

Extending your SAP applications to better manage business performance

How your IT department can add
value to an SAP infrastructure

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Abstract

Building performance management on an SAP infrastructure: the challenges facing IT.

Overview

As an Information Technology professional, you face the daunting task of fulfilling a vast array of rapidly evolving business user information needs in a diverse, fast-changing technical environment.

To succeed, the technology you choose must meet with a high rate of user adoption and satisfaction; even the most elegant of solutions fails if no one uses it. To ensure success, you need an effective information infrastructure. But you must also be able to leverage and extend that infrastructure to provide business users with the flexible, self-service business intelligence (BI) and planning capabilities that they need to manage their performance.

Business problems

In an SAP environment, this means extending the capabilities of your SAP infrastructure and applications. And it means doing it in ways that empower your business users while keeping your workload manageable and retaining control in IT. For this to happen, you must address five critical criteria when choosing a solution to manage and drive business performance:

1. The solution must be complete
2. It must be able to handle multiple and changing data sources and infrastructures
3. It must be SAP independent
4. Using it must be easy and self-service
5. It must be proven and available now

Business Drivers

1. The solution must be complete

In a recent review of selection criteria for an effective performance management solution, International Data Corporation (IDC) describes breadth of functionality as essential:

... it is clear that the business functions of statutory and management reporting, planning and budgeting, and KPI tracking are related and come together to form a performance management suite. Common modules ... should include: strategy management, financial consolidation, planning and budgeting, and profitability management. In addition, there is a requirement for complementary BI tools either for production reporting or ad-hoc query and analysis.¹

Increasingly, organizations looking for a complete solution are adding a sophisticated search capability to the list, so that users can quickly find the information they need.

The solution you provide must be capable of delivering all performance management functions to all business users. These should encompass the depth and breadth of business intelligence (BI) and planning in order to enable the faster, more confident decisions that result in better performance throughout the enterprise. At the same time, the solution should be flexible enough that you can implement capabilities incrementally to address burning issues in the short term.

And, of course, your solution must have been designed for completeness from its inception. It must not be a hastily assembled patchwork of loosely integrated components that result in redundant maintenance and administration across tools, a need for multiple skill sets and programming capabilities, and time wasted determining what work to do with what tool to reach the right audience in the most effective way.

2. It must handle heterogeneous data sources and IT infrastructures

Nothing destroys business confidence and leads to a lack of user adoption and satisfaction like different numbers for the same thing. Yet the wide range of data sources typical of most enterprise IT environments, including those with heavy investments in SAP, can lead to multiple versions of the truth. This inevitably means that IT must conduct lengthy investigations into data and processes to identify the ‘right’ numbers – investigations that frequently identify the problem as user error, the result of repeatedly combining numbers manually in spreadsheets.

It is common to have multiple data sources. These might include multiple instances of the same applications – such as different versions of SAP R/3 or SAP BW – in different business units or geographical locations. Typically, they also include data from different applications, such as Oracle or PeopleSoft.

Many organizations working to simplify their IT environments are reducing the number of instances and implementations of their ERP systems. By consolidating different infrastructures, IT can reduce the skills, environments, and training

required to support the technology infrastructure. For SAP customers, the drive is toward fewer instances – or even a single instance – of SAP applications running on the SAP NetWeaver platform. This road to simplicity makes sense. But it typically involves a phased approach over many years and means a constantly changing IT environment.

Whether your simplification effort is underway or not yet started, a mixed infrastructure with many sources will remain a reality for some time, and today's IT infrastructure may not be tomorrow's. The best of several possible ways to address this situation (see sidebar Four Strategies for Dealing with Heterogeneous Data Sources) is to implement a flexible performance management solution that addresses all of your organization's requirements by including data from all of your sources.

3. It must be SAP-version independent

In a recent publication, Ventana Research states that “companies’ BI strategy should be independent of their application server and transactional applications to minimize the risk of dependencies and potential delays in deployment and usage by business.”² The same insight applies to enterprise planning solutions. Although independent of SAP application versions, BI or planning solutions must still be deeply integrated; using SAP approved interfaces for SAP data, including R/3 BAPI, RFC, and OLAP BAPI.

