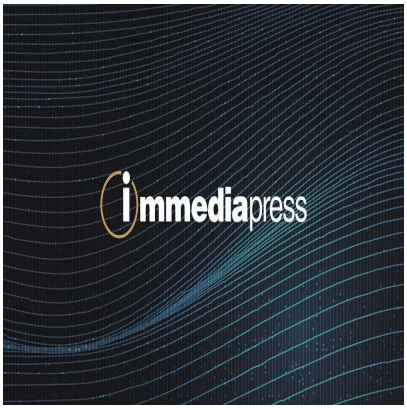

The CFO blind spot: 92% still rely on manual efforts to close â?? despite the potential to automate

Descrizione

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COMUNICATO STAMPA â?? CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

New research finds that despite widespread close automation tools, only 2% of organizations have achieved a fully automated end-to-end close, revealing an â??automation mirageâ?• in finance operations.

VIENNA, Va., March 17, 2026 /PRNewswire/ â?? Redwood Softwareâ?¢, the leading orchestration platform for the autonomous enterprise, today released SSON Research & Analyticsâ?? â??2026 R2R Efficiency Mirageâ?• research, highlighting a critical â?? and solvable â?? execution gap that prevents finance organizations from progressing toward the autonomous enterprise.

CFOs have invested heavily in close management and automation tools to gain control, predictability and efficiency. Yet the research shows that most organizations have digitized oversight â?? not automating the work itself. Leadership sees dashboards and approvals, but Global Process Owners, Shared Services leaders and Finance Operations teams are still manually preparing journals, calculating accruals and reconciling data.

The result is a people-dependent close, which creates unpredictability and strains the teams responsible for delivering financial results.

Key findings: 2026 R2R efficiency mirage

Leadership perception doesnâ??t match operational reality

Executive confidence in automation maturity often reflects dashboard visibility rather than execution reality. Research across 88 shared services leaders shows 92% of organizations still carry significant manual effort in the record-to-report close, and 63% say more than half the close remains manual. Meanwhile, 51% say leadership underestimates or is unaware of the true level of manual work involved. This perception gap leaves Global Process Owners and Finance Operations leaders under pressure to accelerate performance without structural automation beneath them.

The work teams thought was automated is still manual â?? and exhausting

The most critical close activities remain heavily manual despite years of tooling. 84% of organizations cite journal entries as their biggest source of manual effort, followed by reconciliations (69%) and accruals (67%), and 86% still reconcile in spreadsheets. For Shared Services and Finance Operations teams, the work believed to be automated still depends on manual preparation and coordination â?? creating burnout in processes that leadership assumes are modernized.

The blind spot has operational, financial and talent consequences

When execution remains manual, the close becomes fragile and difficult to scale. 80% of finance teams report late nights during the close cycle, and 68% say processes bottleneck when key people are unavailable. With 93% still coordinating the close through checklists, spreadsheets or email, orchestration is largely absent. The result: recurring manual work consumes the time finance needs for analysis and decision support.

How Redwood customers significantly reduce manual work

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While most organizations remain dependent on manual execution, Finance Automation by Redwood customers â?? leveraging RunMyJobs by Redwood, a Leader in the GartnerÂ® Magic Quadrantâ?¢ for Service Orchestration and Automation Platforms â?? demonstrate what structured financial close orchestration can deliver:

â??The future of finance isnâ??t a faster manual close â?? itâ??s a touchless one,â?• said Max Schultz, Group General Manager at Redwood Software. â??A fully orchestrated, always-on close that eliminates manual effort and unleashes human potential across the entire record-to-report cycle is possible today. This isnâ??t an incremental improvement. Itâ??s a fundamental shift from managing the close to commanding it â?? where orchestration replaces manual coordination, execution runs autonomously and finance teams focus on insight, not fixing errors.â?•

â??As we scaled across 250+ legal entities and absorbed $15 billion in acquisitions, we couldnâ??t afford a close that depended on manual effort,â?• said Sabari Swaminathan, Assistant Controller of Corporate Business Systems and Automation at Energy Transfer. â??With Finance Automation by Redwood, we automated nearly 3,000 journal entries per month, reduced reconciliation times from an hour to minutes and recovered 45,000 hours annually. More importantly, we shifted from coordinating tasks manually to orchestrating execution end-to-end. That predictability allows our team to stay lean, support growth and focus on delivering insight instead of managing process.â?•

Access the report

The â??2026 R2R Efficiency Mirageâ?• report provides detailed benchmarks on automation maturity, manual effort concentration and the growing perception gap between executive leadership and operational finance teams. Download the full report here.

About Redwood Software

Redwood Software is the leading orchestration platform for the enterprise, driving business transformation at the lowest total cost of ownership. Redwood empowers organizations to intelligently

automate and orchestrate mission-critical business and IT processes across complex ERP, hybrid cloud, data and emerging agentic AI systems. Through its SaaS-first automation fabrics â?? with AI embedded across the entire automation lifecycle â?? Redwood accelerates the path to the autonomous enterprise. Backed by 30 years of experience and trusted by more than 50% of the Fortune 50, Redwood unleashes human potential so enterprises can focus on innovation, growth and whatâ??s next.

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