

By Alasdair Drysdale The Financial Controller The Things The Academics Dont Teach You

By Alasdair Drysdale *The Financial Controller The Things The Academics Dont Teach You The Things They Dont Teach You A Financial Controllers Perspective* As a seasoned Financial Controller Ive spent years navigating the often complex world of finance While academia offers a solid foundation realworld experience teaches you things that textbooks simply cant Here are some of the key lessons Ive learned along the way **Beyond the Numbers The Art of Storytelling** 1 Numbers are just data points They only gain meaning when woven into a compelling narrative Every report every spreadsheet needs a story to back it up Whether youre presenting to investors board members or even your own team you need to paint a picture with the data highlighting trends explaining variances and ultimately driving action 2 **Master the language of business** Financial jargon can be intimidating but understanding it is essential for effective communication Learn to speak the language of your stakeholders using clear and concise terms to ensure everyone is on the same page 3 **Focus on the why not just the what** Numbers tell a story but its your job to explain the underlying reasons Why did sales decline Why did expenses increase By digging into the root cause you can provide actionable insights and drive positive change **The Human Element in Finance** 1 Finance is not just about spreadsheets Its about people Youre dealing with real individuals with diverse motivations and perspectives Understanding these nuances will help you build trust and create more productive relationships 2 **Soft skills matter** Strong communication active listening and conflict resolution are essential for success Being able to build consensus navigate disagreements and work collaboratively is vital in any financial role 3 **Empathy** is your superpower Put yourself in the shoes of your colleagues understanding their pressures and challenges This empathy will help you build bridges and create a more supportive environment 2 **Mastering the Art of the Possible** 1 **Never stop learning** The world of finance is constantly evolving Stay ahead of the curve by attending conferences reading industry publications and embracing new technologies 2 **Think outside the box** Challenge the status quo and be willing to experiment with new ideas Dont be afraid to break the mold and find creative solutions to complex problems 3 **Be adaptable and resilient** Markets fluctuate regulations change and unexpected challenges arise The ability to adapt and navigate these obstacles is essential for success **The Unsung Heroes of Finance** 1 **Details matter** Attention to detail is paramount in finance Errors can have significant consequences so its essential to be meticulous in your work 2 **Dont be afraid to ask questions** Its better to ask for clarification than to make assumptions Always seek to fully understand the information youre working with and dont be afraid to ask for guidance when needed 3 **Embrace the mundane** The daytoday tasks might not be glamorous but they are crucial to the smooth functioning of the department Take pride in your work and be reliable in your duties even when they seem repetitive **Final Thoughts** While academia provides a solid foundation realworld experience teaches you the true essence of finance Its about understanding the big picture mastering the art of communication and building strong relationships with your colleagues Its about being adaptable detailoriented and constantly learning Above all its about using your knowledge and skills to contribute to the success of your organization By embracing these lessons you can truly thrive in the world of finance and become a valuable asset to any company

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