



The full promise of business intelligence

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Abstract

For a single business intelligence solution to fulfill the full promise of BI, it must access all pertinent performance data, regardless of platform, and deliver the resulting information and analysis to all appropriate users, regardless of location. IBM Cognos® 8 Business Intelligence achieves this. It can access virtually any corporate data source. And it provides detailed, understandable views of that data for all users, from executives to analysts to casual BI users, with innovative tools that allow them to access the information from mobile devices while on the road.

Overview

The full promise of BI means that neither IT nor business users feel limited by their BI systems.

Business users need to see relevant information about their business in ways that are the most meaningful to them and the easiest to understand. They need to see the big picture and, when necessary, the detail. They do not want to drown in irrelevant information.

At the same time, IT's ability to control costs and deliver value should not be undermined by maintaining multiple BI systems. IT does not want BI that only covers some of the data. And they need software that has room to grow to meet tomorrow's demands.

IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence opens windows into all your corporate systems and data. BI system managers, professional authors, business and financial analysts, line of business managers, executives, and casual BI users can all find value through these multiple windows. IT can deliver the best available value to all users with one business intelligence product – making it simpler, faster, and easier to manage.

Business problems

Business intelligence (BI) is the number one investment priority among CIOs.¹ Organizations worldwide demonstrate that BI improves the decision making process and directly improves the bottom line. These organizations also show that the value of business intelligence increases as more decision makers access complete, consistent, and trustworthy information. And yet, these same smart companies often find business intelligence adoption lagging among business users.

Why? Business intelligence epitomizes the classic struggle between IT and business. Business users will not embrace business intelligence until they can get it on their own terms. They protest that they can't wait for IT and need direct access to information. They say they need to see things their own way. They may say BI is too hard to use and they prefer a different interface.

Still, IT has an important job to do. IT delivers the platform that secures information, integrates data sources, provides a foundation that masks the complexity of heterogeneous data sources and provides complete, consistent access to information throughout the enterprise. Only IT can ensure the security, availability and reliability of business intelligence.

Business drivers

Bridging this gap between business and IT is what enables successful companies to realize the full promise of business intelligence. Business users need simple user interfaces that enable them to engage in the business and find answers to their own business questions. IT needs the simplicity of a business intelligence solution that fits with key infrastructure and architecture and enables them to cost effectively scale. They also need to know that the platform aligns with strategic plans for enterprise architecture. With IBM Cognos 8 BI, IBM addresses these issues with a platform for business intelligence capabilities and, by extension, performance management.

IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.4 delivers business intelligence that meets the needs of business and IT. IBM Cognos 8 BI address the demands of business for usability, accessibility and control without compromising IT's high standards for conformance and flexibility. This agility enables BI to cost effectively scale with:

- **A full range of BI capabilities:** All user communities receive relevant information how, when and where it is needed.
- **An open enterprise-class platform:** IT leverages a platform that cost effectively scales to meet growing user demands.
- **Frameworks and proven practices:** Projects get off to the right start with expertise to ensure success on the journey to performance management.

The solution

BI on business terms

There is an information crisis in business today. Despite significant investments in information technology, most companies admit that employees are making decisions without the benefit of timely, accurate information. Indeed a recent Accenture survey found that:

- Managers waste 2 hours a day searching for information.
- Over 50% of managers use the wrong information at least once a week.
- Over 50% of information managers receive is perceived as having no value.²

The good news is this situation can be addressed. Decision makers will adopt BI when it is easy to use, timely and relevant. In short, the IT organization needs to deliver personalized business intelligence without the cost of creating customized applications for the many potential users and applications.

IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence recognizes and accommodates the different needs of all BI users in your organization. Delivering a single source of business intelligence to everyone provides many benefits

- **Informed** – Delivers information that business understands, owns and trusts. Based from a common business model, IBM Cognos 8 BI provides all users with a complete, consistent view of information.
- **Engaged**– Increases the reach of business intelligence by attracting more business users and fully engaging them with a dynamic and interactive business intelligence experience.
- **Aligned**– Improves alignment between strategy and operations with complete visibility from business operations and enterprise applications, to advanced analytics and strategic plans, and from IT to the business community.

