



## My Journey to CFO

CFO, FINANCE, CAREER JOURNEY, CORPORATE

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**I started on a typical path post university, 10 years at EY as an auditor.....  
I loved every minute of it.**

[EY](#) had a great [culture](#), good clients, great people in the teams, great training, 360 feedback and opportunities to work on projects outside of client work.

**I remember EY with fond memories** and I remember the day I finished up there were many tears, it was 15th October 2010. EY pushed hard, but they also rewarded hard workers that delivered. I got overseas conferences (Japan, Venice), to lead a global project for a new tool, which allowed me the opportunity

to lead, get people onboard and manage a big roll out for the ANZ region.

I loved my team, and my clients, favourite client being [Village Roadshow](#) – what's not to love about Theme Parks and Movies. I learnt so much, but probably didn't realise it until I left.

My first job out was Telstra, [Sensis](#) business unit – Technical, Reporting role. Likely considered a backward step – you are over-qualified in a lot of respects but under qualified in other respects. **I was lucky to have a great team, peers and made some great friends along the way.** I loved the industry. I loved being part of something and driving and making a difference and seeing that difference come through.

4 years after I started at Sensis, it was sold to [Private Equity](#), which was where my career went from interesting to super-duper interesting. Working with the private equity firm to carve out from Telstra and set up the business under private ownership. It was a big change. I took a lead role in working with new shareholder to manage the transition and help build the business in the new world.

This included [zero based budgets](#), [cash flow reporting](#) & [forecasting](#) and understanding the capabilities required to deliver on the change in strategy. It wasn't just a big change for Finance but for the whole business, but finance become central to how the business operated and therefore the role I took was pivotal to the success.

Over the next 5 years, I worked as Deputy CFO, then transitioned to CFO and looked after Strategy, Finance, Operations and IT. My role continued to expand.

**I really enjoyed the experience and breadth of the role. Navigating strategy, to building a budget and metrics to measure success and the capability in the business to drive the outcomes required.**





We found over the period, people self-selected, and private equity wasn't for everyone. It was about achievement, delivery and ensuring that all key metrics are met. Incentives ensured that the key metrics were measured, tracked and managed.

**The private equity approach was hardcore and a lot of lessons were learnt along the way**, but for me I realised this was the environment that I enjoyed, I loved the change, execution and an ability to drive an improved outcome in the results.

Since I finished up at Sensis, I have done a number of roles with other private equity firms – doing interim CFO roles, managing transitions, integrations, operating models, strategy, business plans etc, working with different companies to actively manage an acquisition (from DD) to the first [100 days](#), which will make or break a business and set the tone for the new world.

These projects require different skillset but a driver that can help move things forward and ensuring that there is a plan to deliver on the synergies baked into the plan. I have done this under the banner of [Whiteark](#). I have other clients, but mainly working with PE on assessing, strategy, plan and execution for deals, and that is what I love.

I love the planning but then being able to get in there and really deliver. **My finance experience, private equity experience and breadth of roles, has allowed me the opportunity to jump into consulting to private equity with both feet.**

Not sure where my journey will land me, maybe back as a CFO one day, but for now enjoying the freedom, challenge and drive of working for myself and picking my clients and making a difference every day.



With my background as CFO – we have a range of tools and FREE templates that we have generated that might help you with your day-to-day life as well. You can explore and download the templates [HERE](#)

If we can help you, reach out for a no obligation chat to [Jo Hands](#) on 0459826221, or [jo.hands@whiteark.com.au](mailto:jo.hands@whiteark.com.au)