

**/IFP FP&A FORUM**

# Unlock SaaS-Like FP&A Automation with Excel & Power Query

**A production-tested FP&A analytics architecture**

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## Why Does Financial Reporting Still Break During Close?

### Excel Overload

- Version control chaos across dozens of workbooks.
- Business logic duplicated across teams.
- **Excel blamed — architecture ignored.**

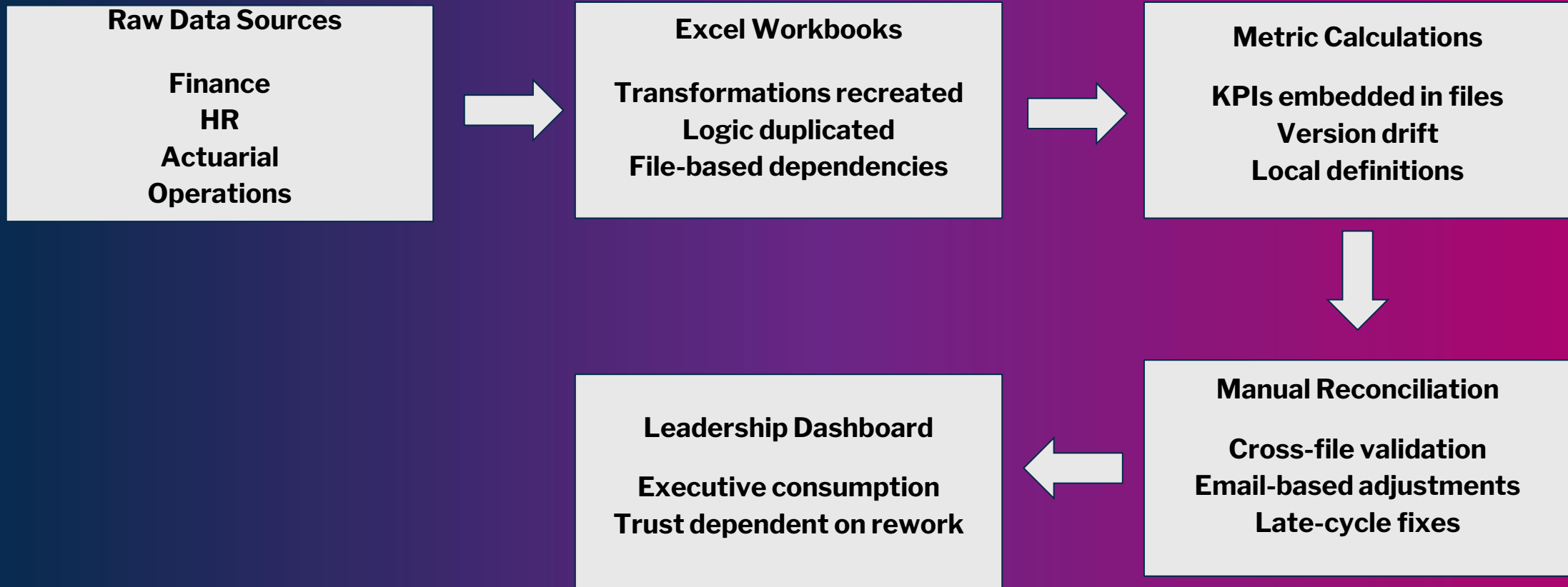
### Expensive Reporting Software

- Six-figure annual subscriptions.
- 12–24 month implementation cycles.
- Heavy IT and vendor dependence.

# Agenda

- Why does financial reporting break when scale increases?
- Why are companies forced to buy expensive reporting software?
- Can Excel become a scalable analytics engine?

# Where Reporting Architecture Actually Breaks



# Where Excel Works – and Where It Breaks

## Excel Strengths



Quick Analysis



Small Datasets



Financial Modeling

## Limitations



Multiple Data Sources



Manual Data Preparation



Manual Data Preparation



Spreadsheet Sprawl

Excel is powerful – but scalable reporting requires automated data pipelines.

# Intro To Power Query

**Total Revenue**   **Total Quantity**   **Overall Margin %**  
**\$7B**   **\$7.3M**   **41.84%**

Reporting Period: Jan 1-6, 2024  
 Wholesale and Direct channels account for the majority of revenue,  
 with Wholesale exhibiting the highest revenue per unit.