Integration with, plus independence from SAP gives you the flexibility to add performance management capabilities independent of your ERP plans. It also eases problems associated with different upgrade cycles. For example, SAP ERP upgrade cycles are typically longer than those for BI. Any dependency that links the two will result in one of two things: either BI drives shorter ERP cycles and introduces more frequent risk, cost and effort to IT; or the ERP cycle spreads the BI upgrade cycles and slows the possibility of introducing new BI functionality required by end users.

By ensuring independence of BI and planning from ERP versions, you introduce increased flexibility to adopt new BI and planning capabilities when users need them. If you do upgrade SAP R/3 or BW or your platform, you can do it on a schedule that you choose, knowing that BI and planning users will be insulated during the transition. This reduces your risk by not requiring everything to change at once. It takes pressure off the push for shorter upgrade cycles and eliminates the incumbent risk, cost, and effort. The overall result is greater flexibility and a better return on your investment in existing and future SAP versions.

4. It must be easy to use and self-service

The success of your performance management solution and your investment in an information infrastructure can often be measured by the level of user adoption and satisfaction. This seems obvious. And yet, examples abound of organizations that have made significant investments in infrastructure and applications only to realize little benefit because users were unable or unwilling to adopt the technology.

In the “winning deployment strategy” envisioned by IDC, IT manages the business analytics platform, including data integration, database management, query tuning, security management and similar functions, while business users can author and modify their own applications, reports, and plans based on their needs:

In this scenario of controlled empowerment, IT retains control of the platform, but process owners and end users are empowered through self-service functionality to support their own ever-changing BPM [Business Performance Management] needs.³

The benefits of simplicity

In a global environment, with geographically dispersed personnel, multilingual requirements, and a wide range of corporate roles and information needs, ensuring that business users adopt a technology can be challenging. If your efforts in IT are to be effective, business tools must be easy to use. Only then will they be adopted eagerly. Only then will business intelligence and planning be placed in the hands of everyone in your organization, not just a select few.

The skill set required of your business users must be low enough that your organization does not need to incur the significant expenditure of time and resources associated with extensive training. Your users should be able to focus on achieving business goals rather than on learning to use tools or coding; they should not need to know ABAP, HTML, Java®, or have other programming skills. In this type of environment, anyone creating BI—including IT users—is more productive, and IT resources with high-level skill sets are freed up to work on projects that can really benefit from their attention.

Four strategies for dealing with heterogeneous data sources

Which strategy makes the most sense when combining data from multiple sources to provide business users with performance management capabilities?

Introduce different tools to leverage different sources

You can implement different tools for different data sources. But this results in duplication of resources and effort. And, in an environment where new data sources can be expected in the future, it is a never ending process. It is high-risk, high-effort, and inconsistent with the drive to simplify IT.

Before taking this approach, ask yourself:

- Do I have to define the same business rules over and over again, for each tool and environment, to ensure a consistent view for users?
- How many overlapping environments with incompatible results must be implemented to meet the same kinds of needs?
- How does this provide the desired single view of the business?

Bring all of the data into a single warehouse

You can load all of your data into a warehouse, such as SAP BW. But this is a multi-year, multi-phase project that involves complex, hard-to-predict challenges that inevitably consume time and resources.

Even if this is your ideal scenario, it will leave you in a mixed environment for a long time. Before taking this approach, ask yourself:

- How much time will it take to achieve the single warehouse?
- Will our business practices – including mergers, acquisitions, and external sources of data – let us achieve a single warehouse?
- What can my business users do until the warehouse exists?

Create VirtualCubes in SAP BW

You can create VirtualCubes in SAP BW that point to external data sources, and then create MultiProviders to enable cross-source calculations. But this also requires time and a high level of effort from IT. And you'll need a detailed, in-depth understanding of all the performance management tasks that your business users might need to perform.

Self-service authoring for all

An important key to ease of use is the ability of business users to engage in self-service reporting, analysis, planning, and other performance management tasks. Users must be able to access the information they need themselves and author their own reports and queries, create their own planning models, and perform other tasks through self-serve capabilities. This enables them to achieve their goals more easily, and it off loads effort from IT.

