

# THE GREEK CFO LEADERSHIP SHIFT



February 2009

**STANTON CHASE**  
INTERNATIONAL  
*Executive Search Consultants*

**CFO** agenda

## Foreword

Media across the globe repeatedly mention that Chief Financial Officers will definitely play a crucial role in ensuring their companies survive, and even thrive, within the current economic uncertainty.

**Stanton Chase Athens** and **CFO Agenda** of Boussias Communications initiated this survey, entitled "Greek CFO Leadership Shift", in order to compile a current profile of Greek CFOs. While CFOs appear to be determined to weather the economic storm, they are simultaneously concerned and optimistic about their career prospects and opportunities in the market sectors for 2009.

According to other European and U.S. studies and publications, conducted by prestigious and well reputed organizations such as The Economist, CFO Europe, Tilburg & Duke Universities and CFO Rising, the Finance function is more critical than ever; 2009 is truly "**The Year of the CFO.**"

Demonstrating its commitment to understanding the views and career aspirations of Greek business leaders, Stanton Chase Athens conducted this survey and is sharing this knowledge with the world at large.

This report will present CFOs views on how financial professionals are acting to navigate in today's environment and what companies will be looking for from their financial partners.

The CFO Agenda is committed to granting insights on all aspects of financial management and giving the Greek CFO a platform from which to be heard.

Data was compiled from over 300 responses and reflects a diversified sampling of professionals and organizations throughout Greece. The survey was conducted in January 2009.

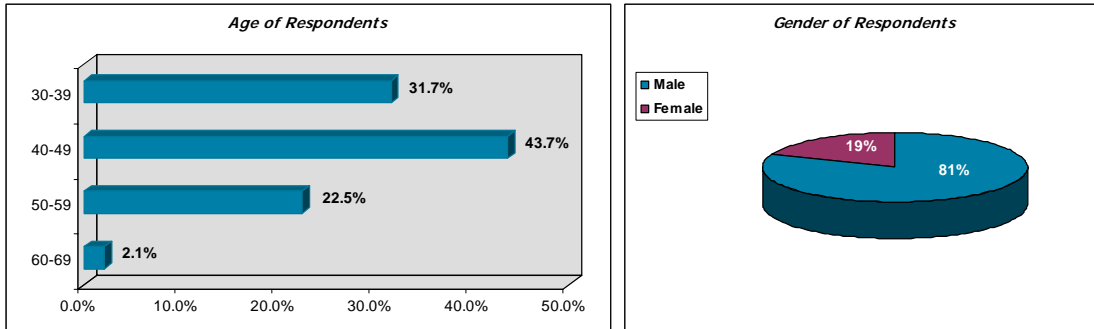
Our sincerest thanks go to the survey participants for sharing their insights with their functional counterparts in Greece and for providing an invaluable contribution of thought leadership.

## Contents

Foreword	1
Contents	2
Demographics of the respondents	3
Market Sectors represented in the survey	3
Market factors that have most affected the definition of the CFO role in recent years	4
CFOs perception of employment prospects in the next 11 months	5
Strengthen value within the organization as a Strategic Advisor and Business Partner	6
Importance of experience in today's challenging business environment	7
Major concerns within the organization	8
Competencies expected from CFOs in Greece	8
Shortage of talent within the CFO function	9
Market Sectors with most career opportunities	10
Critical factors for CFOs job satisfaction	10
Investigating new career opportunities	11
How important are the following factors in your decision to join a new employer?	12
How do you search the market for possible openings?	12
What do you consider you need to develop in order to achieve your career goals?	13
Relocation	14
Executive summary	15
About Stanton Chase	16