Channel Name	Total Revenue	Total Margin	Total Quantity	Revenue per Unit
Direct	1,559,998,440	626,666,040	1,999,998	780
Marketplace	799,999,200	219,999,780	666,666	1,200
Online	800,333,734	200,333,434	666,667	1,201
Partner	300,000,150	220,000,110	666,667	450
Retail	652,060,326	278,726,806	1,333,334	489
Wholesale	2,593,334,630	1,260,000,630	2,000,001	1,297
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,705,726,480</b>	<b>2,805,726,800</b>	<b>7,333,333</b>	<b>5,416</b>

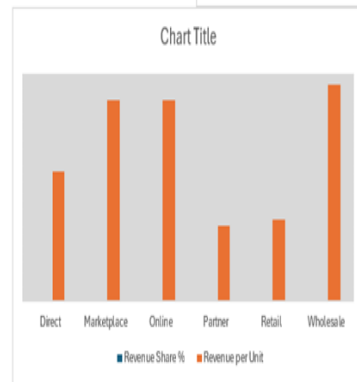
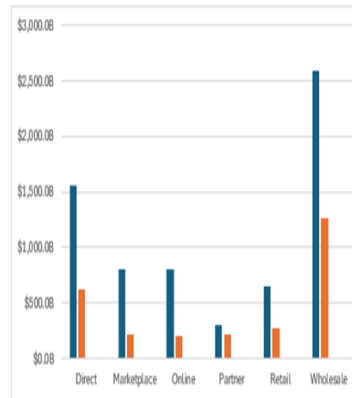
Channel	Revenue Share %	Revenue per Unit
Direct	23%	780
Marketplace	12%	1200
Online	12%	1201
Partner	4%	450
Retail	10%	489
Wholesale	39%	1297

**Revenue Concentration Risk:**  
 Wholesale contributes ~39% of total revenue

Count of row for analysis  
 4000000

Channel Name

Direct	Marketpl...
Online	Partner
Retail	Wholesale



## Query Settings

### PROPERTIES

Name  
 stg\_fact\_sales

All Properties

### APPLIED STEPS

- Source
- Removed\_Columns
- Changed\_Types
- Added\_Gross\_Margin
- Added\_Margin\_Pct
- Added\_Year
- Added\_MonthStart
- Added\_Month\_Name**

## Queries & Connections

Queries | Connections

8 queries

- fact\_sales  
4,000,000 rows loaded.
- stg\_fact\_sales  
4,000,000 rows loaded.
- agg\_sales\_daily  
6 rows loaded.
- dim\_channel  
6 rows loaded.
- mart\_sales\_channel  
6 rows loaded.
- dim\_calendar  
6 rows loaded.
- agg\_sales\_channel  
6 rows loaded.
- mart\_sales\_channel\_risk  
6 rows loaded.

# The Architecture Shift: Separate Compute From Analysis

- **Computation moves upstream.**
- **Analysis moves downstream.**
- **Logic written once — scale becomes predictable.**

