

How to implement a Business Intelligence Strategy in your organisation

BRIGHTRED RESOURCING LIMITED
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Right from the time when organisations used to fill their office cabinets with huge volumes of files to today's digital datacentres that handle large volumes of big data, Business Intelligence (BI) has come a long way. It is an undebatable point that BI significantly impacts business growth. However, the key lies in rightly implementing a BI strategy in the organisation.



A BI Incompetency Center in action...

Here are a few steps on how you can rightly implement a BI strategy to fully leverage its offerings.

1) Go through the Vision Document

Before implementing a BI strategy, it is important to understand the vision and goals of the Bi project. Most high performing teams attribute their success

to clearly defined and compelling goals, clearly defined roles, effective communication, and able leadership.

Most often, organisations prepare a BI strategy plan before implementing it. So, go through the strategy document and clearly understand the vision and goal of the BI project. When every member of the organisation imbibes these concepts, you can effectively implement the strategy in the right places.



If you haven't prepared a BI design strategy for your organisation yet, please go through our earlier white paper that talks about how to design your BI strategy for your company [here](#).

2) Building your BI Team

Be it a large enterprise or a small organisation, regardless of the size of the business, there needs to be a dedicated BI team that handles end to end BI tasks. As a best practice, choose an executive sponsor who is involved in data processes and understands the value of data. This executive sponsor should also be involved in financial aspects as well as decision making so that BI projects would get proper funding. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) would be a good bet for this position.

Choosing the BI team members is a tricky task. While you might want to tend towards professionals with expertise in specific areas, the right way is to choose people who are adaptive, quick to learn new things and are highly ambitious to perform. As BI technologies are changing at a rapid pace, every BI member should be able to quickly realign themselves to suit changing technology requirements. A best practice is to choose the right IT resourcing company that can support your BI projects with the right talents.

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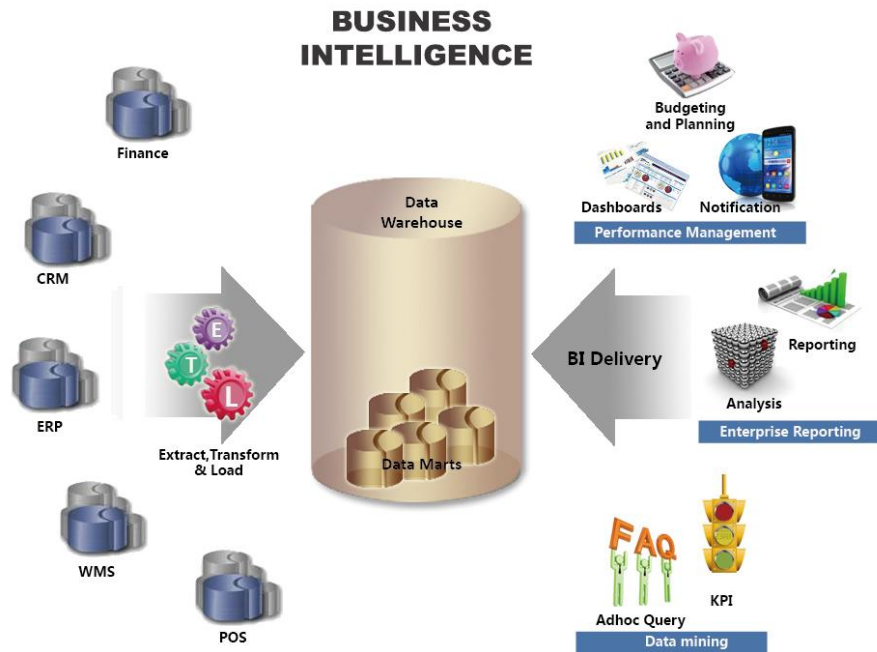
Some of the common BI roles in most organisations:

- BI Project Manager
- BI Manager
- BI Business Specialist
- BI Developer
- BI Data Analyst
- BI Decision Support Analyst
- BI ETL Specialist
- BI Designer
- BI Database Administrator
- BI Miscellaneous Executives

3) Choosing the right BI Tools

Tools and technologies play a key role in the implementation of a BI project in any organisation. Sisense, Zoho Analytics, Oracle Analytics Server, Microsoft Power BI, Tableau, SAP Business Objects, QlikView, IBM Cognos Analytics, etc. are some of the leading providers of BI tools. When it comes to BI, you should determine the type of BI requirement the company has.

