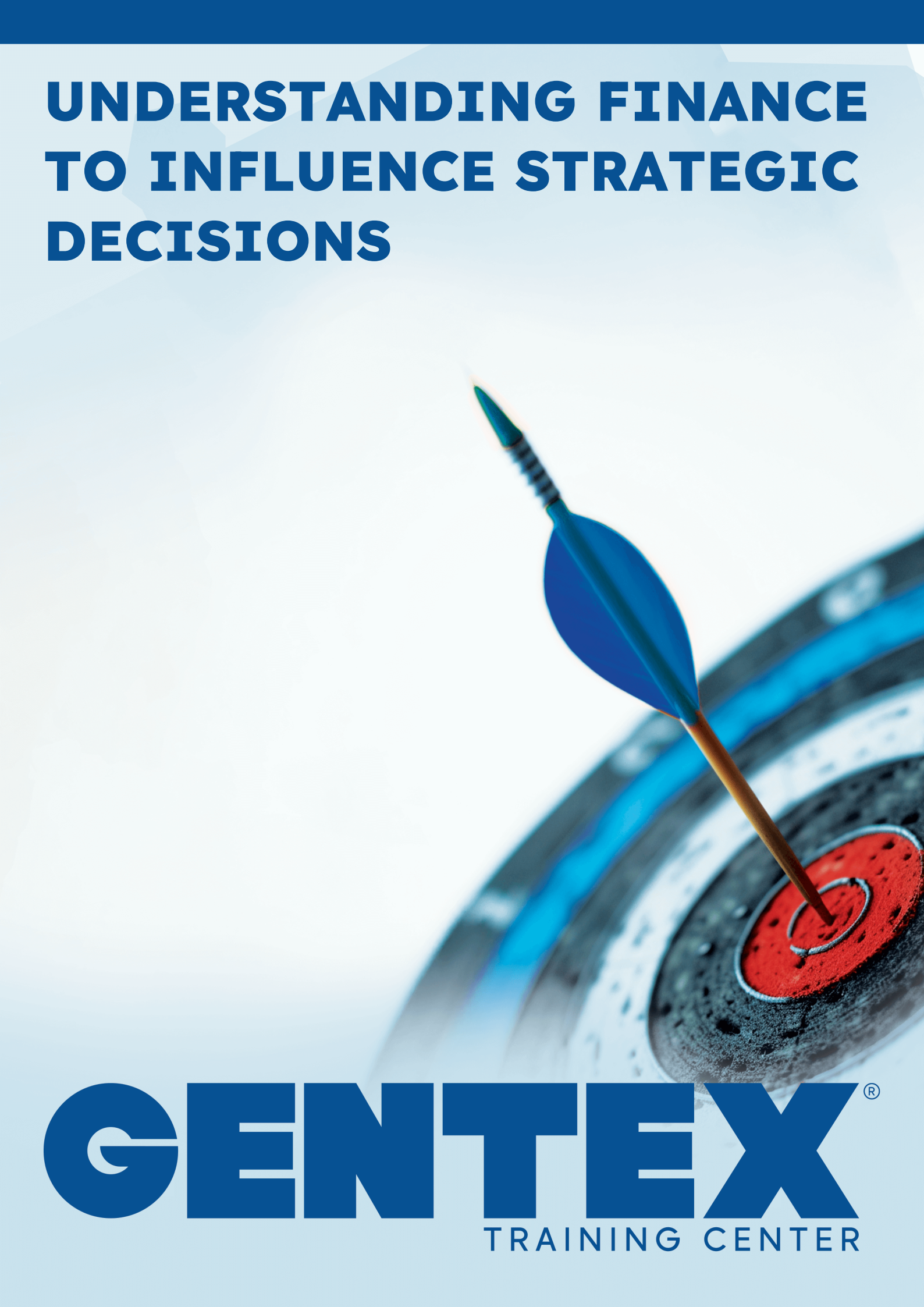
UNDERSTANDING FINANCE TO INFLUENCE STRATEGIC DECISIONS



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Introduction

Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions Training Course equips managers to use financial insight as a tool for persuasion and direction. It translates accounting language into the questions that shape strategy: where value comes from, what growth really costs, and which projects deserve funding. Participants learn to read statements quickly, question assumptions, and build a case that executives accept. Furthermore, the programme links budgeting, cost behaviour, and capital appraisal to practical choices managers make each quarter. In addition, it develops the communication habits that turn analysis into influence. As a result, attendees contribute to strategic debates with credibility.

Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions Course Objectives

- Read the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement and extract strategic signals.
- Interpret the ratios that reveal profitability, liquidity, efficiency, and gearing.
- Apply cost behaviour concepts to pricing, contribution, and break-even decisions.
- Build a defensible budget and forecast for a unit or project.
- Appraise investment proposals using net present value and internal rate of return.
- Estimate the cost of capital and use it as a decision hurdle.
- Evaluate the financial impact of strategic options through scenario modelling.
- Link operational key performance indicators to financial outcomes.
- Present a financial business case that survives executive challenge.
- Influence board and management discussions using evidence rather than opinion.

Course Methodology

- Case discussions on strategy decisions from different industries.

- Hands-on Excel exercises on costing, forecasting, and investment appraisal.
- Business case simulations with structured peer challenge.
- Role-play on presenting financial arguments to senior stakeholders.
- Personal action planning applied to each participant's own decisions.

Who Should Take This Course

- General managers and department heads.
- Non-financial managers with budget responsibility.
- Project and programme managers.
- Sales, marketing, and operations leaders.
- Strategy and business development managers.
- Engineers and technical managers moving into management.
- Professionals preparing for senior leadership roles.

Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions Course Outlines

Day 1: Financial Statements as a Strategic Lens

- What the three primary statements reveal about strategy.
- Revenue quality, margin structure, and growth sustainability.
- The balance sheet as a picture of resource allocation.
- Cash flow as the test of strategic ambition.
- Working capital and its effect on growth capacity.
- Ratio analysis: profitability, liquidity, efficiency, and gearing.
- Workshop: reading a competitor's annual report for strategic insight.

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Day 2: Cost, Pricing, and Contribution

- Fixed, variable, direct, and indirect cost behaviour.
- Contribution margin and break-even analysis.
- Cost-volume-profit analysis for decisions.
- Relevant costing and avoiding sunk cost traps.
- Pricing strategy: cost-plus, market-based, and value-based.
- Activity-based costing and its effect on product decisions.
- Exercise: deciding whether to accept a special order.

Day 3: Budgeting, Forecasting, and Performance

- The budget cycle and its link to strategic goals.
- Incremental, zero-based, and driver-based budgeting.
- Rolling forecasts and variance analysis.
- Separating price, volume, and mix effects.
- Key performance indicators that link operations to finance.
- Balanced Scorecard as a performance framework.
- Workshop: building a departmental budget and variance report.

Day 4: Capital Decisions and Value Creation

- Time value of money and discounting.
- Net present value, internal rate of return, and payback period.
- Weighted average cost of capital as a hurdle rate.
- Sensitivity and scenario analysis for risk.
- Economic Value Added and return on invested capital.

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- Lease versus buy and outsourcing decisions.
- Case study: defending an investment proposal to a board committee.

Day 5: Influence, Communication, and Business Cases

- Structuring a business case for decision makers.
- Turning analysis into a clear recommendation.
- Handling challenge and defending assumptions.
- Communicating numbers to non-financial audiences.
- Negotiating budgets and resources with evidence.
- Ethical considerations in presenting financial information.
- Capstone: presenting a strategic proposal with financial justification.

Conclusion

By successfully completing Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions Training Course, participants will gain the confidence to read financial information and use it in strategic argument. They will acquire the ability to build budgets, appraise investments, model scenarios, and present business cases that withstand scrutiny. As a result, they can shape decisions rather than react to them. Gentex Training Center delivers this programme with a strong focus on practical application and executive communication.

FAQs for the Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions course

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Q1 What is the "Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions" course about?

It teaches managers to use financial information as a decision and influence tool, covering how to read statements, interpret ratios, apply cost and pricing logic, build budgets, appraise investments, and present business cases convincingly.

Q2 What are the key benefits of the "Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions" course?

Participants gain credibility in financial discussions, present stronger business cases, and challenge assumptions with evidence. They also make better pricing, costing, and investment choices, which improves both unit performance and their standing with senior leadership.

Q3 What skills will I gain from the "Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions" course?

Financial statement analysis and ratio interpretation; cost behaviour, contribution, and break-even analysis for pricing and product decisions; budgeting, forecasting, and variance analysis; and investment appraisal using net present value, internal rate of return, and weighted average cost of capital.

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Q4 What tools, methods, or standards are covered in the "Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions" course?

The course covers ratio analysis, contribution margin and cost-volume-profit analysis, relevant costing, activity-based costing, incremental, zero-based and driver-based budgeting, rolling forecasts, the Balanced Scorecard, net present value, internal rate of return, payback period, weighted average cost of capital, Economic Value Added, return on invested capital, and scenario and sensitivity analysis.

Q5 How is the "Understanding Finance to Influence Strategic Decisions" course applied in real-world practice?

Participants review a competitor's annual report for strategic signals, decide on a special order using relevant costing, build a departmental budget and variance report, and defend an investment proposal to a simulated board committee. Each task reflects the financial judgements managers make routinely.