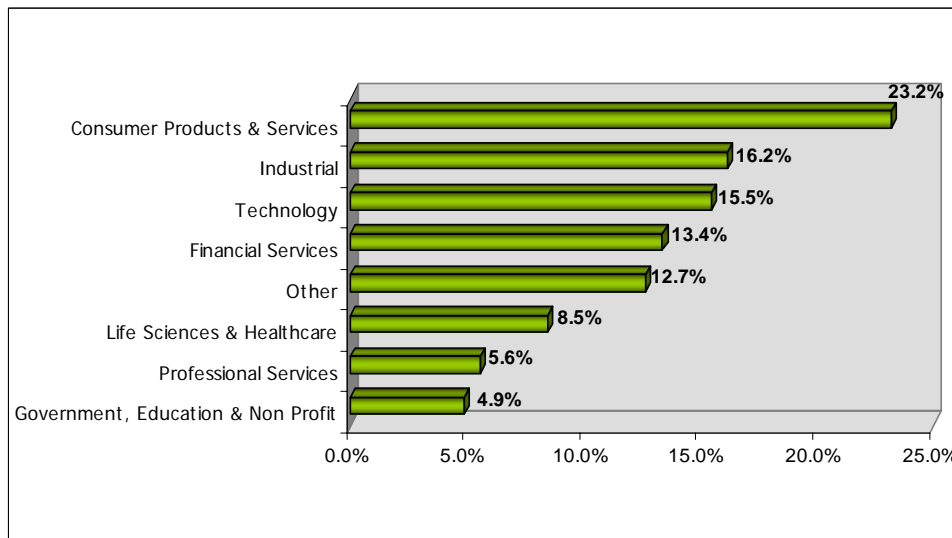
### Demographics of the respondents

The vast majority of the respondents range from 30 to 49 (75.4%) in age. More specifically, 43.7% of the respondents are 40-49 years of age, 31.7% are younger (30-39 years old) and 22.5% are 50-59 years old. Only a small percentage of 2.1% is over 60. For sure, **it is a male dominated sector with 81% participation, while women CFOs account for only 19%.**



### Market Sectors represented in the survey

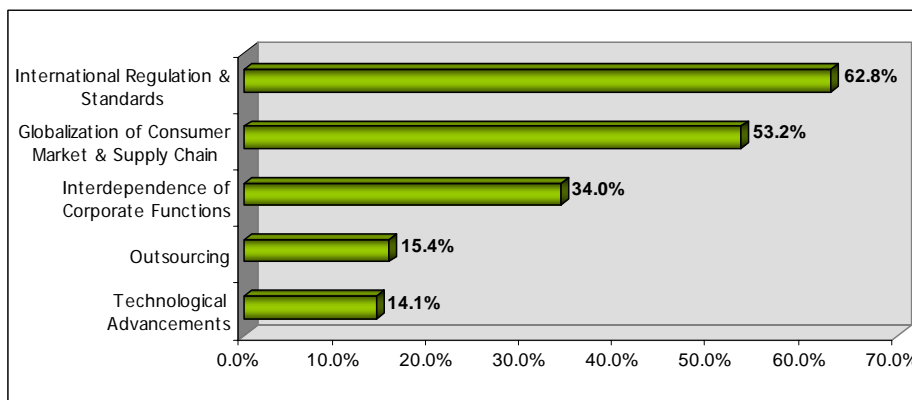
Consumer Products and Services is the best represented sector, with 23.2%, followed by the Industrial, Technology and the Financial Services sectors.



## Market factors that have most affected the definition of the CFO role in recent years

**International Regulation & Standards** appears to be the most significant factor that has affected the CFO role, in the past year, with 62.8%. Global regulations and standards have proved to be critical for financial executives in order to ensure appropriate financial control, gain the confidence of the stakeholders and to evaluate enterprise risk.

Globalization of Consumer Market & Supply Chain ranks second with 53.2%. The other factors, which are interdependence of corporate functions, outsourcing and technological advancements seem to have less impact.



*How do you think your role will be influenced within the current financial climate?*

The vast majority of financial leaders (49.4%) stated that their business role will be strengthened within the current financial state, while 32.1% of the respondents believe that their role will remain the same and 18.6% that it will be weakened.

The respondents, who said that their role will be strengthened, gave the following argumentations:

- There will be a need for more competent, experienced and skillful managers now more than ever, given the emphasis on their strategic role
- Emphasis will be focused on treasury, risk management processes and profitability analysis, which are key parameters in a business environment
- Increased demand for multi-tasking CFOs

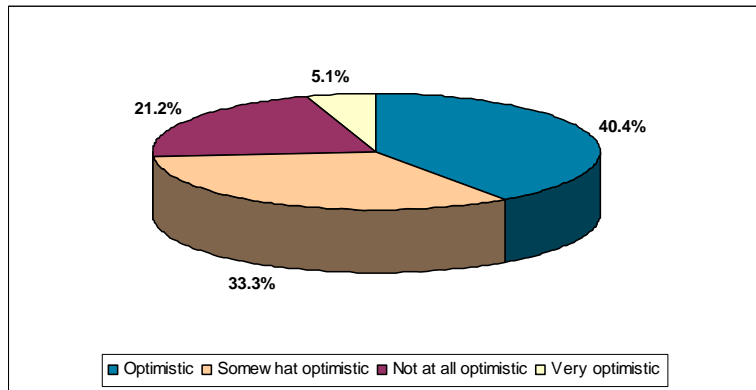
The respondents, who said that the CFOs' role will be weakened, mentioned that:

- Finance Management will be overlooked by CEOs
- Headcount reductions will take place due to current financial state impact
- Sales and market activities will impact them

### CFOs perception of employment prospects in the next 11 months

In total, **45.5% of Greek CFOs are very optimistic** about their employment prospects during the next months (40.4% of the respondents are optimistic and 5.1% very optimistic). While another 33.3% keeps a reserved position of moderate optimism. 21.2% of the respondents are not optimistic.

