

BUSINESS FINANCE

THE CEO'S ONE-PAGE FINANCIAL DASHBOARD FOR 2026

January invites clarity. The year begins with energy, clean calendars, and a renewed sense of focus. Yet for many CEOs, that clarity fades quickly. By February, the noise returns. Reports grow longer. Dashboards multiply. Meetings are filled with numbers yet short on insight. Leaders begin reacting to fragments instead of stepping back to see the whole picture.

The problem is not a lack of information.

The problem is the absence of a simple, reliable structure.

A CEO does not need a stack of reports or fifty KPIs that fight for attention. A CEO needs **one page that reflects the financial truth of the business**, regardless of the month, the quarter, or the level of noise around them.

This is the purpose of the **Four-Quadrant Dashboard**. It gives leaders a clear way to view their company's financial health at a glance, without getting lost in details or distracted by metrics that do not drive decisions. It also creates a discipline that prevents drift, especially in the first quarter when companies set the tone for the entire year.

Below is what belongs in each quadrant. You do not need to populate it as you read. Use these categories to build your own dashboard with your leadership team and revisit it weekly.

1. CASH AND WORKING CAPITAL

This is the most important quadrant because it determines how much flexibility you have. Cash reveals the company's capacity to absorb surprises, make investments, or weather slower revenue periods.

Your dashboard should include:

- Cash runway in days or weeks
- Receivables aging (especially over 45 days)
- Timing of major payables and obligations
- Any upcoming spending that will materially affect cash

This quadrant answers a single question every CEO must know:

Do we have room to maneuver, or are we approaching pressure?

2. MARGIN AND COST STRUCTURE

Revenue often gets the attention. Margin tells the truth. This quadrant ensures the business is not growing in ways that quietly weaken profitability.



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Include:

- Current gross margin and recent trend over the past 90 days
- Any product or service line where margin is declining
- Variable costs that are rising faster than expected
- Pricing patterns that indicate discounting or deal-by-deal erosion

Margins reveal whether the company is strengthening its financial foundation or simply working harder for less return.

3. SALES PIPELINE BEHAVIOR

A healthy pipeline is not measured by length; it is measured by movement. CEOs often focus on the total dollar amount, but timing, quality, and concentration determine whether revenue will actually materialize.

Capture:

- Realistic revenue expectation for the quarter
- Percentage of deals that slipped from prior periods
- Customer concentration risks
- The earliest visible weakness in the pipeline

This quadrant clarifies whether upcoming revenue is reliable or whether the business is depending on hope rather than forecasted reality.

4. CAPACITY AND CONSTRAINTS

This is the quadrant most overlooked by CEOs. It forces the organization to acknowledge its limits and ensures you do not sell work the company cannot deliver effectively.

Include:

- Current operational and labor capacity
- Known bottlenecks that will limit growth
- Team bandwidth over the next 60–90 days
- The first thing that breaks when demand increases

This quadrant prevents accidental overcommitment and helps leaders pace growth intelligently.

HOW TO USE THE FOUR-QUADRANT DASHBOARD

Once you outline the items for each quadrant, place them on a single page. Review that page every Monday with your leadership team. The dashboard works because it replaces scattered reporting with a focused, consistent view of the business.

Over time, it becomes:

- a grounding tool,
- a planning ritual,
- and a common language for decision-making.

A one-page dashboard reduces emotion, eliminates noise, and creates alignment. It helps CEOs stay ahead of issues instead of reacting to them once they become urgent.

THE TAKEAWAY

Effective leadership does not rely on more information.

It relies on the **right** information.

The Four-Quadrant Dashboard gives CEOs a clear, disciplined structure they can use all year to evaluate strategy, monitor risk, and make confident decisions. Build it with intention. Review it with consistency. Improve it with time.

If you want support designing a dashboard that fits your business model and leadership approach, I am glad to help.

AUTHOR BIO

Jeff Solomon is the founder of CFO On The Go, providing CFO support part time to business owners who want stronger financial insight without the complexity of a full-time hire. He helps leaders translate goals into measurable financial plans, understand their key drivers, and make decisions that protect cash and create sustainable growth.

