

Planning & Budgeting in Excel

8 Challenges & Solutions to Make Your Process Shine



Enhance your Excel experience with Jedox

For as long as most finance professionals can remember, Excel has been the gold standard. But in this day and age, is it still enough? Although Excel is a great tool which offers numerous features that provide a lot of functionality, it still has limitations that deny users the growth now available to finance professionals. Technology is rapidly changing the face of finance, along with the rest of industry standard practices. Build on this evolution and gain insight and business value from your data. Your organization can achieve this by combining it with the Jedox solution: Our state-of-the-art budgeting and planning solution will enhance your Excel experience. Here's how:

I. From data discrepancy to data integrity

1 **Excel:** Repetitive work and data integration challenges

Data has to be manually pulled into Excel, which creates repetitive work and data integration problems.

Working in Excel starts with input of data. This data frequently comes from different systems within the organization, which means these other systems are insufficient for planning and budgeting. Modern FP&A professionals should not have to waste their time doing this every single time data is updated somewhere within their organization.



The Jedox solution provides automatic loading processes from any system. Current and historical data from source systems is up to date on a centralized solution.

2 **Excel:** Flexibility that may end up hurting your results

With hundreds of formulas and unlimited manual changes, there isn't a solid path to validate numbers, calculations and data integrity.

It happens to every Excel user. You validate your model, check formula but the numbers are incorrect. The sum formula did not include the full range and the "vlookup" function returned the wrong results. A random overwrite of a formula or a "one-time" manual change creates a repetitive error that persists throughout multiple generations of spreadsheets.



All business structure is always governed and managed at a centralized location. No more duplication or missing data points. The same goes with all formulas. Jedox keeps it consistent and allows updates to be made that will immediately appear for all users simultaneously.

"Because we use Jedox from Excel, we can easily and efficiently do history comparisons and variance analysis. We depend on Jedox."

Mercedes-Benz



Mercedes-Benz

75%

reported that
non-integrated systems
present a challenge*



II. From distributed tasks to complete collaboration

3 **Excel:** Ease of collaboration and version control

Templates in Excel are manually prepared, shared, and collected which leads to version control issues as well as consolidation and collaboration hurdles to overcome.

FP&A professionals send spreadsheets all over the organization to collect data. This process is offline. Each person in the chain has to remember to send and receive the data on time or the system will fall apart. Excel Online offers an incremental improvement to this process, but also causes other obstacles to rise up. Offline collaboration is an immensely time-consuming task. Different insights and feedback about data being kept on those spreadsheets rarely ever get consolidated in final reports and presented to executive management. Those spreadsheets are usually working drafts. Budget owners end up sending around more than one version of their insights. There simply isn't a single streamlined source of data. The Jedox solution solves this.



All users work online, and data is immediately captured. Users can also work through modern web interface outside of Excel. Users can work on different versions while keeping audit trails and commentary.

4 **Excel:** Simulations – business modeling and what-if analysis

While Excel models are easy to build, they are exposed to discrepancies. Data accuracy becomes a problem.

Simulating, evaluating, and comparing different planning scenarios is an essential step in the budget approval process. Using only spreadsheets, often you must duplicate dozens of sheets just to create one scenario. With Excel acting as both database and calculation engine, creating comparisons between different assumptions and scenarios requires an inordinate amount of time, preparation, and manipulations.



Business logic is centralized in the Jedox solution and calculations are in real-time from any platform. Updates are easy to make in place and demonstrate impact on all data.

"As long as you know Excel, you can use Jedox. Jedox gives us one version of the truth."

VASCO



80%

use Excel for scenario modeling*



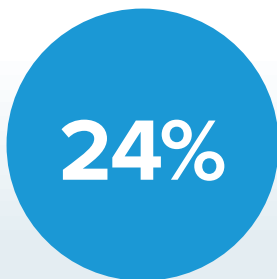
5 Excel: Top-down, bottom-up, and workflow

Excel was not designed to allocate data and then collect new versions. There is a lack of process control when data is copied and shared multiple times.

