral experts guide companies through their BPM initiatives from start to finish, while both reducing risk and minimizing costs. BPM Partners has specialized packages that lead clients through project justification, requirements definition, vendor selection, and deployment of departmental or enterprise-wide BPM or related business intelligence (BI) systems. For further details, go to <https://www.bmpartners.com/>. Follow BPM Partners on Twitter [@BPMTeam](#).



Questions? For questions about this guide, or any of the covered vendors:  
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Company:  
**Alterra Mountain Company**

Industry:  
**Recreation & Hospitality**

Implementation Partner:  
**The Hackett Group**

## About Alterra Mountain Company

Alterra Mountain Company is a family of 15 iconic year-round destinations, including the world's largest heli-ski operation, offering the Ikon Pass, the premier season pass across the globe. The company owns and operates a range of recreation, hospitality, real estate development, food and beverage, retail and service businesses. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, with destinations located throughout North America, Alterra Mountain Company is rooted in the spirit of the mountains and united by a passion for outdoor adventure. Alterra Mountain Company's family of diverse playgrounds spans six U.S. states and three Canadian provinces. Alterra Mountain Company honors each destination's unique character and authenticity and celebrates the legendary adventures and enduring memories they bring to everyone. For more information, please visit [AlterraMtnCo.com](http://AlterraMtnCo.com).

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The team is really hitting their stride now with the close process. We are **saving 30 to 40% of the time** it took to close the month-end and quarter-end previously with HFM. We chose a **best-in-class solution** that we could **grow with our organization** and **adopt more capabilities** over the long term.”

—**Andrew Renken**

*VP Enterprise Applications & Program Management Office*  
**ALTERRA MOUNTAIN COMPANY**

## The Challenge

Offering a family of ski resorts and year-round recreational destinations to explore, Alterra Mountain Company was formed in the summer of 2017 through the merger of several companies. The core company that became the backbone of Alterra Mountain Company was using an outdated version of Oracle Hyperion Financial Management (HFM) for a consolidation system. Their instance of HFM had been running for over a decade. The people who had installed and managed the application were gone, and the people left to take over were challenged in maintaining the application.

“There were upwards of 1,000 top side journal entries accumulated over that decade,” said Andrew Renken, Vice President Enterprise Applications and Program Management Office at Alterra Mountain Company. “Unfortunately, very few individuals understood the history that came forward with that installation, and ownership had very few means to find the business outcomes they were trying to see in HFM.”

Ownership had a primary objective to focus on upgrading the company's back-office applications. Renken was brought in to lead this initiative, switching ERP systems from a multi-platform



## Corporate Performance Management Solutions Delivered

- ✔ Financial Close and Consolidation
- ✔ Financial Reporting
- ✔ Account Reconciliations



## Business Challenges

- ✔ Instance of HFM had been running for over a decade and needed an upgrade.
- ✔ The people who had managed HFM were gone and very few understood the data within the application.
- ✔ Had to export everything from HFM and do Excel® manipulation to realign fiscal years across companies.



## Key OneStream Benefits

- ✔ Unified platform for financial consolidation, reporting and account reconciliations.
- ✔ Highly advantageous simplification of the financial architecture.
- ✔ Intelligent Finance platform able to keep up with a fast-growing company.
- ✔ Replaced Excel® and Trintech for account reconciliations.
- ✔ Reduced the fiscal quarter close from five weeks to a 3.5 week process.
- ✔ Ability to bring new acquisitions into financial reporting in a timely fashion.
- ✔ Upgrade process has been very smooth — cloud solution has been more advantageous.
- ✔ Multiple ownership and consolidation methods for 160 legal entities.
- ✔ Saving 30 to 40% of the time it took to close the month-end and quarter-end previously with HFM.

landscape to standardizing on Microsoft Dynamics 365. And once core financial information was established in the ERP, they started to evaluate their needs for financial consolidation and reporting.

## The Evaluation Process

“A pending acquisition created the need to align fiscal years across the business, so with that we had to make a decision,” said Renken. “We were on an old version of HFM and we started a conversation with leadership about how we wanted to move forward.” So, Alterra along with their IT services partner, The Hackett Group, began the evaluation process in short order to maintain their reporting schedule.

“We knew that the costs to upgrade Oracle HFM and ongoing costs to maintain it would be substantial,” said Renken. “We considered upgrading to Oracle EPM Cloud, but the evaluation was quite short and frankly non-existent. We knew if we were going to make the investment we wanted a platform we could grow with and leverage across many business processes — so we immediately looked at OneStream.”

Off the bat, the OneStream team was very compelling and engaged with Alterra in evaluating the organization’s needs. This attentive attitude stood out to Renken and his team. “The partnership is just as important as many aspects of the solution itself, especially for a very prominent platform that will be in our organization for many years to come.” The business found the user interface very efficient and sleek, particularly the Quickview features and the menus of the platform.

