

Stalled at the Finish (or Starting) Line?

How to Turn Your NetSuite Investment into a Value Engine



Whether you're at the starting line of your NetSuite journey or have already crossed the finish line, the goal is the same: to create value for your business.

Yet for many, the reality is a system that creates more questions than answers.

The project is technically complete, but progress has stalled. Your team is still exporting reports to Excel for manual reconciliations, the month-end close still takes weeks, and getting a simple report on profitability requires a ticket with IT.

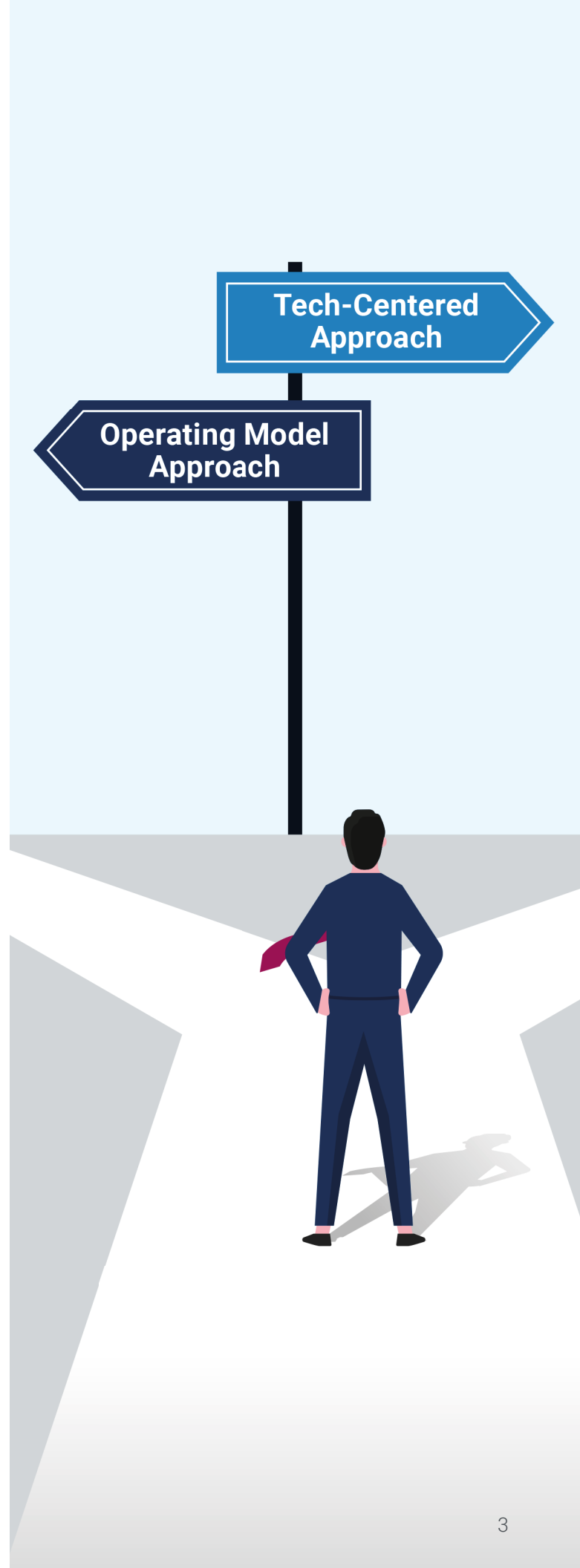
This whitepaper provides the playbook to break that cycle. We outline a proven approach that transforms NetSuite from a glorified data repository into a platform that delivers real-time answers, ensuring your investment pays dividends whether you are just beginning or looking to optimize an existing implementation.



The NetSuite Journey: Two Paths to Different Outcomes

Companies typically begin their NetSuite journey with common drivers, but the approach they take determines their outcome.

- **The Tech-Centered Approach:** A project with a narrow focus on technology, often prioritizing speed and out-of-the-box solutions, can lead to a fast implementation but may result in an unscalable solution. This approach often results in a continued reliance on manual processes outside of NetSuite, a lack of end-to-end business process redesign, and project delays or budget overruns due to a lack of business alignment. Statistics show that up to 70% of ERP initiatives fail to meet their business goals, with 50% of software licenses remaining unused after implementation.
- **The Operating Model Approach:** This path focuses on an upfront strategy and design, analyzing end-to-end business processes before designing the technology landscape. This methodology ensures the technology, people, and processes are aligned to leverage NetSuite to its maximum potential, resulting in a more scalable finance operating model and a timely, on-budget go-live of a well-defined scope.



Defining Success Beyond Go-Live

A successful go-live, measured by criteria like on-time and on-budget implementation with core functionalities, does not guarantee a successful business transformation. A truly successful NetSuite implementation is defined by value-based criteria that align with business objectives.