These statements may be surprising due to the current economic state, however CFOs' optimism reflects the bright side of business reality once the crisis has been overcome and their role will be further empowered.



## Strengthen value within the organization as a Strategic Advisor and Business Partner

As business demands grow and change, the finance community must be aligned. In an uncertain economy, the role of Top Financial Executives as Strategic Advisors strengthens and tends to be of pivotal significance. Finance leaders perform a multi-faceted role within the organization and align the Finance function with value creation. Understanding commercial issues was rated as the most significant factor with an 81.4% response. We understand that top financial executives should look at the long term for their career sustainability. Their role as the Strategic Advisor may be translated as similar to that of the CEO. The new role contributes to the successful realignment of the company's portfolio and ensures that its robust financial health continues. Two more factors of major importance were the creation of an appropriate Information platform for the company's decision making process and the alignment of strategic and operational goals, which ranked second and third.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Understanding of commercial issues	<b>81.4%</b>	16.0%	2.6%
Effectively address regulatory compliance issues	57.1%	39.7%	3.2%
Managing crucial external relationships with investors, media and regulatory authorities	54.5%	37.2%	8.3%
Cover/lead also other functional areas such as Logistics, IT, HR	33.3%	60.3%	6.4%
Effectively evaluating Enterprise Risk Management	64.1%	33.3%	2.6%
Creating an appropriate Information platform for company decision making	<b>67.9%</b>	28.8%	3.2%
Ensuring appropriate control systems	<b>67.3%</b>	27.6%	5.1%
Ensuring alignment between strategic & operational goals	60.9%	34.6%	4.5%
Maintaining the confidence of stakeholders	58.3%	35.9%	5.8%
Gaining access to skills and expertise	51.3%	45.5%	3.2%

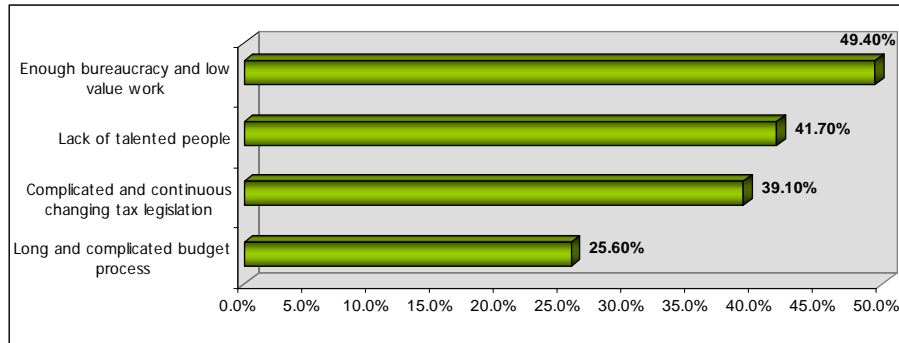
### Importance of experience in today’s challenging business environment

Financial Planning & Analysis area ranked first (77.4%) as it is of cardinal significance for CFOs to be involved in the strategy planning process. Risk Management (67.7%) ranked second and IFRS knowledge and experience was also perceived as critical for their role development.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Accounting	51.0%	47.7%	1.3%
Tax Management	55.8%	42.3%	1.9%
Financial Planning & Analysis	<b>77.4%</b>	18.7%	3.9%
Risk Management	<b>67.7%</b>	30.3%	1.9%
Internal Auditing	45.1%	<b>51.0%</b>	3.9%
Information Technology	52.6%	42.2%	5.2%
Investor Relations Management	48.4%	48.4%	3.3%
Mergers & Acquisitions	44.8%	47.4%	7.8%
Multicultural/ International/ Regional Experience	54.5%	42.2%	3.2%
IFRS	<b>61.7%</b>	35.7%	2.6%
SOX	40.0%	48.7%	11.3%
MBA Degree	34.6%	46.4%	19.0%
ACCA Certification	28.2%	<b>55.0%</b>	16.8%