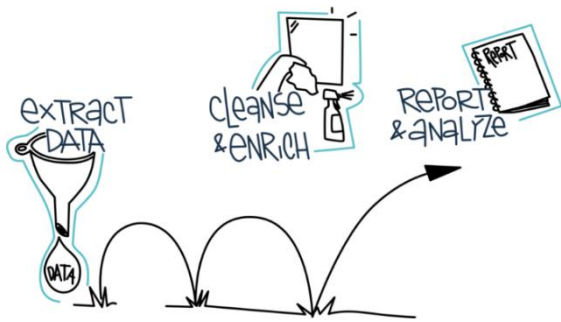
Data extraction, visualisation and reports are the three important areas to be considered. So, determine if your company requires a simple data extraction process or does it require a high-level visualisation model.



A) DATA EXTRACTION

When it comes to data extraction, there are two approaches. The first option is that you have a dedicated data warehousing in-house. As such, the data is segmented and clean. In such a case, a BI tool that can simply pull out data from the warehouse is enough. It also allows you to write SQL queries to extract specific and relevant data. Another benefit is that you will use multiple BI tools to access the data and manage business processes without being tied to a single BI vendor. While it takes time and efforts for the initial setup, it gives more control over data.

The second option comes into the picture when there is no data warehouse. In such a case, you'll have to choose a BI tool that can extract raw data, clean it and manage it for you.



With an out-of-box option, it is easy to configure and start using this model. However, the downside of this method is that data management will be limited to BI purposes. Similarly, the functionality is limited to the performance of the BI tool. Over time, there will be massive growth in data volumes which makes it extremely difficult to manage the data and the costs.

E.g.: Sisense, Tableau, Power BI, Carriots Analytics, Phocas, SAP Analytics Cloud, QlikView, etc

B) DATA VISUALISATIONS



The purpose of BI solutions is to provide clear insights into business performance. As such, data visualisation is very important. It is a proven fact that visually appealing data in the form of reports, pivot tables, graphs and diagrams is easy to read and understand. It also enables you to quickly identify new patterns. So, choose a BI tool that offers interactive and live visual analytics. An intuitive dashboard with features such as easy

navigation, drag and drop features, etc is beneficial.

Dashboard focused tools e.g.: Sisense, QlikView, Power BI, Tableau, Domo, SAP Analytics Cloud, etc.

C) REPORT GENERATION

When it comes to reporting, consider the following aspects;

1. Does a simple report serve the purpose, or do you want to visually appease your audience with vibrant reports?
2. The frequency of report generation is another key consideration. Do you require the tool to generate reports daily, weekly or monthly?
3. How does the notification system work? Do you need instant alerts? Similarly. How does the tool alert you? Does the tool send instant notifications, SMS, email, etc?

Another important consideration is the technical expertise of your staff using the BI tool. If they are technically strong, you can choose to extract data using SQL queries and Excel macros. In such a case, you'll be able to securely access data from disparate data sources using different CSV files. Data can be transmitted using secure SSH channels. It will give more control over data. Alternately, you'll have to choose a tool that offers an interface with drag and drop options, data filters, etc. While a drag and drop interface makes the process quick and easy, data filters allow you to filter specific sets of data while being able to share reports instantly via multiple communication modes. However, the only requirement is that your data should be organised and clean.

E.g.: Sisense, Power BI, Phocas, Domo, Looker, Bissantz Deltamaster etc.