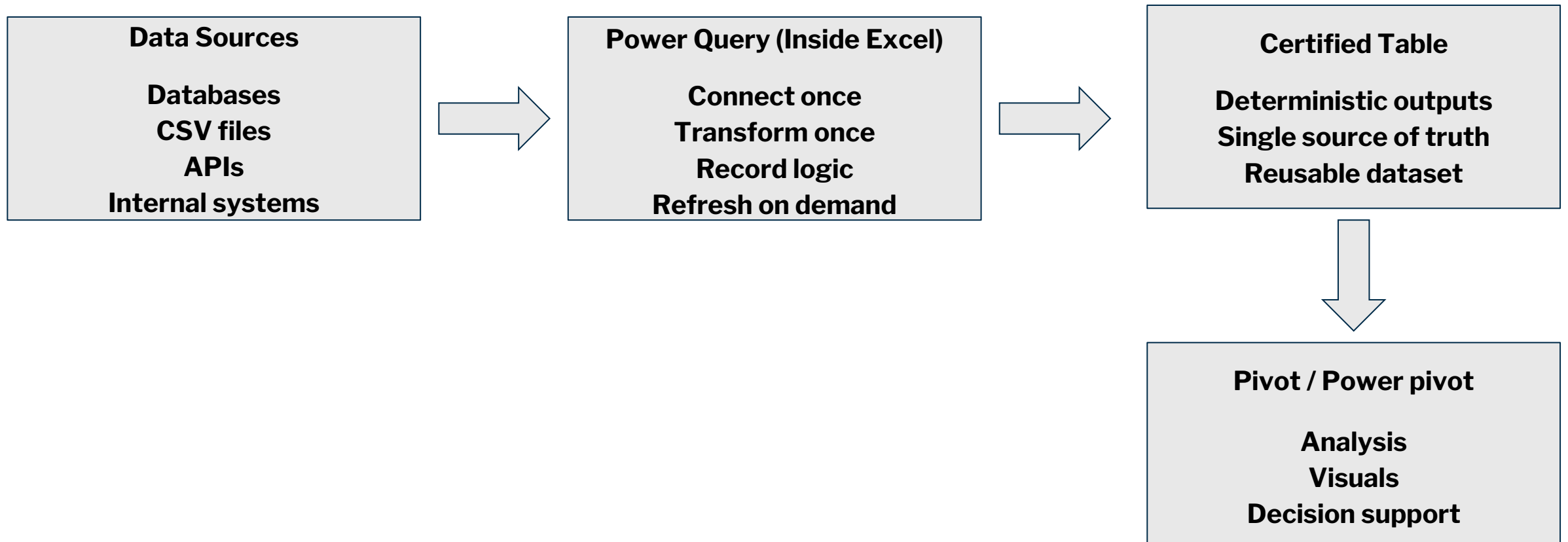
## Analysis & Decision Layer

Excel  
Pivot Tables  
Power Pivot  
Dashboards

## Computation Layer

Power Query transformations  
Controlled business logic  
Data validation  
Deterministic metric calculations

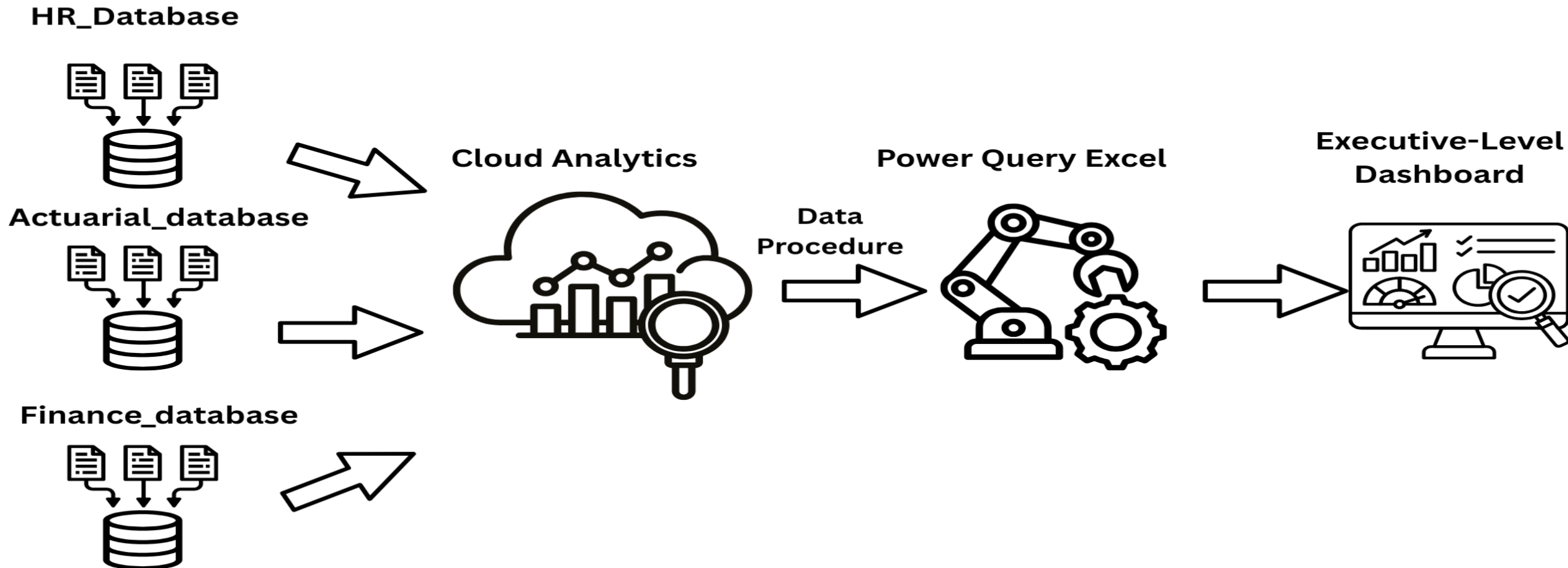
# What If Excel Could Automate Its Own Data Pipeline?