Enterprise planning frequently uses a top-down approach for target setting and bottom-up data collection. In most cases, users (such as your regional sales managers) will get an empty spreadsheet for planning with guidelines. Those users then have to input their data, submit the data and get approval or rejection, all while meeting very specific standards. Excel is not built to manage those workflows. Additionally, it is impossible to pre-populate targets in Excel which means users must start their planning from scratch.



Workflows are fully embedded in the Jedox solution. Approvals and data locks are also supported. The solution allows automatic data allocation, so bottom-up planning does not have to start from scratch every time.



are not getting forecasts right the first time*



III. Fill in missing pieces and enhance functionality

6 Excel: Permissions and information security

Properly securing sensitive data such as payroll and forecasts is difficult to achieve with Excel. Potential compliance violations become a real risk.

Often the spreadsheets being used for planning and reporting contain some of the company's most confidential and sensitive information. Some of this data is protected under federal and state laws, including personal details of employees such as salary. When dealing with data such as forecasts, you could potentially be in violation of SEC regulations if this data is exposed. FP&A professionals often take great care to protect the data they are tasked with managing, but then are forced to send spreadsheet files bouncing around the office. In an era of heightened data security and breaches occurring at larger organizations, finding a solution that clearly protects highly sensitive data is paramount.



All types of data are subject to the latest security standards. Templates can be set for specific sharing so only approved users are provided the access level their work requires.

64%

experienced leakage
of data offline into
local files*



7

Excel: Dashboards and executive reports

Capabilities for deep data analysis, executive reports online, and dynamic reporting are very limited.

Excel and PowerPoint are often thought of as the friendliest and most commonly used tools to create management reports. However, it is no longer the most modern solution available to finance professionals. They do not accommodate web-based information. It is either too heavy and large to easily share or you can only share tiny slivers of data, which means your executive team isn't getting the full picture. While it does look nice and shiny, it isn't effective in the end and really limits the ability to dig deep in the data and see the full picture across the organization.

Remember that with the advanced digital tools now available to all business functions, executives expect a digital solution.



Data can be analyzed from anywhere on the platform. Reporting and planning are seamlessly connected, allowing the system to create proactive alerts to provide more clarity on “the big picture.”

“The efficiency increase in planning alone is very impressive! What took several hours before we now achieve within seconds.”

FCA Motor Village Germany



8

Excel: Never-ending models for all aspects of finance

Excel struggles to be multidimensional; users are forced to work with single department reports rather than templates.

For a mid-size organization with 10 product lines, 10 regions, and 10 cost centers, spreadsheets can quickly number over 10,000 every year. This number doesn't even include drafts and simulations! Additionally, making changes to a single template within this mid-size organization means updating dozens of spreadsheets - in most cases, individually. In most cases, individually. The risk of incorrect formulas is rampant and cannot be eliminated. Quite simply, Excel struggles to be a multi-dimensional tool. Multi-dimensional functionality and smart data storage are standard features of the Jedox solution.



The multidimensional model allows users to work with templates rather than individual or departmental reports. The Jedox solution offers full connectivity between different data sources at the application level.