Here is a comparison of popular BI tools available for organisations:

BI Features	Leading BI Tools
Dashboard-rich tools	Power BI Tableau Desktop and Tableau Server Domo Sisense SAP Analytics Cloud
Reporting Features	Power BI SAP Analytics Cloud Domo Diver Platform Phocas
Data Discovery/Extraction	Power BI Sisense Tableau Desktop and Tableau Server QlikView SAP Analytics Cloud
OLAP Focused	Bissantz DeltaMaster Calumo IBM Planning Analytics SAP Business Objects Analysis Jedox
Embedded Analytics	Power BI Looker Domo Sisense Yellowfin BI
Leading BI providers in EMEA Region	Bissantz DeltaMaster Jedox Looker Targit Decision Suite Cubeware CSP C8

Source: <https://bi-survey.com/business-intelligence-software-comparison>

As with any other software solution, it is important to consider certain aspects such as ease of use, functionality, speed, performance, capacity to handle large volumes of data, help and support, pricing structure, etc.

4) Get set to go

Now that you have the tools and teams ready, get set to go. Here are some of the things that you should check out before implementing the strategy:



- **Data sources:** BI tools are data hungry. So, determine the external data sources to pull out data.
- **Data Warehousing:** Determine the data warehousing solution you are going to use for the BI projects and make sure every authorised person can securely access it. In case of a cloud warehousing solution, make sure the cloud provider takes care of data protection and security.
- **BI integration with existing infrastructure:** When you run a Bi tool, it is important to integrate with existing business solutions for a seamless functionality of business processes. For instance, graphs designed in excel or presentation designed in PowerPoint should be able to be displayed in the BI tool. If you use any other presentation tool, it should work well with the current BI tool.
- **Analytics Solution:** Determine the analytics architecture you would use in the BI project.

- **Reporting solutions:** check out the ease of use and report generation formats offered by the reporting tool. If you have to write SQL queries, you should train employees on those aspects.
- **Data and Compliance go hand in hand:** When you manage data, compliance is an obvious guest. Make sure your BI tool complies with data regulations of your area, e.g. GDPR
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Without measurable numbers, it is not easy to monitor the progress of the BI project. So, make sure that the BI team sits together and prepares a list of KPIs.



5) Begin Small

The good thing with a BI solution is flexibility. You don't have to implement a fully detailed strategy. You can simply start a trial project to see how things are working. So, choose a few KPIs and begin the project. Build dashboards and reports to get clear insights into business processes. When you run a trial project, understand the current state of the organisation first. Identify how data is collected, how it is analysed, how this data can become useful to the company, how useful is the current organisational structure and what can be improved. If the current system helps the BI project, you can continue using it or simply make the required changes to realign it accordingly, without the need to start from scratch.

6) Setup Continuous Monitoring and Feedback Loops

Continuous monitoring and feedback loops are essential for any software project. BI solutions are not excluded.

Make sure to setup continuous monitoring and feedback loops so that you can analyse the performance of each project and improvise accordingly. Conduct weekly, monthly and annual review meetings to collect feedback from BI members as well as other members of the organisation. Document everything so that the performance of a BI project can be assessed at any point in time. Note that business goals and processes are constantly changing. So, review your KPIs too and realign them whenever necessary.



7) Create awareness across the organisation

Though you have a dedicated BI team, the BI solution is not confined to that team. Every member of the organisation plays a key role in the success of a BI project. However, remember that change is not always acceptable to everyone. When you analyse data and provide insights and forecasts, not everyone will embrace this strategy and decision-making model. So, it is important to educate every member of the organisation about the importance and functionality of BI solutions and make everyone a part of the system. Continuous training and support programs should be implemented. When each member

understands their roles and works in harmony, BI projects will be effective.

The Bottom Line


As Cloud, DevOps and IoT Networks take centre stage of business technologies, BI has moved from being an option to compulsory. A BI project can significantly improve the performance of an organisation of any size. However, many organisations are not able to meet their business objectives because they don't take time to plan, design, implement and review the BI project. It requires a lot of commitment, time and efforts. When you have a design strategy in place, you can implement the project in a phased manner. Organisations that invest in time and efforts are sure to reap the amazing benefits of BI solutions.

Let us help you. Brightred's dedicated BI team can work with your organisation to identify the right reasons to help you build and implement the most effective BI solution.

Please get in touch for further information.

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