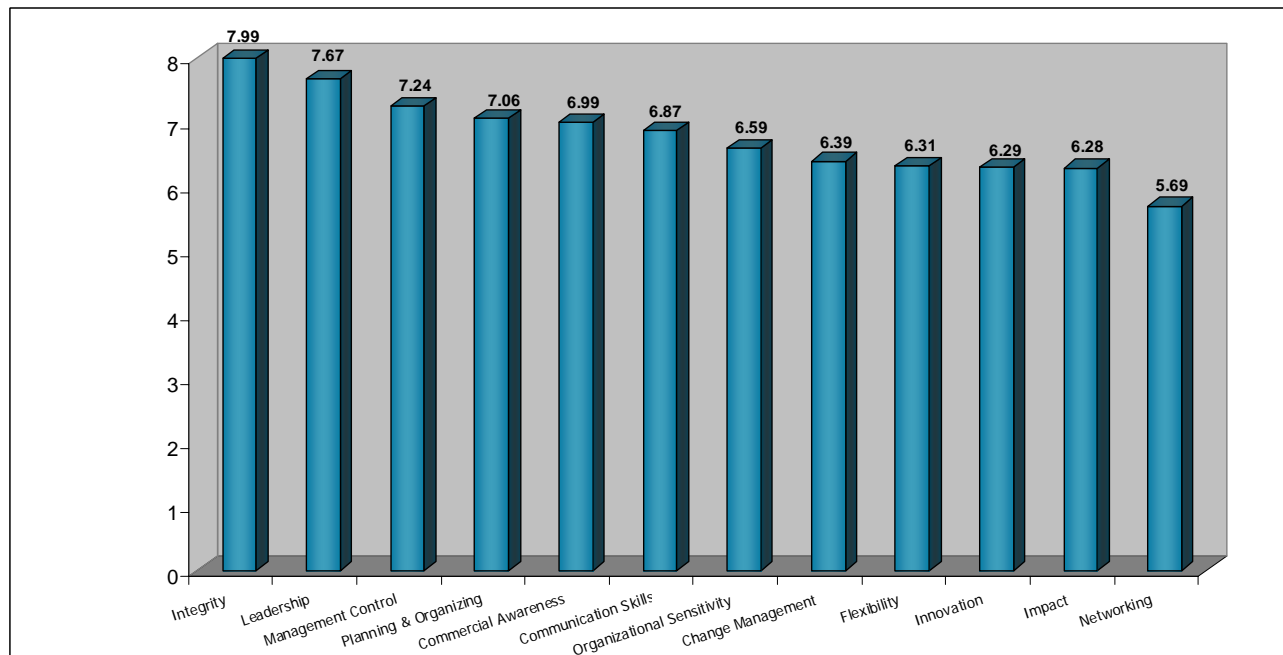
### Major concerns within the organization

Half of the respondents (49.4%) replied that their major concern is the increased emphasis on bureaucracy that hampers high quality work. Lack of talent and the complicated tax legislation follow with 41.7% and 39.1% respectively. Obviously, financial executives would like to involve themselves in more substantial issues.



### Competencies expected from CFOs in Greece

An outstanding emphasis is given to Integrity and Leadership which are of pivotal significance. Competencies such as Management Control, Planning & Organizing and Commercial Awareness ranked second while Organizational Sensitivity, Innovation and Networking lag behind.

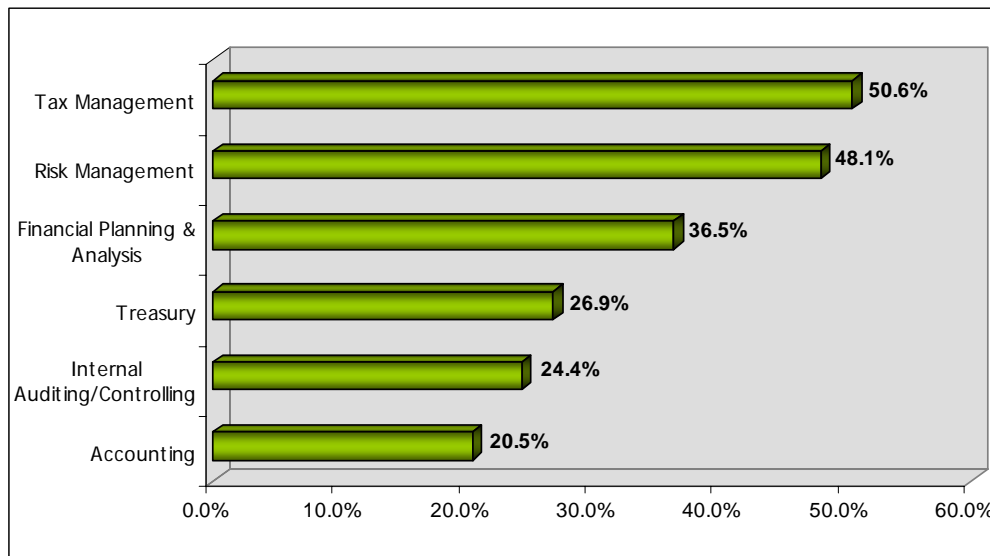


### Shortage of talent within the CFO function

The highest shortages of talent are perceived to be in Tax Management (50.6%), Risk Management (48.1%) and Financial Planning & Analysis (36.5%).