Casual BI users

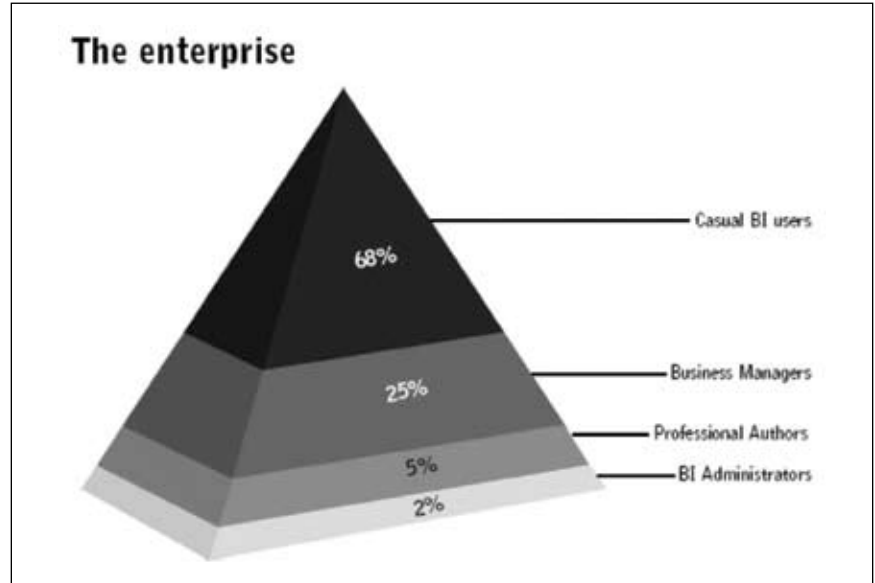
Representing the majority of potential enterprise users, casual BI users account for a broad range of users that access BI from a browser; including sales people, operational workers, administrators, even customers and suppliers. What makes this group unique is that they need access anywhere with very little training.

Casual users want:

- Ability to subscribe to regularly distributed reports.
- Simple navigation.
- Uncluttered display of just the information that is relevant to them.
- Secure personalized access to information without training.

IBM Cognos 8 BI delivers:

- Simple enterprise search which lets casuals search and create BI content as simply as they search the Internet for access to BI; Information returned is ranked and relevant.
- Secure access over the Web and the very same reports on mobile devices without the need for report rewrites.
- Automated email delivery of relevant reports in their preferred formats and languages.
- Personal report subscriptions, email, and Web-based alerts.
- Guided navigation for easy drill-down to detail.



Executives

These organizational leaders function as casual BI users with unique needs which reflect their more strategic perspectives.

Executives want:

- At-a-glance awareness of organizational health across lines of business.
- Timely updates and status alerts on their areas of responsibility.
- Secure access to business information from anywhere.

IBM Cognos 8 BI delivers:

- Personalized dashboards which deliver an at-a-glance, up-to-the-minute view of business performance; including a summarized view of key metrics, key reports, alerts, as well as visibility of non BI content so the executive can see the complete picture.
- Business dashboards for quick communication of complex data and scorecards that track progress against individual objectives.
- Scheduled reports delivered to desktops, and event notification delivered anywhere, which help organizations respond quickly and uniformly.
- Briefing books that present data in multiple styles from disparate sources in a single document.
- A secure portal with 128-bit encryption and 24/7 availability.

Business managers

Representing approximately one quarter of the business users in an average enterprise, these users have a wider range of responsibilities than casual BI users, and demand a wider range of self-serve access to different BI capabilities.

Business managers want:

- Drillable business information that offers detail, context, and the 'why' behind the numbers.
- Basic BI authoring that is easy to use.
- Occasional ad hoc queries, analysis, and metrics management.
- Information about the report so they can be confident they are relying upon the right information at the right time.
- Collaborative capabilities on reports so they can express their point of view.

IBM Cognos 8 BI delivers:

- A familiar, self-service working environment for all BI capabilities.
- Drag-and-drop BI authoring in the same zero footprint user interface.
- Automatic translation for distributed BI.
- IBM Cognos lineage
- Consolidates all the various data sources within the organization so a manager only has one place to go to understand the business.

Business and financial analysts

Business and financial analysts represent a segment of the business manager population. They are unique because they are very savvy in both their analytical and technical abilities. Like professional authors, this group of user often creates content for others to consume, however, they are not BI professionals.

Business and financial analysts want:

- Freedom to explore and analyze data from many sources.
- Professional report authoring capabilities to create statement-style reports with a simplified interface.
- Context surrounding the report, underlying data and business terms
- Ability to work with Microsoft® Excel®.

IBM Cognos 8 BI delivers:

- Web-based, deep, comparative analysis.
- Ability to work in Microsoft Excel with trusted IBM Cognos 8 metadata.
- Integration with IBM's business glossary
- Data and report lineage
- The powerful but simplified express authoring mode.
- Purpose-built features for creating financial statement-style reports.
- Easy creation and update of specialist data sets.

Professional authors

Also known as power users, professional authors are the traditional target of most BI software. These authors produce professional quality content for others to consume. Professional authors want these advanced BI capabilities:

- **Volume:** Fast distribution of many reports to many users.
- **Variety:** The full range of BI elements and output types.
- **Velocity:** Fast response times for bursting reports to thousands of users, and sub-second response times when exploring large volumes of data.

