



# 2019 State of Financial Reporting Survey: Connectivity's Impact on the Financial Close

Presented by Workiva in partnership with  
the *Journal of Accountancy*

Results from a global survey of accounting,  
finance, and compliance professionals revealed  
insights on data, processes, and technology.



# 2019 State of Financial Reporting Survey: Connectivity's Impact on the Financial Close

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The stronger the collaboration, the faster financial reporting teams can complete the month-end close. That was one of the biggest takeaways from a new survey of nearly 600 finance and accounting professionals.

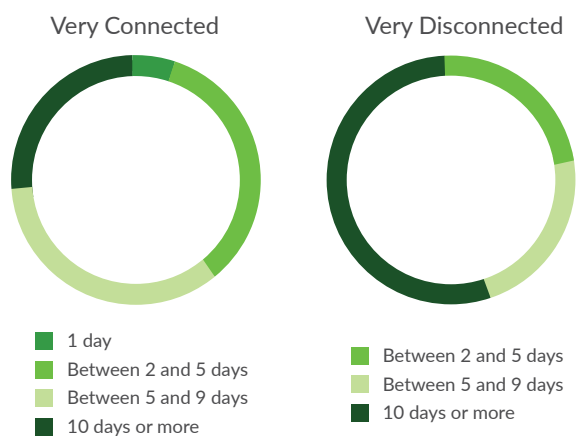
The survey found that for those who describe their teams as “very connected,” about 40% say they complete the month-end close in five days or less—nearly double the percentage of those who describe their collaboration as “very disconnected.” In fact, more than half of those on “very disconnected” teams say their close takes 10 days or more.

Explore more key results from the survey in this report.

## Key takeaways:

- Connection and collaboration fuel a faster close.
- Manual tasks are far and away the top concern for teams.
- Automation in the finance function is on the rise.

## How long does it take you to complete the month-end close?



## Connected teams close faster

The stronger the level of collaboration, the shorter the average preparation time.

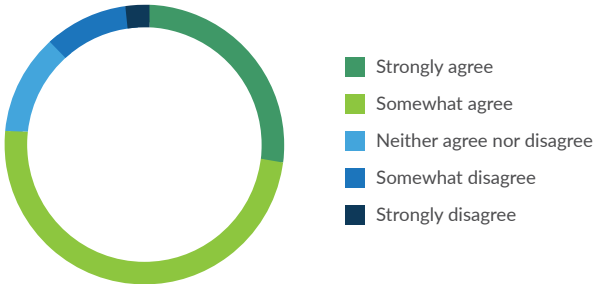
Those who describe their teams' collaboration on reports as “very disconnected” are more likely to spend at least 10 days on the month-end close. Bringing data, people, and processes together could lead to efficiencies and shorten turnaround times.

### Connected teams are more satisfied with their time for analysis

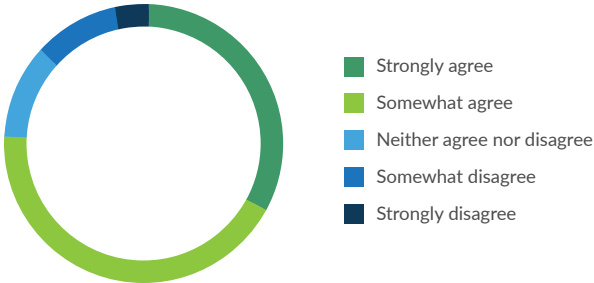
Highly connected organizations felt strongly that their close processes allowed enough time to analyze the data.

#### Do you feel you have sufficient time for analysis?

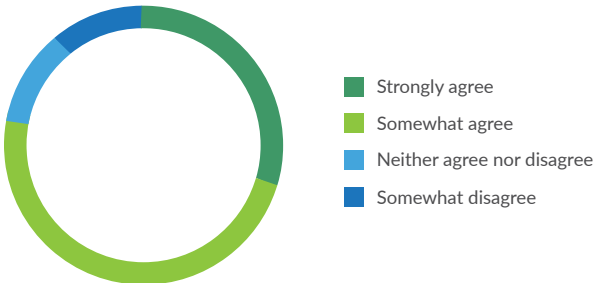
Three-fourths of people who describe **how they apply data** as “very connected” agree they have enough time.