Corporate finance, with its highly specialized technical and analytical requirements, is on the front line in today's war for talent. Indeed, the cost and availability of talented recruits are CFOs' biggest concerns. Although talent shortage is a challenge common to all senior executives, there are at least three concerns unique to finance departments.

First, as globalization continues rapidly, transactions are getting more complex. Second, traditional financial reporting is expanding in scope, to encompass critical non-financial operational data. The third is related to the second - as finance becomes the hub for all company data - boards and management teams expect from Finance to provide the forward-looking analysis and insight, leading to valuable future business decisions.



### Market Sectors with most career opportunities

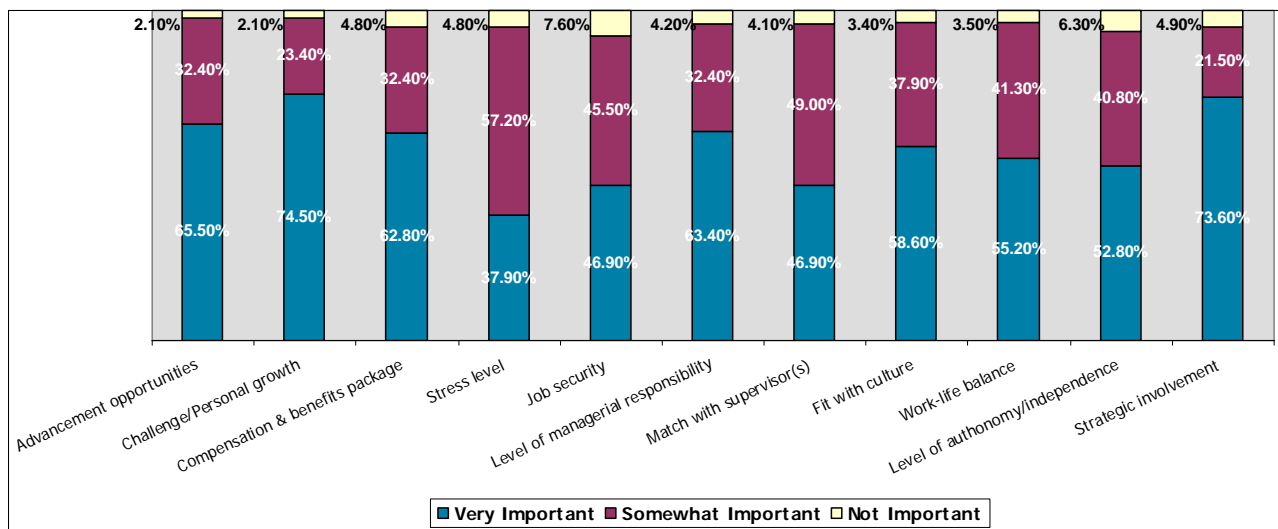
There is strong conservatism about the opportunities offered in the various business sectors in Greece.

The Energy sector seems to be the most dominant one for financial career opportunities with the Consumer Products & Services sector next. Sectors like Industrial, Technology, Retail and Life Sciences & Healthcare are perceived as promising for CFOs career growth.

Consumer Products & Services	41.4%
Retail	31.7%
Technology	33.8%
Industrial	35.2%
Energy	<b>55.2%</b>
Shipping	25.5%
Life Sciences & Healthcare	31.0%
Public Sector	12.4%
Professional Services	28.3%
Banking	12.4%
Insurance	5.5%
Real Estate	10.3%

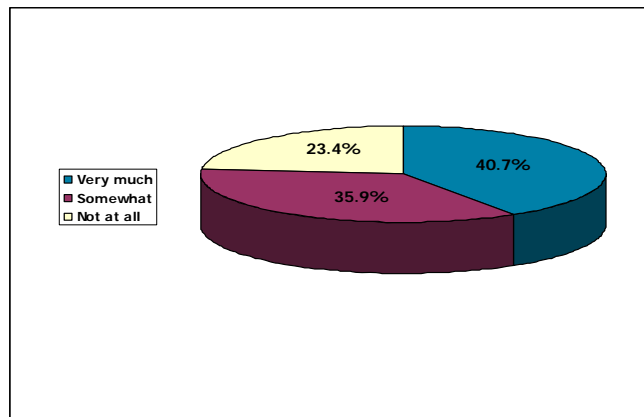
### Critical factors for CFOs job satisfaction

It is worth noting that Challenge/Personal Growth (74.5%) and Strategic Involvement (73.6%) are top factors for CFOs' job satisfaction. Advancement opportunities (65.6%) and Level of managerial responsibility (63.4%) rank second. Compensation and benefits package ranks fifth on the list with 62.8%.