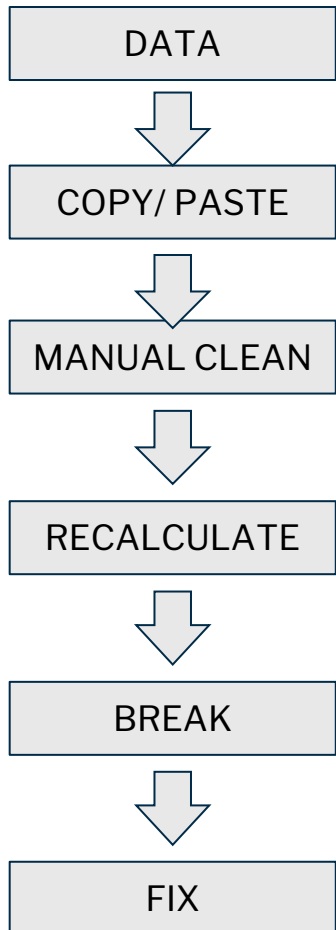
# Cloud-Ready FP&A Analytics Architecture

Cloud + Power Query Turn Excel into an Automated Reporting Engine

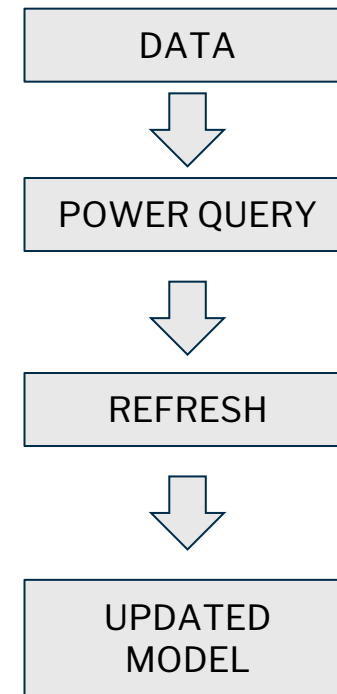
This architecture handled multi-million row datasets while reducing manual effort by up to 70%



# From Manual Refresh to Controlled Automation

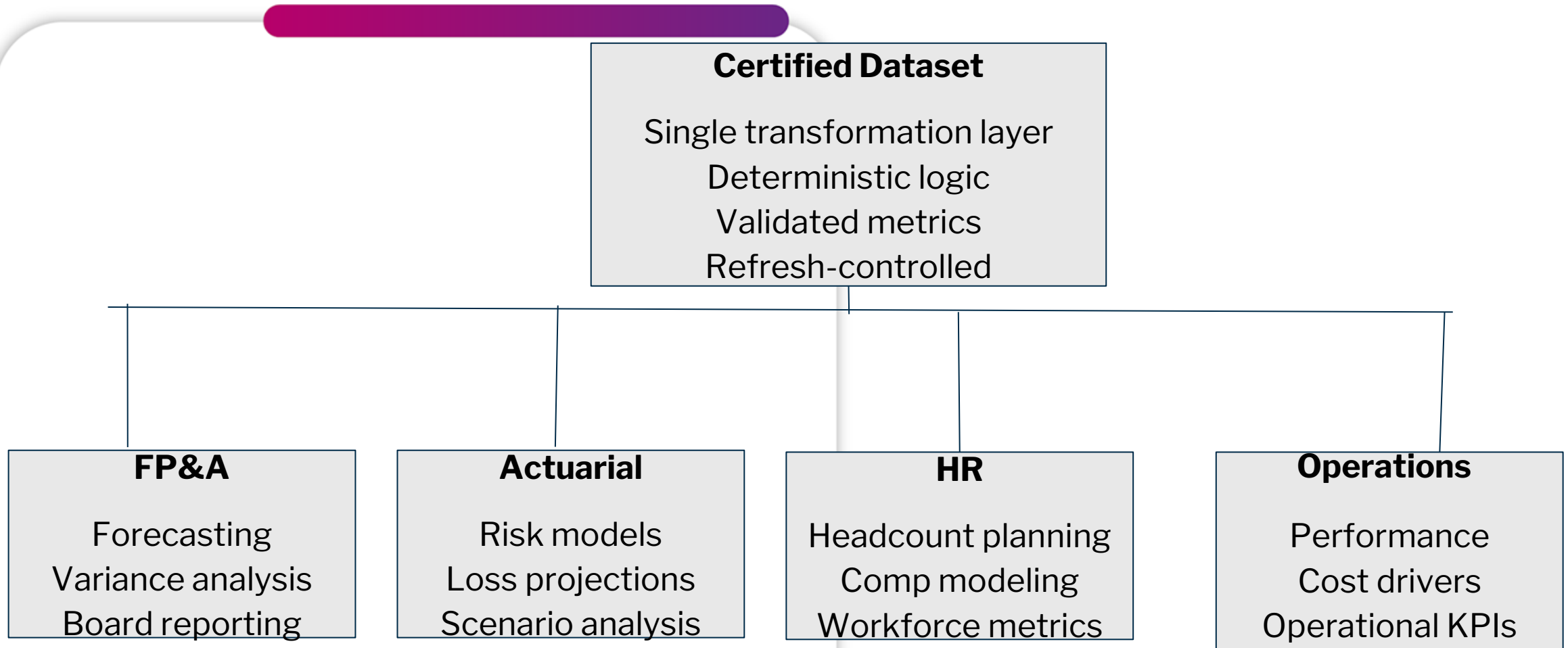


- Logic recreated inside every workbook
- Business rules embedded in individual files
- Small upstream changes break downstream models



