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2025 CFO Autumn / Winter Survey
CFOs turning disruption into opportunity

Cautious optimism returns amid global uncertainty

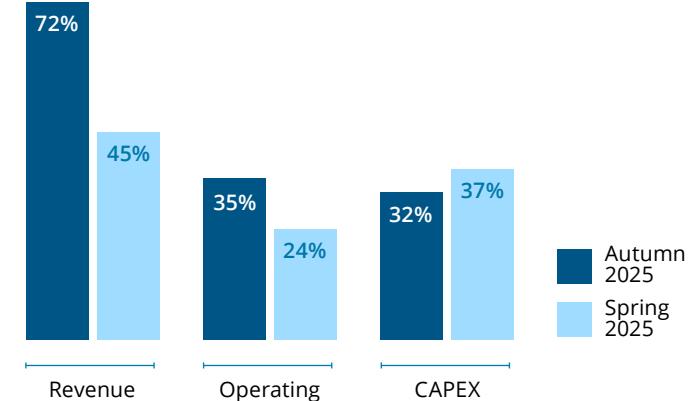
Ireland's CFOs are turning disruption into opportunity by combining disciplined investment with careful cost control amid ongoing headwinds. With inflation expectations moderating, 72% now expect revenue to rise - a significant increase from 45% in our **Spring Survey** - reflecting cautious optimism and ambition for growth.

There is also a clear improvement in sentiment. The share of CFOs feeling pessimistic about their organisation's financial outlook has dropped sharply, from 43% to 17%. This shift likely reflects confidence in the returns from earlier investments and in the ability to continue delivering on growth initiatives despite persistent external pressures.

However, this optimism is tempered by realism, with 35% of CFOs expecting margin growth and 48% planning to hold capital expenditure (CAPEX) steady.

Taken together, these results reveal a finance community adjusting to a new equilibrium. CFOs are balancing external uncertainty with internal resolve, adopting a strategic approach to investment and cost management that protects margins while positioning their organisations for sustainable growth.

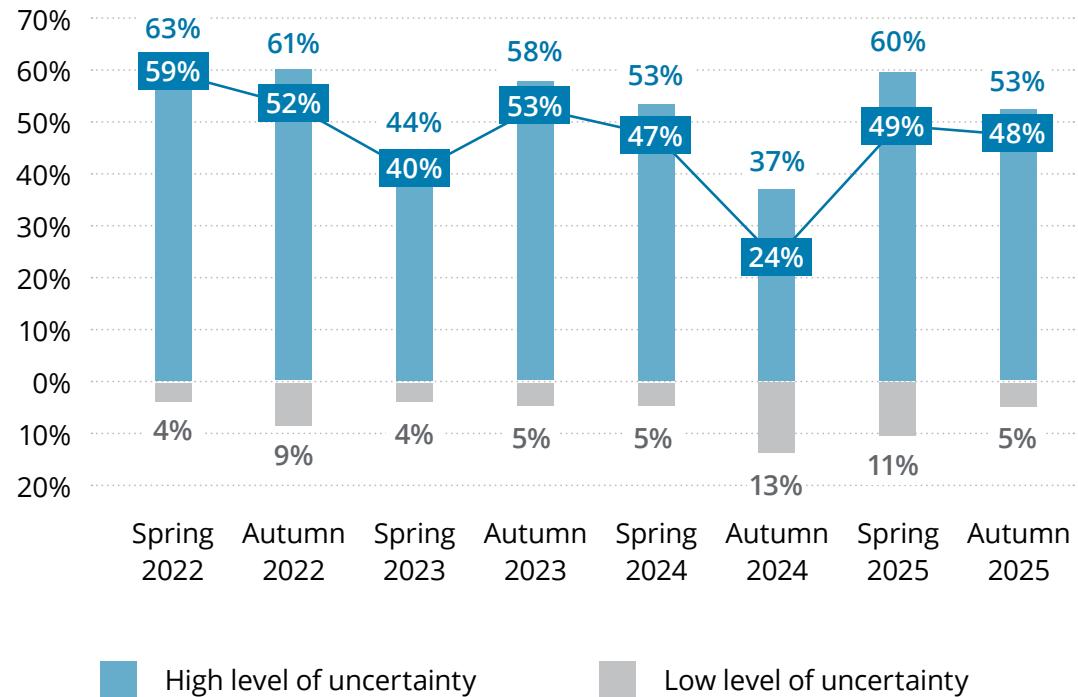
How are revenues, operating margins, and CAPEX likely to change for your company over the next 12 months?



CFOs feeling less optimistic about financial prospects



External uncertainty remains elevated



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External uncertainty remains elevated as geopolitical risks, shifting trade dynamics, and increasing regulation continue to influence the outlook. In a world where change is the only constant, resilience is no longer just about absorbing shocks but seizing opportunities to innovate and differentiate. Those who can balance agility with discipline, protecting margins while investing for the future will define what successful financial leadership looks like in the years ahead.