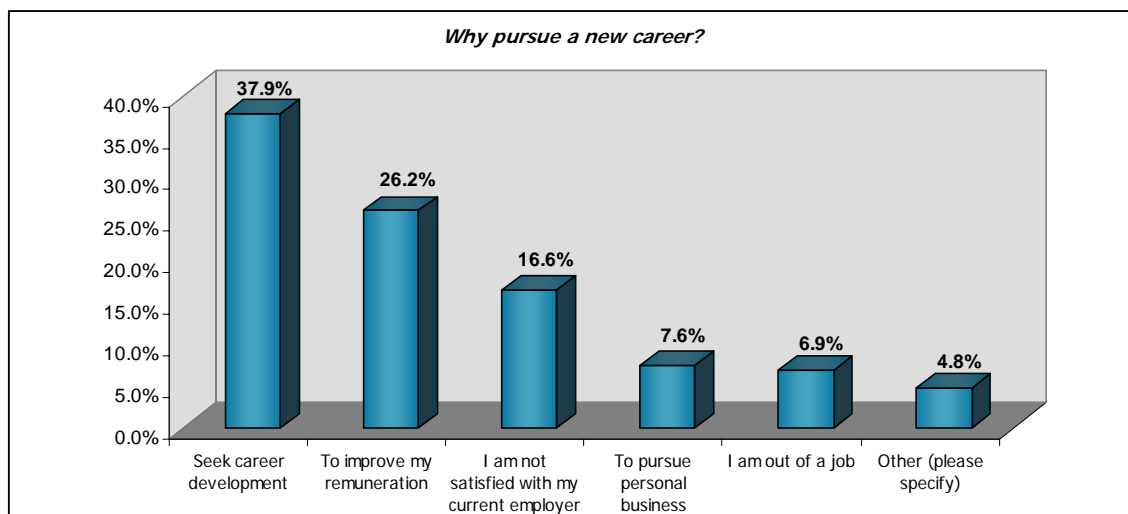


### Investigating new career opportunities

Although one would expect an uncertain economy to pause any interest for career change, the majority of Greek CFOs (40.7%) are very much interested in investigating a new career opportunity while 35.9% keep a moderate willingness.



Seeking career development still dominates as the main reason for which one would investigate a career change. Another reason that urges CFOs to pursue a new career is to improve their remuneration package, which ranks second according to their opinion.



### How important are the following factors in your decision to join a new employer?

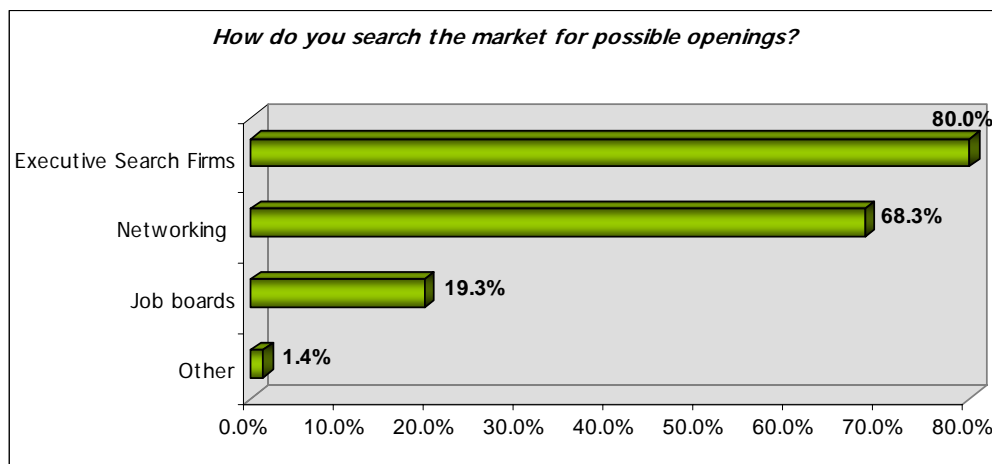
Increased responsibility/more senior role prevails (59.3%) and confirms what has been previously seen as a determining factor for a decision to join a new employer.