The requirement for self-service authoring is driven by new information requirements springing from unexpected shifts in markets or business environments. These demand fast, new analyses and answers. And, because BI and planning are iterative processes, they require that users have the ability to make prompt adjustments and conduct new explorations based on emerging needs. IT must not be required to pre-think, pre-build, and pre-know everything.

Of course, the cost of self-service should not be security – IT can only rest easy when all of the appropriate controls are in place. Proper security must be built into a single sign on (SSO), so that users see only what they have permissions to see and can do only what they are allowed to do. Your solution must address the key requirements of authentication, data access, and performance application security (see sidebar Self-Service – But Controlled by IT).

Before taking this approach, ask yourself:

- How long will it take to address the next new request?
- How much ongoing effort is associated with VirtualCubes?
- Does it require a business case to initiate the development of a new VirtualCube and MultiProvider to support the ongoing administration effort?
- What happens for that one-off question that may not require a more permanent solution?
- Does the additional overhead of the VirtualCube and/or MultiProvider impact performance, and thus user adoption?
- Will users give up because of the overhead, effort and time required to get results?

Implement a flexible performance management solution

You can implement a performance management solution that addresses your organization's BI and planning requirements across all of your data sources and takes advantage of your heterogeneous infrastructure, even as it changes.

This leverages and increases the return on your existing IT investments. And it insulates business users from the changes you make as you simplify your infrastructure. It also lessens the number of solutions that need to be implemented,

trained on, and supported, reducing overall cost and effort for IT. Business users have a single tool to learn and use, reducing the upfront planning and effort required to get the information they need. The right solution can also provide a bridge to help simplify the effort to migrate to fewer or a single data warehouse to support performance management – insulating users from the back end changes.

This option is ideal. But before choosing a solution, ask yourself:

- Does the solution employ a single, common enterprise metadata model that rationalizes all data and delivers the same information to all business users no matter how they want to see that information?
- Does it leverage existing security, application servers and other infrastructure components, including SAP NetWeaver?
- Does it insulate users from the back-end complexity and changes that IT makes as we consolidate or simplify our infrastructure?

Self-Service authoring is essential not only so that business people can achieve their goals independent of IT, but also to ensure that IT resources are not consumed addressing a constant stream of user requests. True self-service authoring goes beyond providing minimal selection criteria through prompts. It provides users with an environment in which they can ask new questions, explore new situations, and collaborate with other users to make better decisions.

5. It must be available and proven

Finally, the solution you choose must be available and proven. Will it meet users' demands for BI and planning today? Will it in the future? Is your vendor known for leadership and innovation in BI and planning? Are they likely to deliver the cutting edge capabilities that users will demand to create a competitive edge? What will it take to implement the solution's capabilities? How confident are you they will meet your users' expectations?

To be effective, your solution must be available for use with your existing infrastructure. You must be able to get it up and running quickly, across all of your IT investments. It must be a solution you can implement now, not next month or next year.

And the solution must be proven. To avoid the risk associated with implementing new technologies, it should be a solution that has worked well over time in a range of environments. This means obtaining your solution from a recognized performance management leader – one known for performance management solutions and a record of partnering effectively with customers to meet their goals.

Your vendor must also have a proven track record of innovation in performance management, so that you are confident that your future needs will be met – even those that you aren't yet aware of. Only then can you be assured that your performance management solution will meet the test of time.

Self-service – but controlled by IT

Business user self-service should never be at the expense of necessary security and controls. The solution that provides self-service should feature security that is built into a single sign on (SSO), so that users see and do only what they are permitted. Effective, flexible security addresses the three requirements of authentication, data access, and performance management application security, and effectively manages the impact on your applications – SAP and non-SAP alike.

Authentication and access must leverage the security from your data sources, whether it is done using SAP security, an alternate SSO source for your organization, or your performance management solution supporting multiple security providers across multiple sources.

Application security provides controls over the performance management content users can see or access, such as folders, reports, dashboards and plans. It also controls users' performance management capabilities: Will a user only receive and consume reports and dashboards? Can they author ad hoc or sophisticated reports and use scorecards? Can they build and modify plans or just contribute to them?

