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## Citigroup Hire Leaves CEO Issue

**American Express Official  
Is Named Finance Chief;  
Not Clear Prince Successor**

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**Citigroup** Inc.'s naming of **American Express** Co.'s chief financial officer to be the New York-based bank's next finance chief fills a gap in Chief Executive Charles Prince's leadership team but doesn't clear up who eventually will replace him as CEO.



**Gary Crittenden**

The announcement that Gary Crittenden would take over the post of chief financial officer on March 12 comes as Mr. Prince, 57, faces increasing pressure to improve the profit and stock performance of the world's largest financial-services firm by market value.

Mr. Crittenden, 53, will have to help the bank navigate a difficult interest-rate environment, as the narrow difference between short-term and long-term rates makes it harder for banks to make money on long-term loans financed with deposits that earn short-term rates. That problem could be exacerbated by the increased problems some consumers and businesses are having paying debts.

"It's a highly complex task," Mr. Crittenden said in an interview. But "if you do what I do, this is just about the best CFO job in the world."

With investors growing impatient with Mr. Prince's turnaround efforts, some had expressed hope prior to yesterday's announcement that the new finance chief would have enough financial-services management experience to succeed the CEO immediately, if need be.


In Mr. Crittenden, Mr. Prince found a well-regarded career finance executive with limited relevant top-management operational experience.

Mr. Crittenden has a reputation for being methodical and well-versed. At American Express, he ran the quarterly conference calls on earnings for investors and analysts; most companies' CEOs handle such calls. He is known for his strong relationships with American Express's big institutional shareholders. He was involved with the 2005 spinoff of the company's financial-advisory business, now called Ameriprise. Global Network Services, the company's bank-card processing unit, reported to him.

"I view his hire as positive," said analyst Joseph Dickerson, who follows both Citigroup and American Express for Atlantic Equities in London. "I am not convinced the CFO role at Citi will lay a clear path to CEO succession, but Gary is certainly competent enough."

**Peter Crist, chairman and CEO of Crist Associates, a small search firm in Hinsdale, Ill., said Mr. Crittenden is**

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one of the best finance chiefs in the business. But he "doesn't have enough experience managing a diverse portfolio of businesses" to be CEO in the next five years.

The finance chief's job was vacated last month, when Mr. Prince moved Sallie Krawcheck out of that post and into a job as head of the bank's global wealth-management division following the abrupt ouster of its chief.

If he is ever considered for the top job, Mr. Crittenden would join five other Citigroup executives as potential successors to Mr. Prince, who is also chairman: Manuel Medina-Mora, head of Citigroup in Latin America; Tom Maheras and Michael Klein, co-presidents of the corporate-and-investment bank; Ajay Banga, head of the international consumer business; and Ms. Krawcheck.

Asked in an interview if Mr. Crittenden has CEO potential, Mr. Prince didn't answer directly but said, "I wanted someone who had the potential to do even more" than be finance chief. He said Mr. Crittenden "stood out as the best of the best" of 40 internal and external candidates. The others included Alvaro De Molina, until recently Bank of America Corp.'s finance chief, and Charles Noski, a Morgan Stanley board member and former chief financial officer for Northrop Grumman Corp. and AT&T Corp., people familiar with the search say.

Mr. Crittenden has scaled steep learning curves before. When he became chief financial officer of Monsanto Co., a biotechnology-and-agricultural firm, in 1998, he knew little about genomics, he said. When he left Monsanto to become American Express's finance chief less than two years later, he likewise wasn't well versed in financial services.

Mr. Crittenden also was chief financial officer for retailer Sears Roebuck & Co., now Sears Holdings Corp., in 1997- 98. Citigroup now owns Sears' U.S. credit-card portfolio. He began his career as a consultant at Bain & Co., is a Brigham Young University graduate and has a Harvard University M.B.A.

This month, Mr. Crittenden was nominated to the board of package-delivery company United ParcelService Inc. He is slated to stand for election at its shareholders meeting in May. He is on Staples Inc.'s board.

American Express yesterday named Dan Henry as acting chief financial officer while it searches for a permanent replacement. Mr. Henry has been finance chief of the company's U.S. cards business for more than six years and joined American Express in 1990 as comptroller.

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