Typical vs. Value-Based Success Criteria:

Typical success criteria (Example)

- Core ERP capabilities fully functional
- Accurate financial statements
- Clean and accurate historical data migration
- Automated integrations with existing infrastructure and systems
- Stable solutions with 99.7% uptime
- On-time and on-budget implementation

A NetSuite implementation can meet these criteria while still failing to achieve your business goals.

Creating sustainable value from your investment in NetSuite requires defining criteria that aligns to your goals and drives the right changes across your operation model.

Value-based success criteria (Example)

- Scalable finance functions to meet future growth through automation, resource utilization, etc.
- Improved cash flow through better and timely visibility into receivables, payables, and inventory
- Real time insights for data-driven decisions
- Improved supplier collaboration



A successful implementation provides the foundation for continuous improvement and value creation.

Pitfalls of a Tech-Centered Approach

Programs that prioritize features over outcomes exhibit predictable failure modes: strategic misalignment, fragmented processes and data, low end-user adoption, and over-customization that reduces system agility.

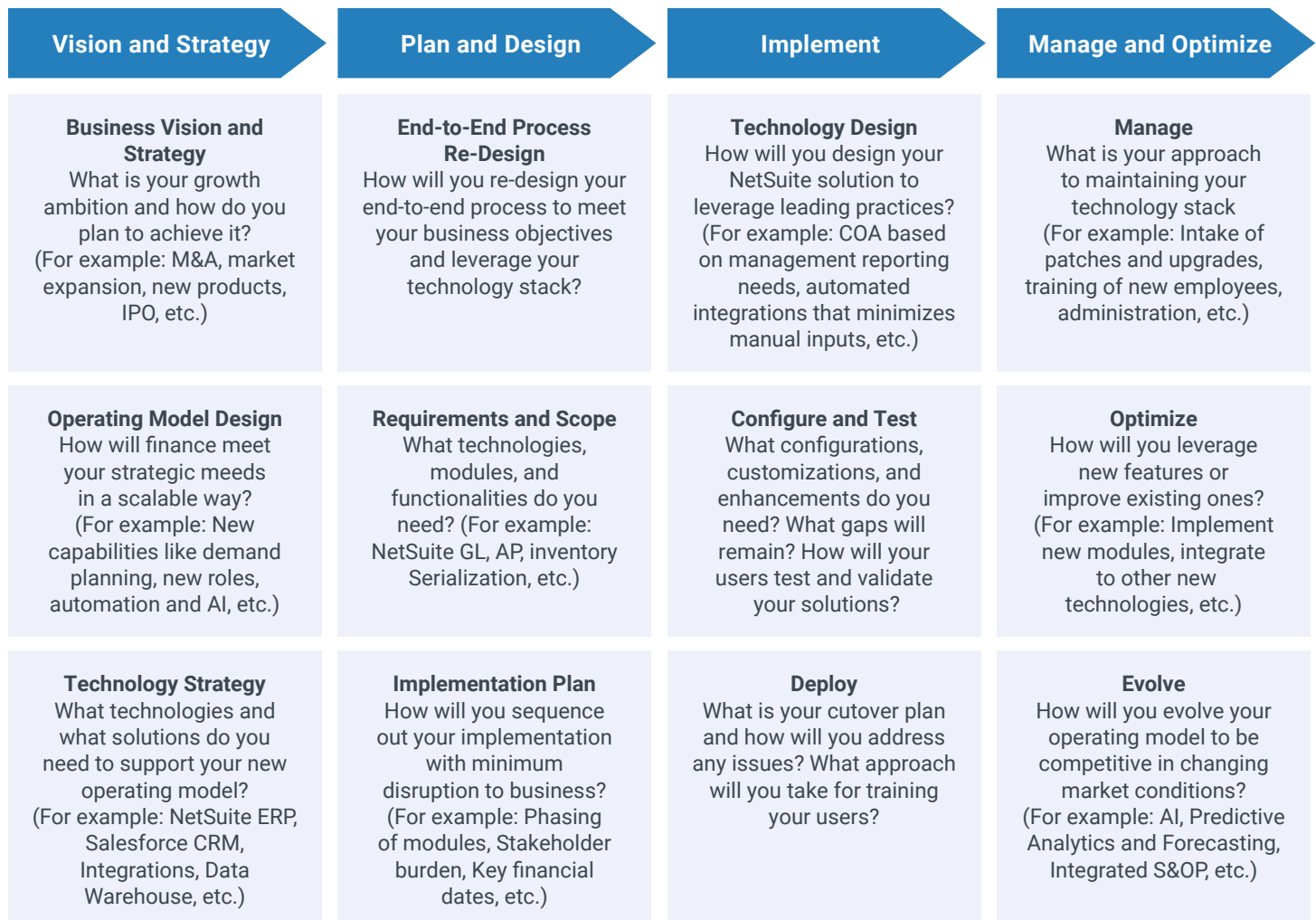
Common Pitfalls and How to Address Them:

Pitfall	What it looks like in practice	Mitigation
Strategic misalignment	ERP features implemented without linkage to growth and value goals; automation of outdated processes.	Start with business vision and operating model; define value-based success criteria and trace to design.
Fragmented operations and data	Siloed CRM/SCM/Finance processes; inconsistent reporting; manual reconciliations in spreadsheets.	End-to-end process design; harmonize data structures; integrate platforms with clear ownership.
Limited training and adoption	Users revert to Excel and offline workarounds; reports not trusted or used.	Role-based enablement, hands-on UAT, embedded change champions, post-go-live coaching.
Over-customization	Point customizations to fix upstream issues; rising maintenance costs; upgrade risk.	Adopt leading practices; change processes before code; use configuration and lightweight extensions.

The CFGI Approach to Achieving True Business Transformation

CFGI’s methodology is an outcome-driven process that enables a leading-practice operating model through NetSuite. This approach is broken down into four key phases:

- 1. Vision and Strategy:** The process begins by defining the business’s growth ambition and how the finance, technology, and operating models will support it.
- 2. Plan and Design:** This phase involves re-designing end-to-end processes, defining the technology requirements and scope, and creating an implementation plan that minimizes business disruption.
- 3. Implement:** With a clear plan, the solution is configured, tested, and deployed with a focus on comprehensive user training and a well-defined cutover plan.
- 4. Manage and Optimize:** This is an ongoing phase where the company maintains its technology stack, leverages new features (including AI-powered enhancements like SuiteAnalytics and Bill Capture), and continuously tracks key performance indicators (KPIs) to evolve the operating model and remain competitive.



Lessons Learned and Recommendations

For companies starting their NetSuite journey, the following are critical for success:

- **Define success criteria based on business outcomes**, not just project milestones. The board and stakeholders need to see a return on investment through efficiency gains, added insights, and business transformation.
- **Establish a cross-functional team** from the beginning to ensure alignment across business, finance, and technology.
- **Focus on what is truly unique about your business** and how NetSuite can address those specific needs, rather than getting caught up in the details of standard finance functions that NetSuite handles effectively.
- **Look at end-to-end process transformation**, not just the sub-processes within NetSuite.

How to measure success?

Anchor delivery to measurable outcomes tied to cash, cost, growth, and control. Track baselines, targets, and benefits realization from blueprint through post go-live.

KPI	Baseline	Target (12-18 months)	Value Driver
Days to Close	15-20 days	5-7 days	Faster reporting, earlier decisions
Automation Rate - Transactions	30-40%	≥80%	Scalable finance capacity
Automation Rate - Reconciliations	20-30%	≥95%	Control & speed
Cash Conversion Cycle	Baseline+	-10-15%	Working capital release
Self-Service Reporting Adoption	Low	High (BU/Region/Product)	Decision velocity
License Utilization	50-60%	≥90%	Realize SaaS investment

Sustaining Success

- **Strategically expand** by exploring additional NetSuite modules and integrating with other platforms like CRM solutions to ensure data consistency and accuracy.
- **Enhance the solution** by leveraging new features and AI capabilities to maximize technology investment.
- **Focus on continuous improvement** by monitoring performance and evolving reports to meet the changing needs of the business.
- **Maintain ongoing training and support** for both existing and new employees to ensure the system is being used to its maximum potential.

Conclusion

Outcome-driven NetSuite programs succeed when they start with the business vision, design an operating model that scales, and then implement technology to serve that vision. By anchoring on value and sustaining change after go-live, organizations convert ERP spend into durable competitive advantage.

Contact us:



ANDRES GARZON
Senior Managing Partner
@ agarzon@cfgi.com



SHINE THOMAS
Partner
@ sthomas@cfgi.com



TOM IRWIN
Managing Director
@ tirwin@cfgi.com



KEN SCHATZ
Partner
@ kschatz@cfgi.com

Supporting CFOs In All Critical Functions

Who is CFGI?

We are a leading global accounting and business advisory firm. We partner with our clients on their most important regulatory, transaction, and business improvement initiatives.

Our team of over 1000 former Big 4 professionals brings expertise across technical accounting, capital markets, tax, valuation, ESG, transaction advisory, restructuring, cybersecurity and technology solutions – all delivered

with an independent and roll-up-the-sleeves approach. CFGI was founded in 2001 and serves thousands of global clients from our 28 offices throughout the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions.

Call or email us today to begin a dialogue. We'll show you how a consulting relationship with CFGI can provide both immediate benefits and lasting effects.

[cfgi.com](https://www.cfgi.com) | [in](#)