Another key aspect of these controls involves managing the impact on your SAP and non-SAP applications. This can come in the form of control over which users can run reports and which can only view saved output; the distinction is important because it can greatly reduce repeated execution of the same reports. It can also involve having mandatory prompts in place to filter prebuilt or ad hoc requests against SAP R/3 or non-SAP data sources using vendor prompts, or BW using BW variables or vendor prompts.

In addition, having a single metadata model across all sources of data enables IT to ensure consistent business rules are applied for all business users to leverage. This ensures that everyone gets the same, single version of the truth and common calculations and business rules.

Extending the Value of Your SAP Applications with IBM Cognos software

It is not surprising, given the longstanding relationship between Cognos, beginning in 1997 before IBM acquired it, and SAP, that IBM Cognos solutions meet all of the essential criteria for leveraging and extending an SAP infrastructure and applications to deliver superior performance management capabilities.

The IBM Cognos solution is an official SAP Software Partner solution and was one of the first to be certified as Powered by SAP NetWeaver. The IBM Cognos-SAP partnership includes ongoing executive-level communication; a dedicated IBM Cognos development team with resources in Walldorf, Germany for ease of interaction with SAP; and strong alliances that include research and development and customer support.

1. IBM Cognos performance management: all capabilities for all users

IBM Cognos software delivers a complete performance management system on a Web-services based services-oriented architecture (SOA), reducing the effort required of IT with a single solution that addresses all requirements and data sources in a centralized deployment and administration environment.

IBM Cognos solutions provide all of the capabilities needed by business users throughout the enterprise. It gives them the ability to address diverse organizational needs and expand the use of information for better decision making. All users can meet all of their BI and planning needs in the ways that best suit them – via their browser, by using Microsoft® Office®, and in Adobe® PDF®, HTML, or other formats. Whether reports and analyses are pre-defined, pre-built, managed, or ad hoc, they provide a consistent single view of the business.

The server-based IBM Cognos solution requires no desktop installs, easing deployment and maintenance. Centralized administration speeds deployment and ensures that IT can easily roll out to additional users and locations while maintaining controls. Business users can perform sophisticated planning and a full range of business intelligence, including reporting, dashboarding, scorecarding, analysis, business event management and BI searches from their browser (see sidebar What will IBM Cognos solutions do for my business users?).

What will IBM Cognos solutions do for my business users?

IBM Cognos solutions provide a full range of performance management capabilities for business users throughout the enterprise, including:

- Sophisticated planning to help build a foundation for better performance.
- Reporting that includes ad hoc queries and deep, dimensional reports and analyses.
- Customized dashboards that communicate key information graphically and quickly, for at-a-glance understanding of key business issues.

- Active scorecards, so users know where they are relative to plan.
- Browser-based deep search capabilities, to quickly find information.
- Event-driven BI to notify users when and where to take action.
- Flexible scheduling and distribution that includes one-touch bursting to hundreds or thousands of users.
- Connection to Microsoft Office, so they can use the tools they are familiar with.

A single interface for all activities means that the IBM Cognos solution is easy to use. Decisions are based on all the data – from multiple SAP and non-SAP sources. Business users are insulated from changes to their information infrastructure. True self-service authoring frees business users to find creative answers to questions and innovative solutions to business challenges.

For a detailed business perspective, see the IBM Cognos white paper *Empowering Decision Makers by Extending Your SAP Applications: How Business Users Can Manage Performance on an SAP Infrastructure*, or visit www.cognos.com/solutions4SAP.

Built into a single performance management system that was designed from its inception to support the broadest, most diverse set of business users, the role-based, task-oriented interface gives users easy access to the information and capabilities they need.

IBM Cognos BI capabilities are built around a single report specification that provides multilingual support for global collaboration and the ability to graduate to increasingly sophisticated capabilities as needed, without having to jump tool sets. IBM Cognos planning capabilities provide driver-based planning, enabling broad distribution of plans with distributed plan administration – all managed by users, so that they get exactly what they need while offloading IT from the planning function.

With the IBM Cognos solution, IT gains a single platform to deploy and maintain for BI and planning, reducing burden and cost. Business users gain self-service access and authoring for BI and planning, so they receive information based on a single version of the truth, delivered the way they want it.

