



8 Essential CFO strategies for scaling a product-led business

from Yoto's CFO Ben Averis

CFO Ben Averis of Yoto shared his experience on the CFO Playbook podcast, offering practical insights for finance leaders navigating the challenges of scale, seasonality, and customer-led growth.

Yoto is a UK-based company that creates screen-free audio players for children. Its flagship product, the Yoto Player, is designed to encourage independent, imaginative, and educational play through audio content such as audiobooks, music and podcasts: Yoto uses physical cards that children insert into the player to access the content, giving them autonomy while keeping them away from screens.

Here are eight things, according to Ben Averis, every finance leader should keep in mind:

1

Get a clear north star

Growth becomes a lot more focused when the whole company rallies around one meaningful metric. For Yoto, it is weekly active families. That focus helps ensure investment decisions stay aligned with the customer experience—not just top-line revenue.

What to do: identify a single, meaningful metric that captures long-term value and aligns every function around it.

2

Passion, balanced by discipline

In a product-led business, it is easy to fall in love with the idea. But decisions still need to be grounded in evidence. Ben's approach? Use data to validate instinct. Passion fuels innovation, but discipline turns it into long-term value.

What to do: pair founder intuition and team passion with data-backed validation before scaling new ideas

3

Funding matched to purpose

Different needs require different capital tools. Yoto uses trade finance to support working capital during the Christmas peak—and revenue-based financing to seize short-term growth opportunities.

What to do: Structure your capital stack to reflect the needs of the business.

4

Scalability without headcount bloat

Adding people is not the same as building capacity. Scaling sustainably means investing in the right systems, not just growing teams. That includes smart use of outsourcing, particularly in non-core functions where external expertise can offer better flexibility and control.

What to do: Invest early in automation, tools, and strategic outsourcing. Think ERP systems shared service centers.

5

A seasonality strategy

For hardware and retail businesses, seasonality is not a quirk: it is a structural reality. Rather than trying to flatten the curve, Ben sees it as a strategic moat. The key is scenario planning and agile operations that can flex around key moments in the calendar.

What to do: Build flexible finance models and operational plans that embrace seasonal spikes.

6

A broad but focused role

CFOs in scale-ups rarely stay in one lane. From finance to supply chain to operations, the breadth is wide. But breadth only works when paired with clarity. That means setting priorities, developing your team, and creating space for deep thinking - not just firefighting.

What to do: Embrace the cross-functional nature of the CFO role but carve out space for strategic focus.

7

AI that respects people's time

Used well, AI helps reduce interruptions. It is not about replacing analysts, it is about avoiding Slack messages that pull them off task. Self-serve insights and structured documentation can give teams time back for real problem-solving.

What to do: Use AI tools to enable yourself to self-serve data. Try to allow your teams to focus on their deliverables.

8

Curiosity that compounds

Learning does not stop with a job title.

Ben's tip: Read around your role, every day. A few high-quality newsletters, a quiet moment with a coffee, and a mindset of ongoing curiosity can sharpen your judgement and expand your impact.

Scaling a product-led business is not about moving fast and breaking things. It is about staying close to the customer, using capital wisely, and building the internal muscles that help great products become great businesses.

Inspired by this?

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