Tom Hynes
Partner
Finance Transformation

Top risks for businesses

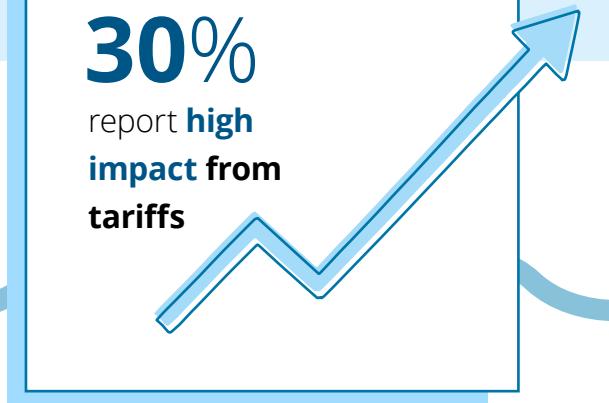
Retaining and attracting skilled talent and qualified employees	83%
Cyber risk	80%
Economic outlook / growth	80%
Increasing regulations	65%
Geopolitical risks	65%



Talent top of mind for CFOs

Attracting and retaining skilled talent is now the top business risk for the next 12 months. While 35% of Irish CFOs expect to increase headcount in comparison to 26% in Europe, hiring remains cautious. This approach reflects tight labour markets, wage pressures, scarce talent, and rising costs, prompting businesses to focus on selective hiring and flexible staffing models.

Beyond talent challenges, businesses face significant risks from the economic outlook, cyber threats, and regulatory pressures. In addition, geopolitical risks remain a key concern for CFOs, with 65% citing these factors as major threats to their organisations and 30% reporting high impact from tariffs.

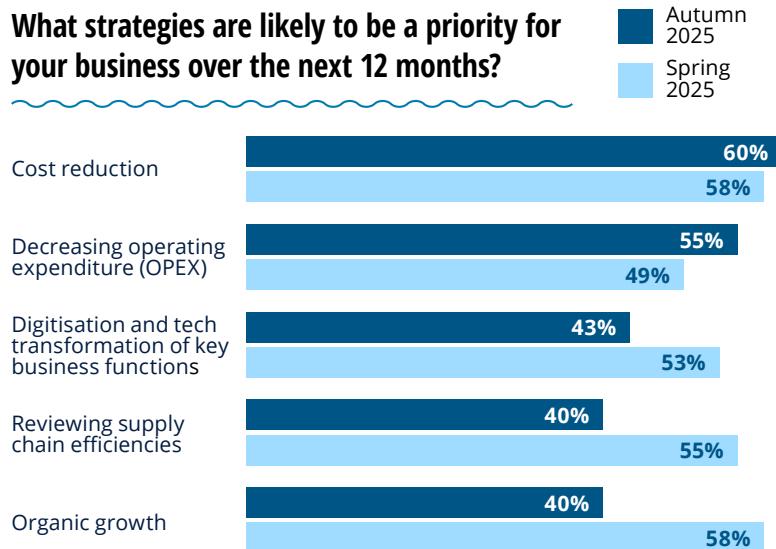


A focus on tightening budgets and improving operational performance

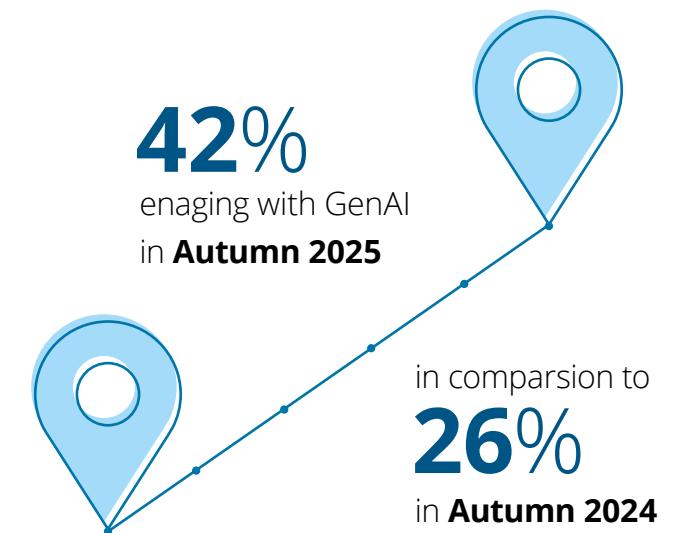
In response to external pressures, operational agility and disciplined cost management are critical priorities. Our findings show that 60% of finance leaders prioritise cost reduction, with 55% focusing on lowering operating expenditure (OPEX). This marks a shift from reactive, short-term cuts to sustainable, strategic cost optimisation that balances efficiency with long-term value creation.

Digital transformation is still a cornerstone of CFO strategy, aimed at enhancing agility, driving efficiency, and unlocking new sources of value. While the proportion of CFOs prioritising digitisation and technology transformation of core business functions has adjusted to 43%, it still ranks among the top three strategic priorities, underscoring its enduring significance in CFO agendas.

CFOs are also reporting progress in AI adoption, with 42% indicating their companies have moved beyond just reading and talking about AI and are now actively engaging with it compared to 26% a year ago.



Where is your organisation is on its GenAI journey?



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