Three-fourths of people who describe their **teams** as “very connected” agree they have enough time.



Three-fourths of people who describe their **process** as “very connected” agree they have enough time.

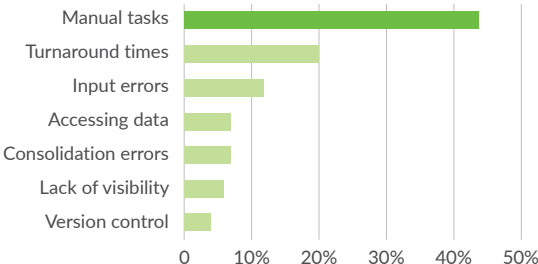


Those organizations that considered themselves “very connected”—either in the way they collaborate on, collect, or apply data—were overwhelmingly satisfied that they have sufficient time for analysis. More than 75% said they strongly or somewhat agree in each category. By reducing manual tasks and increasing team connectivity, they can dedicate more hours toward financial planning and analysis.

### Manual tasks are a top concern

Tedious, repetitive work bogs down close processes.

#### What is your top concern about your financial close reporting process?

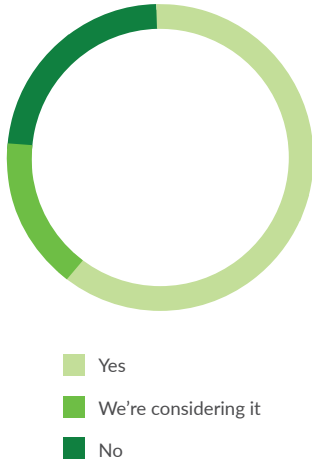


Manual tasks were cited as a top concern in the financial close process, two times more than other factors. Performing manual tasks was the lead concern regardless of role—although for staff, turnaround times were a close second (35% to 33%, respectively).

### Automation in the close is becoming the norm

Modern teams are automating more areas of the close process.

#### Has any part of your month-end close been automated?

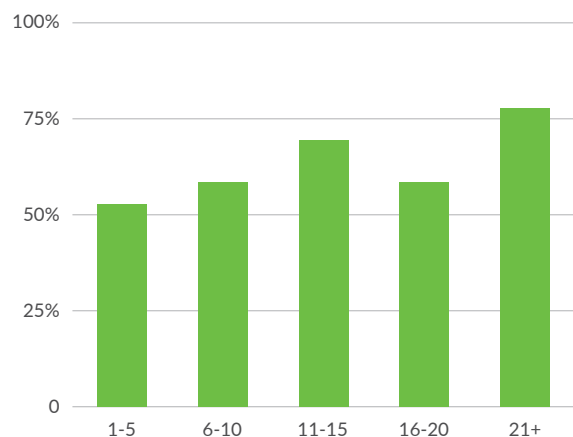


Over 75% of respondents have automated at least part of the financial close process or are thinking about it. This appears to be in direct contradiction of the concerns related to manual tasks—indicating that while organizations are automating more, they may not have achieved the level of automation they desire or are still early in their journey.

## Larger teams leading the charge for automation (for now)

Modern teams are automating more areas of the close process.

### Automation of financial close by team size



Larger teams are more likely to have adopted or considered automation, which can include connecting data from source systems like ERPs to financial reporting tools. While larger teams may have had a head start on technology due to likely bigger budgets, modern cloud tools are fast becoming more affordable and make accounting automation accessible for teams of all sizes.

## Methodology

The findings in this report are based on surveys conducted by Workiva from March through May 2019. The *2019 State of Financial Reporting Survey* drew responses from 584 accounting and finance professionals. Respondents represented all levels of businesses, including approximately 25% in the C-suite; 37% at the VP, director, or executive level; and 38% at the manager and staff level.

## About Workiva

Workiva, provider of the world's leading connected reporting and compliance platform, is used by thousands of enterprises across 180 countries, including more than 75% of *Fortune* 500® companies, and by government agencies. Our customers have linked over 5 billion data elements to trust their data, reduce risk, and save time. For more information about Workiva (NYSE:WK), please visit [workiva.com](http://workiva.com).

## About the *Journal of Accountancy*

The *Journal of Accountancy* is the flagship publication of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA), the world's largest member association representing the accounting profession.