Portfolio-based thesis research

We expect that many items on the CFOs agenda point to a positive drive to make the business better. Items such as measuring & monitoring business performance, continuous process improvement, driving cost reduction, and providing inputs into identifying and executing growth strategies show how the CFO places importance on enabling the business to be more agile, responsive, and competitive, whilst pays an essential role in supporting sustainability initiatives. However, there are differentiating features of those CFOs, who has a proven track record in excellence. Namely, increased effectiveness driving integration of information across the enterprise is a major differentiator for financial outperformers.

Based on the above, your task is to identify and develop possible strategic directions related to digital transformation in the financial function of a company you have chosen from a predefined list.

The list of the companies will be made available by the course leader at the beginning of the study year, together with their downloaded financial data from the Orbis database. Maximum 3 companies can be chosen by students in the same study year. The dissertation shall be submitted individually by the students.

Parts of the dissertation will be elaborated as project tasks related to certain subjects, as follows:

➢ Strategic management and planning: map the company's business environment, systematise the information gathered on the business environment using the analytical methodologies learned – based on these, outline possible medium-term strategies, identifying the main milestones that management can set in the digital transformation of the financial arena of the company.

➢ Company valuation: identify value drivers and determine the value of the company according to two chosen methodologies.

➢ Integrated accounting and controlling: identify the indicators that best reflect the company's profitability, asset efficiency and indebtedness in the context of its strategic direction; interpret these to benchmarks in the company's industry; evaluate the possible medium-term strategies identified in the strategic analysis and propose a digital transformation strategy for the financial function of operation.

➢ Project management in practice: what problems, risks, intervention points do you identify in the digital transformation of your business's financial function - develop a risk management strategy for project risks.

➢ Data asset management: propose the content of regular reports to be retrieved from the ERP system to support and monitor the implementation and progress of the digital transformation strategy. Investigate how, with proper data management, the combination of automation and AI can modernise the record-to-report finance function.

➢ Managerial business economics: after the assessment of the business environment of your company, write an executive summary of your medium-term strategy.