In addition, another important part of that evaluation was the OneStream platform’s multiple ownership and consolidation methods. Operating in CAD and USD, Alterra has a lot of intercompany activity between 145 accounting entities. OneStream’s ability to manage this complexity was one of the main reasons Alterra chose the platform to replace HFM.

## Implementing an Intelligent Finance Platform

After Alterra was formed, the organization continued to acquire resorts as part of a larger resort acquisition. Bringing the resort into their financial reporting in a timely fashion was extremely important. So once leadership decided on OneStream, Alterra was quick to start the project with The Hackett Group, focusing on the implementation of financial consolidations in OneStream. “We started to build and unwind the 1,000 top-side entries,” said Renken. “We made sure we did it the right way to understand the data and the history so we could go into OneStream with clean records and fresh data.”

OneStream was deployed in the cloud for 100 Alterra users. These users rely on the consolidation process and reporting in OneStream from Alterra’s main Denver office and other remote locations. “Having the OneStream platform in the cloud made it more flexible for folks working remotely during the complexities of the pandemic,” said Renken. “We are current on our version of OneStream, and the upgrade process has been very smooth — another reason why the cloud solution has been more advantageous from our perspective.”

## Benefits Realized

The business users started to see the value of OneStream before Alterra was live. “Although it wasn’t part of the original scope, there was an additional business need to solve for account reconciliations, so we did a parallel effort to transition to the Account Reconciliations solution in OneStream,” said Renken. “We went live with 80 users earlier than we did with financial consolidation.” Alterra was able to replace Trintech and Excel® for account reconciliations by creating a much more efficient process in OneStream.

Today, OneStream supports private GAAP reporting, financial consolidation, and account reconciliations for Alterra. Before OneStream, one of the biggest challenges for Alterra was the close time for the financial reporting team. “We had to export everything from HFM and do Excel® manipulation to realign the fiscal year date,” said Renken. With OneStream, Alterra has seen a dramatic savings of time to close the books, going from a five-week to 3.5 week close for the fiscal quarter close. “The team is really hitting their stride now with the close process. We are saving 30 to 40% of the time it took to close the month-end and quarter-end previously with HFM.”

## Extending the OneStream Platform

For Alterra, OneStream is a platform of many uses. “We chose a best-in-class solution that we could grow with our organization and adopt more capabilities over the long term,” said Renken. Alterra sees a lot of opportunity with a unified platform in place and have a long list of capabilities to take on next. On that list, includes a few solutions from the OneStream MarketPlace™, including Transaction Matching and Task Manager. But most important for Alterra would be implementing Budgeting and Planning.

“We are evaluating MarketPlace solutions and anything else we can do to advance some of our business processes this year, but Budgeting and Planning would be the next biggest use case within our organization,” said Renken. “We don’t have any other planning tool in our environment now and rely mostly on Excel®. So although we have a very long list of items on our priority list — next we will be focused to get budgeting and planning moving.”

## About the Implementation Partner

The Hackett Group is an intellectual property-based strategic consultancy, offering business transformation to global companies including digital transformation, enterprise cloud application implementation, robotic process automation, enterprise analytics, working capital management and global business services.

The company’s OneStream practice helps organizations realize the maximum potential of their application and analytics investment, from configuration and testing to process transformation and change management. The company’s unmatched benchmarking database — comprised of world-class performance metrics and correlated with proven best practices within finance, information technology, operations, procurement and human resources — allows clients to rapidly achieve quick wins and drive bottom-line improvements.



For more information,  
visit [TheHackettGroup.com](https://TheHackettGroup.com).

### About OneStream Software

OneStream Software provides a market-leading intelligent finance platform that reduces the complexity of financial operations. OneStream unleashes the power of finance by unifying corporate performance management (CPM) processes such as planning, financial close & consolidation, reporting and analytics through a single, extensible solution. We empower the enterprise with financial and operational insights to support faster and more informed decision-making. All in a cloud platform designed to continually evolve and scale with your organization.

OneStream’s Intelligent Finance platform can easily be extended with over 50 solutions from the OneStream MarketPlace. These downloadable solutions are fully battle-tested and optimized for the OneStream platform. They allow customers to easily extend the value of their investment to meet the changing needs of finance and operations.

#### OneStream Software

362 South Street | Rochester, MI 48307

[OneStreamSoftware.com](https://OneStreamSoftware.com)  
[Sales@OneStreamSoftware.com](mailto:Sales@OneStreamSoftware.com)

@OneStreamSoftware  
 @OneStreamSoftware  
 @OneStream\_Soft