

Strategic Business Intelligence [BI]

Do you know of strategic data that exists in your organisation's IT systems, that cannot be readily accessed, thus hindering the required strategic information for effective decision-making?

Utilising strategic data and intelligence to support the digital transformation of your business has become a key business differentiator. The role of data and business intelligence is imperative for making insightful decisions and effecting decisive market moves.

Most organisations have a deluge of data and information that is impractical to use for strategic decision making. This stems primarily from an inability of most organisations to ensure that their strategies are underpinned and informed by evidence derived from robust business data. Difficulties are all too often encountered when trying to leverage the organisation's available information from systems by utilising various forms of technology solutions.

An integrated approach to BI (Business Intelligence) that originates from the strategy and is aligned to and supported by the ICT environment is therefore critical to enable decision-making geared to realising superior shareholder value. The key building blocks of effective BI are therefore:

- a clearly articulated corporate and set of cascaded business unit strategies, each of which are measurable and where performance can be tracked to enable effective performance monitoring;
- a business strategy that is aligned with an organisation's ICT strategy;
- a flexible information and systems architecture that caters for changing business needs; and
- ability to manage behavioural change associated with a more rigorous and inclusive approach to managing and using strategic information.

BI (Business Intelligence) is often misinterpreted and is not seen as playing a strategic role in an organisation's digital transformation. BI is often considered only as a data exploitation tool or technology solution, while others perceive it the same as competitor intelligence. This understanding, while partly accurate, encompasses a very small portion of BI. The term Strategic BI is preferred, firstly to remove some of the confusion around the subject definition, but more importantly to reinforce the linkage between BI and a company's strategy. According to Bill Gates, "How you gather, manage and use information will determine whether you win or lose".

Key benefits of an integrated approach to BI, as part of digitally transforming an organisation and channelled from an organisation's strategy are:


- increasing the performance of the enterprise – Integrating operational performance with an organisation's strategy aligned to increasing shareholder value;
- standardisation – "one version of the truth" in making strategic decisions from an agreed and reliable information foundation;
- reduced costs and increased efficiencies – Transparent and readily available information will increase the speed of strategic decision-making within an organisation, dramatically increasing the efficiency of day-to-day operations;

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- a standardised, enterprise wide approach to BI - This will result in significant savings by removing duplication of effort, outdated reporting and the associated infrastructure, software, support and maintenance costs;
- enhanced decision-making to respond to market dynamics and digital transformation – The ability to respond to competitive threats and an increasingly dynamic marketplace;
- knowledge management and innovation – An integrated approach to BI will result in an organisation becoming a far more mature user of its available intelligence to drive and stimulate innovation.

A truly proactive approach to information management allows an organisation to predict, analyse and in some cases, change its competitive landscape for a sustained advantage.


An advanced BI capability within your organisation will provide the ability to anticipate, respond and act on critical business needs through collaboration, thereby leveraging accurate, readily available intelligence. Put simply, BI allows an organisation to answer critical strategic, tactical and operational business questions.

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