

SCALING VISIBILITY

\$25M–\$50M Finance Playbook

Controller hire, ERP evaluation, monthly close, and your first CFO – without confusing expensive software with sophistication.

AT \$25M

OWNER FEELS

Lack of visibility – hesitant to invest

FINANCE FEELS

Overwhelmed – time to hire

TIP OF THE SPEAR

Winning the right projects

Focus: Controller · AP/AR clerk · 2nd-tier ERP evaluation · estimating · time tracking · quarterly closes · monthly AR/AP · job profit before finish · ad-hoc monthly reporting

Prepare for \$50M: CFO hire · monthly close · banking partner

AT \$50M

OWNER FEELS

On a rocket ship – visibility gone

FINANCE FEELS

Hanging on with bare nails

TIP OF THE SPEAR

Hire people to grip for you

Focus: CFO · banking platform · annual budget · monthly job profit · monthly closing · weekly AR/AP (cash flow)

Prepare for \$100M: Data gathering role · robust reporting package · data warehouse

Controller, ERP, and project selection

Stepping into a \$25M shop often means inheriting people and platform debt – family members in accounting roles, tightly held processes, and owners who squeak by on cash flow instead of investing ahead of growth. Chad has inherited both an owner's daughter and niece in finance roles with no accounting training. Expect resistance. Plan for it.

The controller hire

Your accounting system is your Bible. A bad controller hire means controller-to-controller churn and financials you can no longer trust. Find an executor in the sweet spot – hungry for growth but not forcing enterprise tools you do not need yet.

ERP reality check

QuickBooks may still be fine. Every ERP vendor says now is the time. Chad has implemented SAP, Oracle, and downgraded back to QuickBooks. Plans take twice as long and cost twice as much. A costly ERP does not make you smarter – the right process does. Use ERP to see winners and losers mid-project, not to impress the board.

ERP transition tip (from Q&A): Before you sign, confirm your team has capacity for 10–20 extra hours per week for six months. Implementation on top of a burned-out team crushes morale.

The \$50M CFO hire

Your first C-suite hire is different. CFOs often come through networks, not job boards – Chad has only once been hired via a job board. Do not promote your tax preparer or sharp accountant without strategic experience. A great CFO is proactive, needs little oversight, and orchestrates monthly close so payroll, job profit, and cash flow run without the owner in every decision.

Resist gripping harder as you scale. Chad watched a talented COO throttle a \$600M organization by requiring fifty weekly updates. Hire people who can grip for you.

Banking partner: Set up lines of credit and capacity before Friday-afternoon cash crunches. If you wait until payroll is at risk, it is almost too late. Evaluate whether you need a lender or a strategic equity partner – every equity dollar costs control.