2. Support for all data and infrastructures

The IBM Cognos 8 platform is a Web services-based services-oriented architecture (SOA) that leverages SAP and non-SAP data and infrastructures, extending the value of all corporate data, even as SAP versions change and new sources of data become available. With SAP-certified interfaces into SAP R/3 and SAP BW data, native access to non-SAP sources, and the ability to do cross-source calculations, you no longer require VirtualCubes and MultiProviders to meet user requirements that cross sources, although you can still leverage them if you want to.

Business users gain access to, and ownership of all the information they need, whether they are running a report, viewing a dashboard, monitoring a scorecard, or contributing to or creating a plan.

With the IBM Cognos 8 platform, you can provide access to the full breadth of data through a single common metadata model that taps into data no matter where it resides. This IBM Cognos modeling tool provides multi-level modeling, so you can define a common business model and expose all or parts of it to user communities based on their roles or groups. You do this using terminology that is easily consumable by business users and is linked to the physical model layer. The result is that information is placed in the hands of business users in terms that they understand. Users are insulated from the complexity of physical data sources, and you have the flexibility to make infrastructure changes without impacting your user community.

IBM Cognos solutions are adaptable for heterogeneous and changing landscapes and are ERP version-independent. The open data access approach comes with full integration into your existing security to ensure that data is accessible only by

authorized users. And it provides auditing functions to simplify management of your performance management solution.

The IBM Cognos solution also features

- Native connectivity to SAP and non-SAP sources. The result is one solution for all data.
- A single metadata model. This provides a single version of the truth and consistency for users.
- A browser-based interface. Accessible through the SAP or non-SAP portals, it means centralized administration and deployment with no client installations.
- Broad access to enterprise data. Data can be accessed from ERP systems, relational databases from multiple vendors, multidimensional sources, and modern sources such as XML and LDAP.

The result is a single solution for all needs, and reduced duplication of infrastructure, capabilities, training, support and maintenance efforts.

The support that the IBM Cognos solution provides for multiple data sources, and its single data model, ensure that all users can access any and all of the information they need through any capability. Everyone sees the same view of that data, and you don't need to do something different for each source.

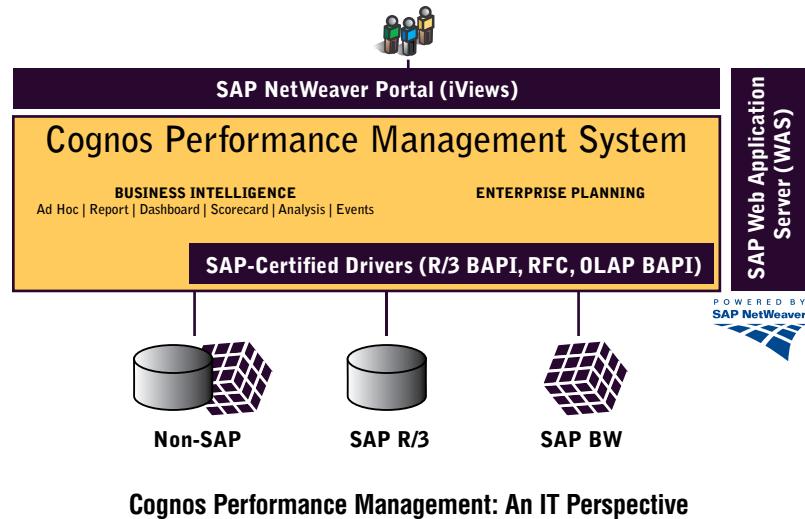
The IBM Cognos performance management solution is built on a single, proven, Web Services-based services-oriented architecture. A modern architecture designed to provide long-term enterprise value, it features

- A single open application programming interface (API) for integration and extensibility
- An ability to build on and leverage your existing infrastructure for simplification and maximum return on investment

- A server-based, no-client install, and zero-footprint BI solution that makes deployment and administration easy for IT
- A solution that is distributable, scalable, adaptable and reliable to ensure consistent performance as your enterprise changes and grows

IBM Cognos software can be deployed on any existing infrastructure, including UNIX®, Linux®, and Microsoft® Windows®. It can be deployed on any Java® J2EE® application server, including SAP's. It integrates into multiple, heterogeneous, mixed infrastructures that include SAP components with their resulting multiple data sources, security models, application servers and operating systems.

