

E-book

8 Signs You Have Outgrown Excel for Budgeting and Planning

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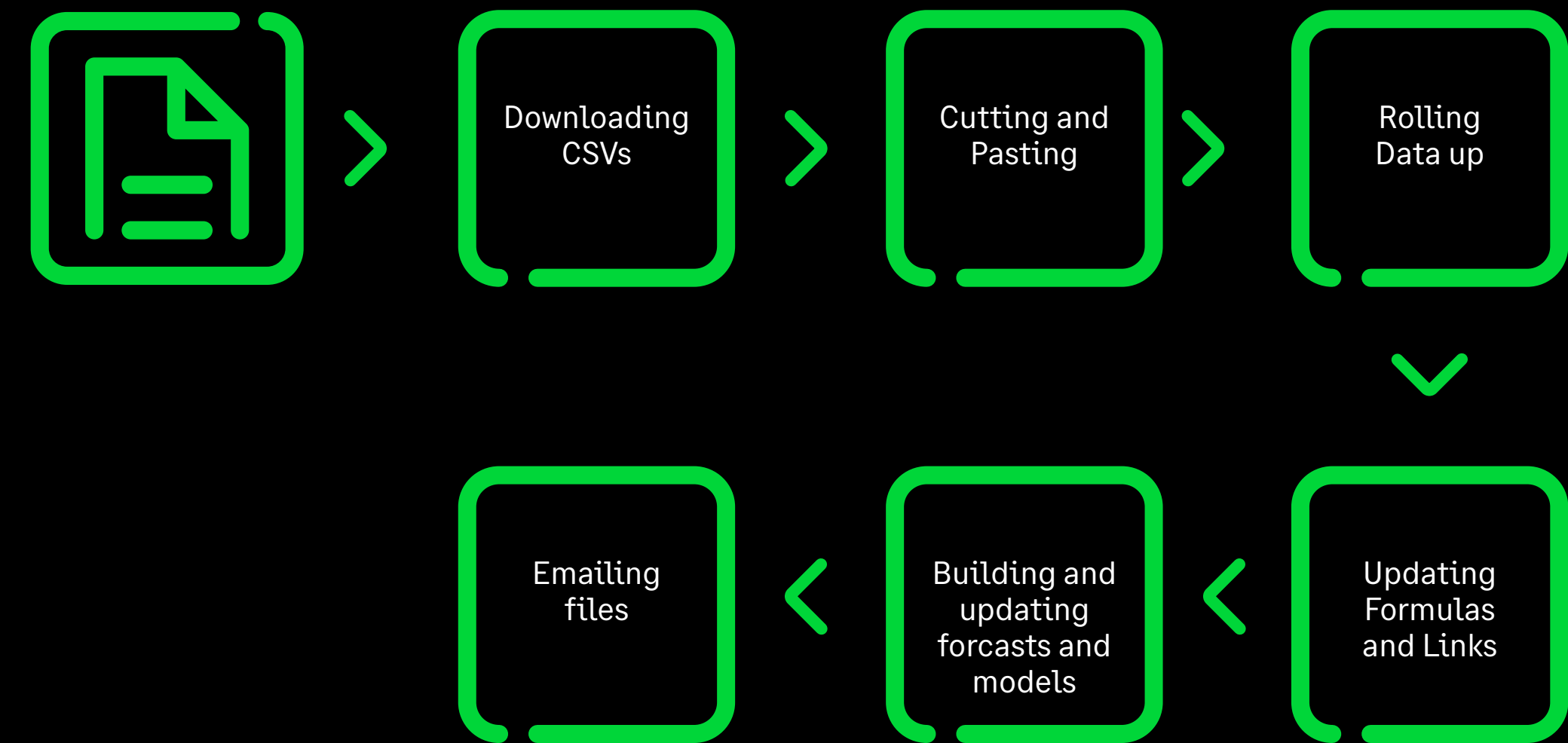


If you're doing your budgeting and planning in Excel, you're not alone. Roughly 90% of companies with 50 to 200 employees use it to budget and plan. But, at a certain point, you start to outgrow Excel and could be missing out on the benefits that a budgeting and planning solution can provide. You could streamline your planning, increase collaboration, and run a more strategic process. Hearing the quotes below from you or your colleagues are signs that you might be outgrowing Excel.