*How important are the following factors in your decision to join a new employer?*

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Indifferent
Increased compensation and benefits	57.6%	38.2%	4.2%	0.0%
Increased equity opportunities	44.4%	41.5%	14.1%	0.0%
Increased responsibility/more senior role	59.3%	36.6%	3.4%	0.7%
More entrepreneurial role	47.6%	41.4%	9.0%	2.1%
International relocation assignment	18.9%	33.6%	32.9%	14.7%
Work with a former colleague(s)	15.2%	21.4%	37.9%	25.5%
Change to a different career	21.5%	27.1%	32.6%	18.8%

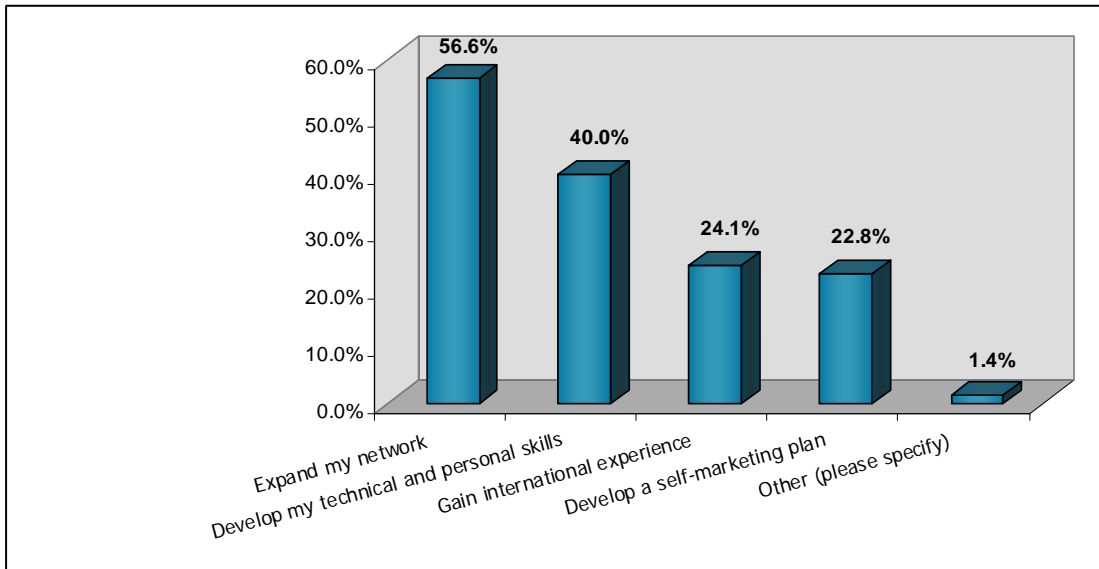
### How do you search the market for possible openings?

A brilliantly high percentage of 80% confirms that top finance executives consider Executive Search Firms as the most appropriate tool to evaluate the market, while the use of networking comes second (68.3%).



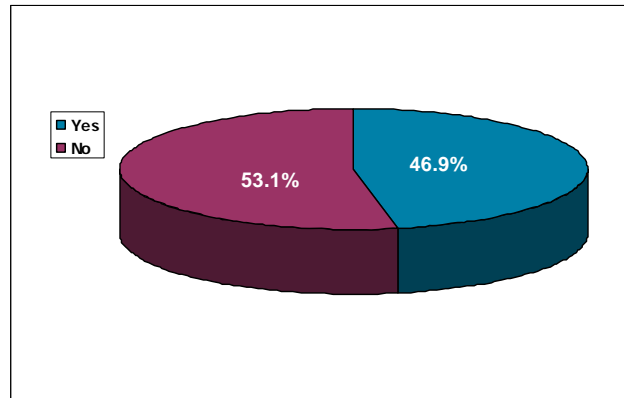
### What do you consider you need to develop in order to achieve your career goals?

Of all survey respondents, 56.6% consider the expansion of their personal network to be the most important factor in the achievement of their career goals, while the development of their technical and personal skills ranked second.

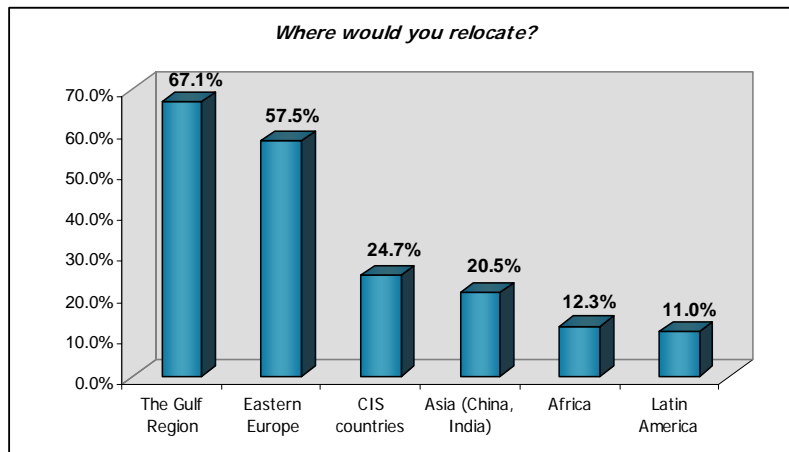


## Relocation

Surprisingly almost half (46.9%) of the respondents would consider relocating abroad for the right career opportunity.



