

Your AI Explainability Checklist



Why does explainability matter *in finance*?

AI is showing up everywhere in finance. According to Planful's [2025 survey](#), 60% of finance leaders use AI daily, and more than half of global teams already rely on AI-powered FP&A tools.

But here's the problem: too many of those tools are black boxes. They give you an answer, but they hide the logic that led to it. And in finance, if you can't explain a number, you can't defend it, share it, or trust it. That lack of transparency erodes confidence, slows decisions, and pushes teams back to spreadsheets.

Explainable AI (XAI) changes that. It makes machine learning visible, showing exactly how results were generated so finance teams can validate, adjust, and act with confidence. With explainability, you can drill into forecasts, test assumptions, and follow the model's reasoning step by step.

This checklist helps you separate true explainable AI from black-box hype, so your team can plan faster, defend every number, and lead with confidence.

Core transparency and logic

Can you clearly see how the AI reached its outputs?

- ☐ **Highlight key drivers behind results.**
Identify the specific inputs with the biggest impact on outcomes.
- ☐ **Access model version history.**
Track which model version produced each output, and how it's evolved.
- ☐ **Trace the full calculation path.**
Drill into any forecast, variance, or output and follow the logic step by step.
- ☐ **View all data inputs and assumptions.**
See the raw data and assumptions (growth rates, seasonality, drivers) behind every forecast or result.
- ☐ **Drill to the exact dimensional intersection.**
For any number, drill down to the precise grain (month/period, entity, account, cost center, and other relevant dimensions) to see exactly what it's composed of.

Auditability and control

Does the tool support transparency, user input, and compliance?

- ☐ **Easily configure core assumptions.**
Edit key drivers, like revenue growth or cost escalations, for planning and sensitivity analysis.
- ☐ **Allow user overrides.**
Adjust forecasts or assumptions, from users or AI, and instantly see how changes affect downstream results.
- ☐ **Maintain a full audit trail.**
Log every change, whether from users or AI, with timestamps and user details.
- ☐ **Show complete data lineage.**
Trace every piece of data from ERP, GL, or CRM sources through to AI-driven outputs.

Credibility and usability

Does the tool make AI outputs understandable and useful for finance?

- ☐ **Respect role-based access controls.**
Match organizational permissions so the right people see the right data.
- ☐ **Explain outputs in plain financial language.**
Deliver clear insights without requiring data science expertise.
- ☐ **Prevent hallucinations.**
Rely on finance-specific models with safeguards that eliminate fabricated or inaccurate outputs.
- ☐ **Embed AI into existing finance workflows.**
Access AI capabilities directly in planning sheets, variance analyses, and core reporting tasks.
- ☐ **Support “why” and “what if” questions.**
Reveal drivers behind results and test alternative scenarios with editable inputs.
- ☐ **Protect data security.**
Keep data securely in your environment, never used to train external or public models.

Trust and confidence

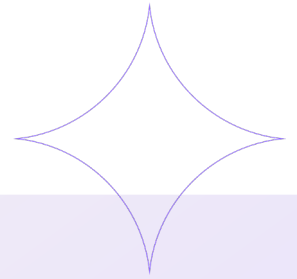
Does the vendor support transparency and long-term accountability?

- ☐ **Get a clear explanation of their AI architecture.**
Ask vendors to walk you through how their models are trained, governed, and designed for explainability.
- ☐ **Request a proof of concept or pilot.**
Test explainability features using your own data before making a full commitment.
- ☐ **Ensure audit-readiness.**
Generate documentation, logic trails, and outputs that hold up under external review and regulatory scrutiny.



Build AI you can trust, defend, *and explain*

AI is transforming finance. But when outputs are opaque, trust breaks down—and so does momentum. If you can't see the data, follow the logic, or adjust the assumptions, you can't stand behind the results.



Explainability is the key. It brings clarity to every forecast, transparency to every assumption, and confidence to every decision. With explainable AI, planning becomes faster, collaboration strengthens, and finance teams elevate their strategic impact.

That's why [Planful AI](#) was designed differently. From day one, our solution has been:

- **Built for finance and accounting teams**, with an understanding of finance-specific logic and processes — embedded directly into the workflows you already use.
- **Grounded in trust and transparency**, our finance-specific models utilize clear logic paths and do not use customer data for training.
- **Controlled by you**, with insights you can drill into, edit, and explain with confidence.

With [Planful Analyst Assistant](#), every variance explanation, forecast, and narrative is powered by clear, contextual logic. And with Chain-of-Thought reasoning built in, you'll always know not just what the answer is, but why.

Because AI only adds value when you can trust it. With Planful, every insight is explainable, empowering your team to move faster with confidence.

Explore an [interactive demo of Planful AI](#) to learn how it can help your team move with confidence.