(For more about the IBM Cognos open data strategy and architecture, see these IBM Cognos white papers: *The Importance of Open Data*, and *The Right Architecture for Business Intelligence*, available at www.cognos.com.)



3. Independent of SAP versions and instances

The IBM Cognos performance management solution provides deep integration with your entire SAP infrastructure. The solution is powered by SAP NetWeaver, seamlessly integrated with the SAP NetWeaver Portal, deployable on the SAP Web Application Server, and fully integrated with SAP BW and SAP R/3 through SAP-certified OLAP BAPI and R/3 BAPI/RFC drivers. No ABAP coding.

IBM Cognos software leverages all SAP BW data, including InfoCubes, SAP BW Queries, Master Data, ODS Data, and more. It also takes advantage of SAP security and business rules, including languages, hierarchies, aggregations, currency conversion, and similar entities. And it provides direct BI access to R/3 data needed to provide current information, such as inventory status or financial indicators necessary for period closure. This increases flexibility and reduces project risk. You can combine historical, SAP BW data with current, SAP R/3 data in a single report, dashboard, or scorecard, eliminating the duplication of infrastructure required for traditionally separate production reporting solutions for SAP R/3 data.

IBM Cognos solutions provide deep integration with the SAP NetWeaver platform, including the portal, application server, security and SAP BW. At the same time, you can use alternate market leading components that your organization has chosen to use, or a mix of SAP and alternatives.

The IBM Cognos solution is independent of SAP versions. This gives you the flexibility to add performance management capabilities independent of your SAP ERP plans. By separating BI and SAP ERP upgrade cycles, you reduce the demand for shorter upgrade cycles and lessen the cost, risk and effort. The result is increased IT flexibility and business agility as users take advantage of new capabilities as soon as they are available—not in the six months to a year that it takes to upgrade your infrastructure.

All this means that you can use your existing version of SAP R/3, SAP BW and the SAP NetWeaver platform and add market-leading BI and enterprise planning without changing your infrastructure. You gain increased return on your investment behind your current ERP implementation, while addressing your business users' pressing needs for performance management solutions. Even with multiple instances or versions of SAP components, you get one solution that brings together information from across all your systems without additional coding.

4. Simple and self-service authoring

If your business analysts can't use Cognos' end-user-focused tools, check their pulses.⁴

The IBM Cognos solution is easy to use

Anyone who can use a browser can service their own reporting, planning and performance management needs with the IBM Cognos solution. A single, intuitive, customizable, drag-and-drop interface for all capabilities across all users and data makes the IBM Cognos solution exceptionally easy to use. It ensures a short start-up time with minimal training requirements. It means that information is truly a click away.

The IBM Cognos user interface supports more than 10 languages and delivers information in over 25 languages, reflecting more than 100 countries. This ensures that users worldwide receive the information they need in their working language. You can use a single report across multiple languages, eliminating the need to rebuild reports for each language.

Report layouts automatically adjust when objects are added, moved, or removed. SAP BW hierarchies are leveraged automatically when grouping or drilling down within reports, and SAP BW aggregations, semi-aggregations and business rules are used automatically for calculations and subtotals. A single report specification ensures that the results of ad hoc reporting or analysis can easily be converted to sophisticated business reports or dashboards, eliminating duplication of effort.

With the IBM Cognos solution, users have personalized report and dashboard formats to reflect their preferences. The default format can include Microsoft® Excel®, PDF, XML, HTML, CSV and more. Users can quickly switch between formats. A single tool provides ad hoc, production, and managed reports. Templates make it easy to add your corporate logo, colors and themes to reports and dashboards for a consistent look and feel. The task-oriented interface means that users are never overwhelmed with a complex authoring interface. And there is no coding needed by them or IT.

The IBM Cognos solution means controlled self-service

The IBM Cognos solution also ensures business user self-service, while maintaining controls such as flexible single-sign on security for authentication, data access and performance management application security. Users can see and do only what they are allowed to. Impact on your data sources, SAP and non-SAP alike, can be minimized through scheduled reports, mandatory prompting, and scheduling and distribution. And it enables user-driven scheduling and distribution to execute reports at off-peak hours, so that bursting touches the data sources only once, while distributing only relevant report slices to thousands of users.