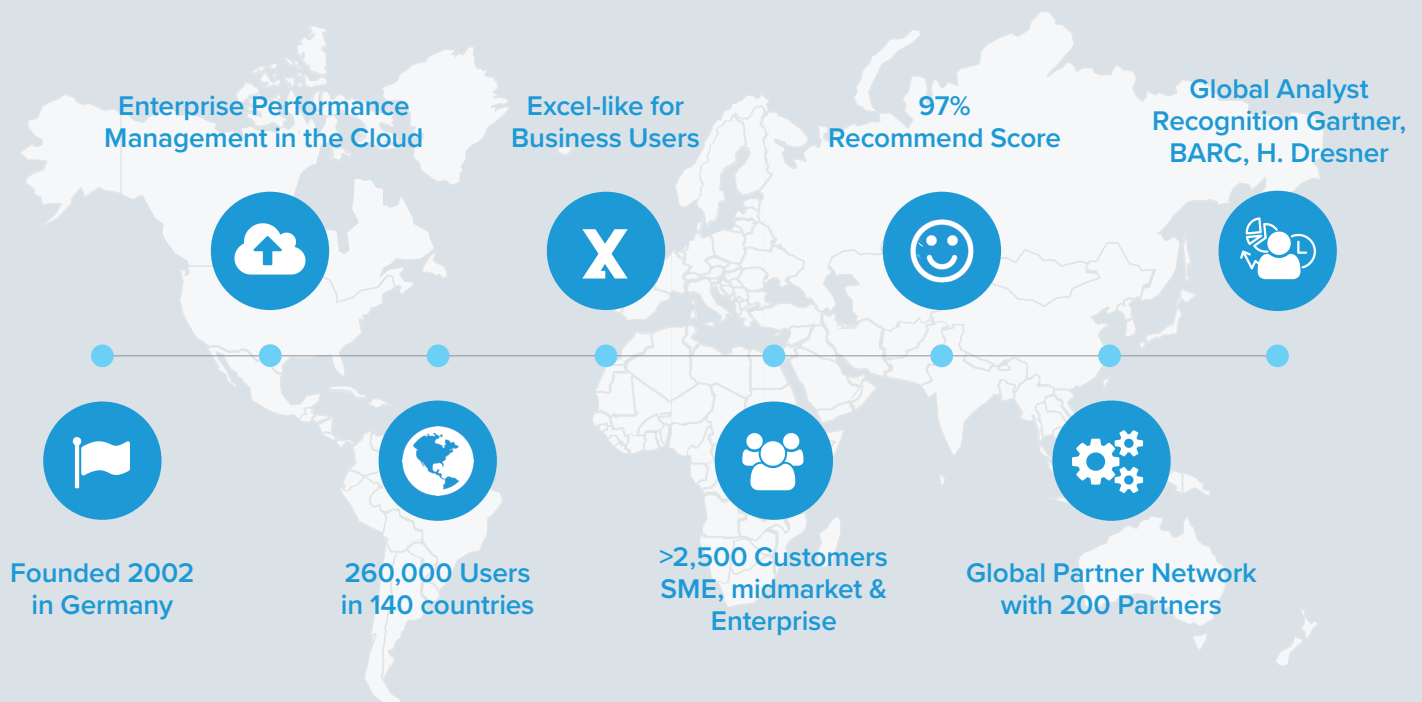
Excel demonstrates clear advantages. The difference with using the Jedox solution is that you are better enabled to fully capitalize on those advantages:

- ▶ Easy to use
- ▶ Fully “self-service”
- ▶ Not tethered to your IT department
- ▶ Allows quick ad-hoc analysis and reporting
- ▶ The Jedox solution keeps your data secure
- ▶ The full Jedox suite automates planning, data integrations, versioning, and simulations
- ▶ Data, analysis, reports, and planning forms are all accessible through a modern web and mobile user interface as well as Excel and other related applications

Excel is still the primary tool of choice for most finance professionals. However, there are other solutions available that offer increased efficiency, effectiveness, and business value for budgeting, planning, and forecasting. With the Jedox solution, there is no need to compromise and choose between one or the other. Enhance your Excel experience and help guide your organization’s next steps in the digital transformation journey without having to abandon your Excel environment.

***2018 Jedox & ACCA Survey of Financial Professionals**

About Jedox



Jedox simplifies planning, analysis, and reporting with one unified and cloud-based software suite. Jedox empowers decision makers and business users across all departments and helps them work smarter, streamline business collaboration, and make insight-based decisions with confidence.

Over 2,500 organizations in 140 countries use Jedox for real-time planning on the web, in the cloud, and on any device. Jedox is a leading Enterprise Planning and Corporate Performance Management solution provider with offices on four continents and with over 200 certified business partners. Independent analysts recognize Jedox for its leading enterprise planning solutions.

Simplify planning with Jedox and start your free trial today:
www.jedox.com

CONTACT

Americas: +1 857 415 4776
ANZ: +61 1300 406 334
Asia: +65 6803 8632
Germany: +49 (0) 761 15147 0
France: +33 1 47 23 00 22
E-Mail: info@jedox.com
Website: www.jedox.com

jedox.