

# Co-creating a Unified Finance Engine for a Global Education Enterprise

*This is our story of designing a future-ready finance operating model for one of the largest private school operators worldwide. Grounded in the realities of a globalized network of entities, our transformation blueprint demonstrates how large, decentralized organizations can unify finance, strengthen governance and unlock productivity at scale.*



# The Industry Landscape: Finance Transformation in Decentralized Enterprises

Large organizations with distributed networks face a common finance challenge: Legacy operating models that are optimized for local autonomy. These typically feature embedded finance teams, localized reporting practices and significant discretion over their budgeting and spend. While this model supports responsiveness at the entity level, it creates fragmentation across the organization's processes, controls and data.

As enterprises grow, this fragmentation limits business visibility, weakens governance and constrains finance's ability to act as a strategic partner. The imperative for finance leaders is universal – standardize without disruption, centralize without losing business context and re-deploy skilled talent toward insight-led decision-making.

## The Client Challenge: Decentralized Control, Limited Insights

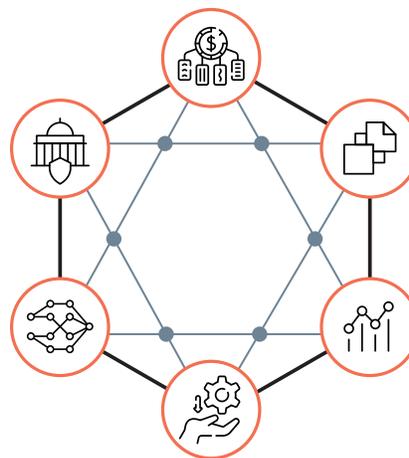
A global education leader operated each school in its extensive network as a separate legal and operational entity, with finance teams reporting primarily to school principals or CEOs. Corporate finance involvement was largely limited to consolidation, resulting in a highly decentralized finance landscape.

**This operating model created multiple, compounding challenges:**

**6. Undefined Governance:**  
Lack of clear role separation increased control and compliance risks. Furthermore, limited tracking and reporting of process health metrics reduced transparency for finance leadership.

**5. Complex Delegation Structures:**  
Authority structures required multiple approvals for the same transaction. Multiple hand-offs and follow-ups across processes further drove inefficiencies and delays.

**1. Fragmented Finance Ownership:**  
Separate accounting teams across schools limited standardization and central oversight.



**4. Manual Operations:**  
Heavy reliance on spreadsheet-based activities impacted multiple functions, including cash application, payroll, asset management and budgeting.

**2. Fragmented Business-Finance Alignment:**  
Ineffective collaboration between business units and finance on strategic planning resulted in misaligned financial priorities.

**3. Misallocation of Expertise:**  
Finance Business Partners and Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) teams performed transactional accounting work instead of value-added analysis.

Together, these issues constrained productivity, diluted financial insight and limited leadership's ability to monitor process health or drive sustainable improvement.

# The Solution: A Future-ready Finance Operating Model using **Agile Target Operating Model**

WNS partnered with the client in a consultative engagement to design a scalable target operating model. The engagement was anchored in WNS’ proprietary, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-led [Agile Target Operating Model \(aTOM\)](#) platform, enabling structured diagnosis and a clear path from assessment to value-realization.

## The New Operating Model, Re-imagined Around Scale and Control

WNS designed a horizontal finance structure anchored in a Finance Shared Services Center (FSSC) that consolidated core accounting and transaction-intensive activities while defining clear governance interfaces with schools and corporate stakeholders. Key elements of this transformation included:



**Process-led Organization Design**

Finance was re-organized around end-to-end processes rather than individual entities. Key interventions included:

- Defining Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) splits and clarifying roles across Procure-to-Pay (P2P), Order-to-Cash (O2C), Record-to-Report (R2R) and FP&A
- Re-designing job descriptions for FSSC accounting roles
- Re-positioning Finance Business Partners as Financial Analysts, focused on insight and decision support
- Embedding segregation of duties to strengthen governance and compliance

**Standardized and Streamlined Processes**

Core accounting workflows were re-designed to eliminate duplication and non value-adding activities. Focus areas included:

- End-to-end re-designing of P2P, O2C and R2R processes
- Clearly defining process controls and governance mechanisms
- Standardizing ways of working aligned to business outcomes
- Creating comprehensive 'to-be' process maps for all in-scope activities

**Technology-enablement and Automation**

Preference was given to optimizing the existing technology landscape rather than introducing unnecessary complexity. Recommendations included:

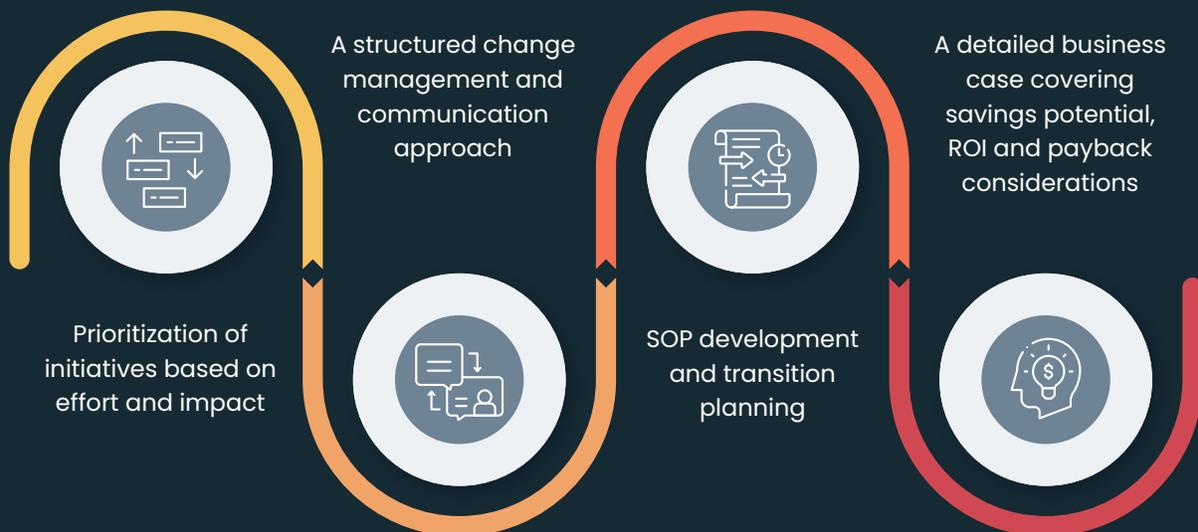
- Right-fit automation opportunities supported by WNS’ bolt-on tools
- A case-management capability to manage parent and internal queries with standardized reason codes and tracking
- Deployment of [WNS TRAC eClose](#), tailored for distributed teams to provide visibility and control over month-end close activities



## Transformation Roadmap and Change Management

To reflect portfolio diversity, schools were segmented into Premium, Mid-Market Plus and Mid-Market clusters, enabling differentiated service design without compromising standardization or control.

WNS developed a phased transformation roadmap spanning immediate, mid-term and long-term horizons (6 months, 12-24 months and 24+ months). This was supported by:



# The Outcome: Actionable Insights with Tangible Benefits

The engagement delivered a clear, future-ready blueprint for finance transformation, enabling the organization's leadership to take informed decisions on centralization with minimal disruption to ongoing operations. Enterprise-level benefits included:

 <p>A centralized, governed finance organization with clear accountability</p>	 <p>Improved utilization of finance talent toward analysis, insight and decision support</p>	 <p>Enhanced visibility into process performance through defined health metrics</p>	 <p>A phased transition approach covering 44 schools across Premium, Mid-Market Plus and Mid-Market segments</p>
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## Quantified Business Impact

<p><b>~52 percent</b> productivity improvement driven by consolidation, continuous improvement and automation over 3 years</p> 	<p><b>~38 percent</b> upfront reduction in shared services headcount, through elimination of redundant activities and process improvements</p> 	<p><b>~USD 6.6 Million</b> in projected overall savings</p> 
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# CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

I would like to first thank you for your work during the assessment and diagnostic phase. Your practical advice and deep understanding of the processes, as well as the clear identification of areas for improvement, were particularly valuable. The insights provided were relevant and actionable. Overall, our cooperation during phase one was fruitful and I am confident that we will continue working positively on the transformation of the finance function to achieve the expected efficiencies.

— Vice President, Financial Reporting



## About WNS

WNS, part of Capgemini, is an Agentic AI-powered intelligent operations and transformation company. We combine deep domain expertise with talent, technology, and AI to co-create innovative solutions for over 700 clients across various industries. WNS delivers an entire spectrum of solutions, including industry-specific offerings, customer experience services, finance and accounting, human resources, procurement, and research and analytics to re-imagine the digital future of businesses. WNS has 66,085 professionals across 65 delivery centers worldwide, including facilities in Canada, China, Costa Rica, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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