Imagine, for example, that you have a sales report consisting of a dashboard as the first page followed by fifty pages of detail for each business unit or cost center. This one report may be required every Monday morning at 8:00 AM by 15,000 sales managers across multiple languages. With the IBM Cognos solution, centralized or user-driven scheduling can take all fifty-one pages of this report, build it once, save it once as a single report and schedule it once. The report will execute once every Monday morning, touch all of the sources once, automatically burst based on Employee ID, and automatically distribute just the relevant information to each of the 15,000 Sales Managers, instead of managing 51 single-page reports and managing 15,000 schedules for each page.

This true self-service means that IT can offload to users the time and effort needed to author reports, create business plans, and carry out other performance management activities. For example, self-service authoring means that finance departments can build their own business models for plans, and are not dependent on IT cycles or availability. Because models are easy to build, there is fast turn around and a short time to results. The same ease of use that enables users to be self-sufficient means that traditional BI or plan authors gain ease of use and become much more productive.

The ease of use and full self-service capabilities of the IBM Cognos solution frees business users to seek creative solutions to business problems on their own. And it frees you in IT to focus on maintaining your information infrastructure.

5. Available, proven, and supported by an industry leader

IBM Cognos solutions are recognized leaders in the areas of planning, business intelligence, and performance management. Cognos was, before IBM acquired it, the only vendor to be recognized as a leader in Gartner, Inc.'s magic quadrants for both Business Intelligence and Performance Management⁵—a designation based on completeness of vision and ability to execute.

The IBM Cognos products stem from years of experience to the task of building and implementing effective solutions in the full spectrum of organization types. And the IBM Cognos solution is available now, today, on your existing infrastructure, no matter what combination of SAP and non-SAP components are included in that infrastructure. No need to wait to upgrade and coordinate your infrastructure before even starting to add performance management capabilities.

IBM Cognos people have a proven ability to innovate and react in a timely way to customer needs and changing market requirements. The IBM Cognos performance management solution is complete across all sources in one platform that is fully integrated with, yet independent of your information infrastructure. It includes everything you need to extend and leverage your SAP applications to better manage your business performance.

The Solution

Why Eastman Chemical chose the IBM Cognos solution

Eastman Chemical, a Fortune 500 company, selected the IBM Cognos solution for its open data access, seamless integration with the SAP NetWeaver platform, superior time to deployment and ease of use. Company officials were particularly impressed by the IBM Cognos solution's ability to pull data from multiple sources, simplifying reporting across departments without having to re-train users or re-architect standard reporting processes.

"There are three things that we must always deliver to our clients when implementing a new system – it must meet the user's needs, it must do so in a useable interface, and it absolutely has to perform. Cognos gives us the flexibility we need to migrate the company to SAP while also providing users with the proven, consistent and accurate reporting they need to continue to do their jobs effectively."

Larry Perdue, IT Manager, Business Marketing and Sales Solutions, Eastman Chemical

Source: Eastman Chemical Company Selects Cognos as Reporting Standard for Its Enterprise SAP NetWeaver Platform – Cognos press release, January 31, 2006

Why Puget Sound Energy chose the IBM Cognos solution

Puget Sound Energy, Washington State's oldest and largest energy utility, uses the IBM Cognos solution with their SAP ERP system to improve budgeting, planning, and forecasting processes across its business.

"We selected Cognos Planning to help extend the capabilities of our mySAP® ERP system in a flexible environment for our business users. We wanted a solution that could help us move beyond traditional budgeting to achieve continuous planning. We implemented the budgeting element of our project in just 47 days and are now working on streamlining forecasting. Ultimately, this move should help us reallocate resources more effectively so that we can better serve our customers."

Brenda Bartell, Puget Sound Energy

Source: SAP Customers Extend Investment with Cognos Performance Management Solutions – Cognos press release, May 16, 2006

Conclusion

With IBM Cognos software, you can meet business user demand for BI and planning now and in the future, while reducing IT effort and increasing user adoption and satisfaction.



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Produced in Canada
March 2009
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Endnotes

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