- Transformation logic written once
- Refresh becomes deterministic and repeatable
- Analysts focus on analysis, not data cleaning

# Scaling This Across Departments



# What Changes When Architecture Is Controlled

## Close Cycle Impact (Before)

Refresh timing varied by workbook

Manual reconciliation between teams

Metrics recomputed during close

Analysts waited on data availability

Close driven by Excel stability

## Close Cycle Impact (After)

Metrics certified before close begins

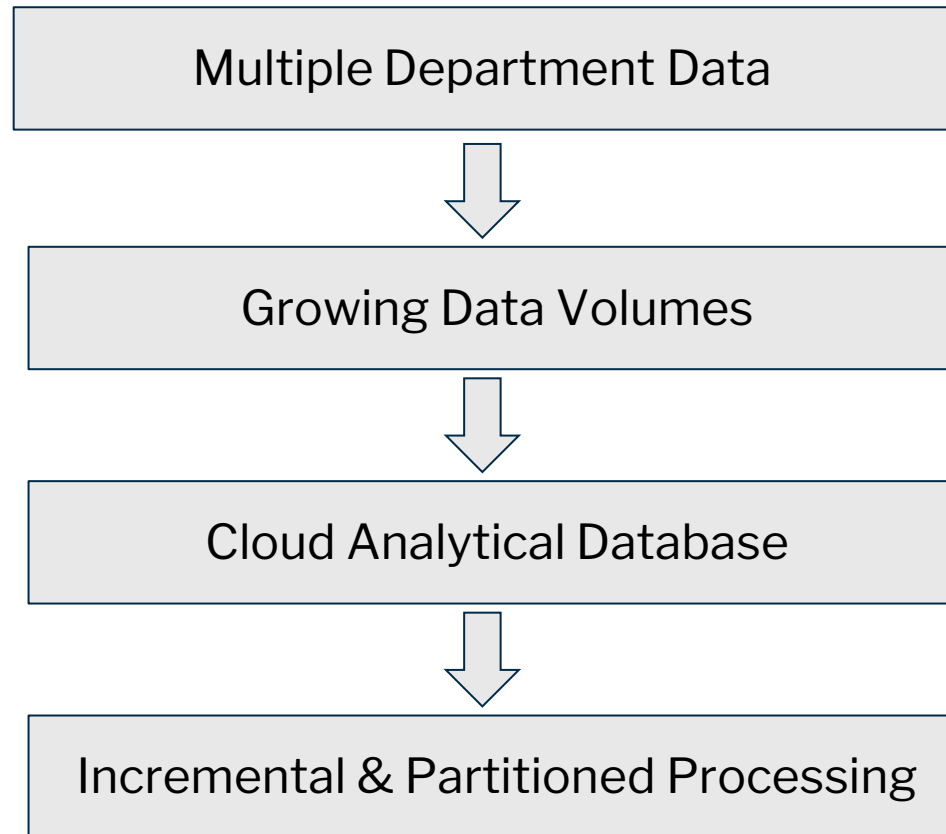
Fixed refresh windows overnight

Reconciliation handled upstream

Analysts start with ready data

Close driven by analysis, not refreshes

# Designed for Scale and Future Growth



- Supports millions of rows without workflow disruption
- **Incremental and partitioned processing replaces full refresh cycles**
- Compatible with cloud analytical warehouses
- Analysts continue using familiar reporting layers

# Excel Isn't the Constraint — Architecture Is

## Traditional Mindset

- Excel is the bottleneck.
- Large files cause instability
- Manual refresh drives risk
- Scaling requires replacing the tool

## Architecture Mindset

- Uncontrolled computation is the bottleneck.
- Transformation must be structured upstream
- Metrics must be certified once
- Refresh must be deterministic

**Build once.  
Certify once.  
Scale confidently.**

# Thank you

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Kadam, Adinath, A Cloud-Native FP&A Analytics Framework Bridging Data Engineering and Financial Analysis while Preserving Excel at Scale (January 18, 2026). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=6091647> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.6091647>