Regarding relocation regions, the first option for those that were positive about relocating is the **Gulf region** with **Eastern Europe** rating second. More remote areas, characterized with higher uncertainty and more challenging relocation conditions have dropped significantly in CFOs' preferences.



## Executive summary

This paper demonstrates the market trends and the potential of Chief Financial Officers to maximize their value and become true business partners.

Today, CFOs can emerge as a strategic business partner in leading the company towards a stronger long-term financial and operational future.

The survey shows that with the downturn of the economy, factors that have also contributed to the new role of the CFO are the International Regulations & Standards and the Globalization of the Consumer Market.

There is no doubt that CFOs and by extension their finance organizations – face an expanding and complex realm of responsibilities. Accounting issues per se and resulting regulations have increased CFOs responsibilities and accountability. In addition, the unyielding pressure of globalization poses a challenge to the entire finance organization.

Financial professionals seem optimistic regarding their employment prospects during the next 11 months and believe that their role will be strengthened. Top financial executives see the shift of their role to Strategic Advisors or Business Partners heavily counting on their knowledge and insight into commercial issues.

Half of responding CFOs cited their major concern within their organization as being the increased bureaucracy that hampers high quality work. Additionally, organizations primarily seek from their CFOs Integrity and Leadership followed by Management Control, Planning & Organizing and Commercial Awareness.

Today, CFOs face the highest shortage of talent within the Tax Management, Risk Management and Financial Planning & Analysis functions. Talent is key to success and a contributor to value creation.

The Energy sector is viewed as the most dominant one to provide career opportunities for them, while Consumer Products & Services ranked second.

Despite current recession, Greek CFOs want to be challenged and are motivated by Personal Growth/Challenge, Advancement Opportunities, and Level of Managerial Responsibility.

CFOs are willing to pursue and consider new career prospects and achieve career development. Top financial executives are willing to relocate. In case they would consider relocating, the close-to-home markets and the more familiar cultures of the Gulf Region and Eastern Europe are preferred.

When looking for a career change, most confidence is placed in Executive Search Consultants. In addition, the expansion of their personal network seems to be the most important factor in the achievement of their career goals, while the development of their technical and personal skills comes second.

## About Stanton Chase

**Stanton Chase International** is a specialized global executive search consultancy firm of first choice to multinational companies, offering executive search services with **worldwide reach, regional knowledge and local insight**.

Formed in 1990, Stanton Chase operates with truly integrated resources of over 66 offices in 41 countries. In recent surveys, **Stanton Chase** is ranked among the **top 10 international executive search firms** by size, stature and reputation. Stanton Chase is a member of the International Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC) and strictly adheres to its ethics and code of conduct.

**Stanton Chase Athens** was founded in 1996 initially as part of Response SA, a prominent executive search and human resources consultancy company and as of November 2003 as an independent legal entity. Since 1996, our consultants have assisted organizations ranging from start-ups to major multinationals in identifying and attracting outstanding individuals for senior management roles and boards.

**Today, Stanton Chase Athens is positioned among the premier executive search firms in Greece.**

The extroversion which characterizes **Stanton Chase Athens** has led to the expansion into the emerging markets of the Balkans and Middle East, with the establishment of offices in **Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria** and the **U.A.E.**, where affiliated offices operate in order to cover the local and regional needs of clients for executive search services.

**Our team** consists of industry specialized consultants and researchers with functional expertise. It is important to state that all our Partners and Consultants have gained their talent, experience and knowledge working as executives in the industries they serve.

## Our Specialization

We provide sector expertise in the following seven dynamic market sectors:

- Consumer Products/Retail/Services (including Luxury, Fashion and Cosmetics);
- Life Sciences and Health Care (including OTC and Pharmaceutical Products);
- Industrial (including Automotive, Chemicals and building materials)
- Natural Resources/Energy ( including mining and utilities);
- Logistics & Transportation (including supply chain management);
- Technology (including IT, Internet and Telecom);
- Financial Services (including Private, Corporate, Retail & Investment Banking and Insurance);
- Shipping.

Utilizing cutting-edge online **psychometric assessment tools**, we ensure timely and effective evaluation of the best candidates from defined target markets whilst focusing on retained, long-term partnerships.

**STANTONCHASE**  
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

*Executive Search Consultants*

Stanton Chase International

**Athens Office**

12 Mykalis Str., 151 24 Maroussi, Athens, Greece

Tel: +30 210 6129429, Fax: + 30 210 6123554

e-mail: [athens@stantonchase.com](mailto:athens@stantonchase.com)

[www.stantonchase.com](http://www.stantonchase.com)