“I just pulled an all-nighter—again—to get ready for the management meeting.”

Managing budgets in Excel requires lots of tactical work.



If you're consumed with these activities, or worse, having to spend your nights and weekends to manage plans and budgets, an easy-to-use budgeting and planning solution can streamline the process and help you get your life back!

“Joe is the only one who understands the model!”

When you’ve got complex forecasting and what-if models and only one person in your company knows how it works, you’re exposing yourself to risk if that person moves on. What is the cost to have someone new diagnose, understand, and update the models if he leaves? You can ensure your continuity with a solution that allows you to define models that consistently operate on the data you pull in from your plans, budgets, and actuals.



“Oops, sorry, that’s a formula error.”

We’ve all been there. You thought you double-checked everything, but you got that last minute change and forgot to update the link in your formula before the presentation to management or—yikes—the board. Your business is depending on you to get the numbers right, and errors reduce their confidence and could lead to misguided decisions if not caught. With a budgeting and planning solution you can easily calculate metrics such as cash flow or model headcount expenses—without spreadsheet errors.



“Oh @#\$%!, did I just send the one with the salary info?”

Budgets usually include sensitive data such as salary info. Or you may want to prevent groups from seeing other groups' budgets. Keeping or sending files around via email or on shared drives creates a risk that the information could be seen by unauthorized people. A budgeting and planning solution that secures plans, budgets, or specifically sensitive information protects you from the risks of inappropriate access.



“Wait, that’s not the version I’ve been managing to.”

Changes are often made to budgets throughout the year to realign to changing business priorities and conditions. Version control issues can have significant consequences beyond just confusion. It means that key parts of the business can be operating from the wrong information, making decisions and spending money in ways that aren’t aligned to your business goals. A budgeting and planning solution provides one source of truth for everyone. You know who updated the budget and when. Everyone is bought in and aligned to the same plans, budgets, and forecasts.



“When did you send it out? I can’t find it.”

Using Excel and email to send out spreadsheets means maintaining distribution lists and digging through email to find budgets. It makes you the go-to person for even the smallest things because department heads don’t trust that they have the right data, can’t find what they need, or need you to make an update. With a budgeting and planning solution, everyone has one place to go to find their data. You can easily invite department heads to enter and update their own plans, budgets, forecasts, and scenarios. You’re no longer the bottleneck for everything budget related.



“It’s halfway through the month, and I don’t have last month’s data yet.”

If you do it like many companies are, every month you have downloaded the actuals to a CSV file and then cut and paste the data into Excel. Or maybe you are more sophisticated and have lookups that pull your data in from the CSV, but then you have to chase down the errors. Then you’ve got to roll it up. In the meantime, everyone is waiting on their reports to see what the actuals were from the last period, potentially delaying operational and strategic decisions. A budgeting and planning solution that integrates to your financial solution can update that information with a couple of clicks and provide immediate access to stakeholders.



“I have no time for analysis.”

If managing budgeting and planning is so time consuming that you're only focused on looking backwards, you're missing the value of budgeting and planning for your business—to look forward and figure out how to meet your short-term, medium-term and long-term plans. Budgeting and planning solutions automate every day budget and plan management and forecasting. They provide templates for what-if analysis that help you shift your focus to the strategic and contribute to the growth and success of the business.



Have you outgrown Excel?

Any one of these signs might be enough to cause you to consider moving away from Excel for your planning. But if you're experiencing 3 or more of these signs, it's time to consider another solution.

Wait—aren't budgeting and planning solutions difficult to deploy and integrate—not to mention too expensive—for a company my size?

Until now, most budgeting and planning solutions have been built to handle the needs of large companies. They simply aren't a good fit for most smaller organizations like yours. They require big company budgets and resources to deploy, integrate, and maintain.