IBM Cognos 8 BI delivers:

- Multi-page, multi-query, high volume bursting via email or portals so they can author reports once, for delivery to multiple report formats, languages, and users.
- Queries run against multiple relational and dimensional data sources for display in a single report.
- BI content objects including: charts, maps, crosstabs, 3D bar, pie, line, gauge, funnel, scatter, dot density, waterfall, and live applications.
- Collaborative workflow that supports viewing, querying, analyzing, and authoring to enable business users and professional authors to work together on the same report.

Access all data

The IBM Cognos 8 platform is designed to provide open data access to support multiple heterogeneous data sources. It provides complete access to all data, enabling access to information from all sources of data within the organization. This enables all IBM Cognos user capabilities to access to any combination of data sources providing a single point of access to data from multiple systems, platforms and technologies

- Maximize investment in relational sources including: IBM DB2®, Oracle, Sybase, Microsoft SQL Server®, with native access to all major databases, and support for database specific features and functionality, plus ODBC access to many more sources.
- OLAP sources such as IBM Cognos PowerCube, IBM Cubing Services, SAP BW, and Microsoft SSAS are accessible without the need to re-engineer or duplicate metadata, allowing automatic leverage of the OLAP hierarchical information. This enables exiting investment in OLAP technologies to be leveraged, whilst providing a broader consumption of critical business information.
- IBM Cognos TM1 and IBM Cognos Now! sources are open to all capabilities, providing a more complete view of the business to be delivered to consumers. As well as the full range of reporting and analysis for IBM Cognos TM1 and IBM Cognos Now!
- Applications such as SAP R/3, PeopleSoft Enterprise, JD Edwards EnterpriseOne, Oracle eBusiness Suite, Siebel CRM, and Salesforce.com become easily accessible with the complex ERP data sources being presented in common business terms that are easily understood by the user.
- Modern and legacy sources can be accessed through a relational interface allowing SQL to be written against these sources. These include XML, Web Services data, and LDAP. In addition many legacy sources can be accessed through JDBC™.
- Planning and budgeting data.

“Other products may give the illusion of being a single product, but with Cognos 8 BI, we receive truly integrated data and functionality... the breadth and depth of functionality delivered in Cognos 8 BI, made the decision to standardize on Cognos an easy one.”³

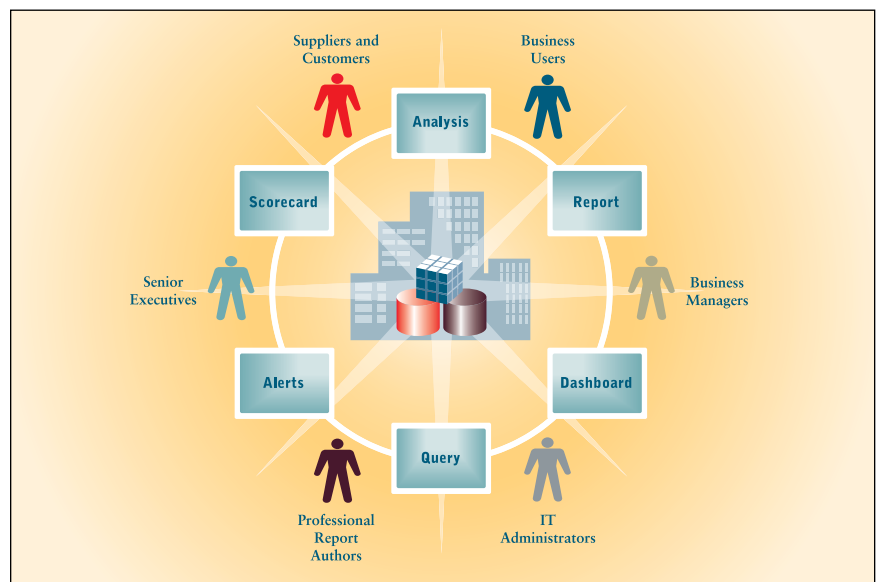
Mark Lack, Planning and Financial Manager, Mueller, Inc., Mar. 2006.

- Satellite data sources, including Microsoft Excel files, Microsoft PowerPoint® files, Microsoft Access® files, flat files, and more.
- Mainframe sources, including VSAM, IMS, IDMS, COBOL copybooks, and others.
- Content management data, including IBM FileNet®, Documentum, OpenSoft, and others.

Business intelligence capabilities

IBM Cognos 8 BI brings together the various styles of reporting, plus analysis, scorecarding, and dashboards. These capabilities are not simply interoperable products, nor are they separate products on a common platform. They are one product that present a consistent way to interact with your corporate information. This integrated set of capabilities makes a difference to our users. As one IBM Cognos customer stated:

You can deliver the complete range of BI capabilities with the flexibility of modular deployment and proven scalability to hundreds of thousands of users. IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence lets business users move among BI capabilities in a in a guided way, get the answers they seek, and collaborate while giving IT complete control over the BI environment.



IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence brings people and systems together: Simple, complete, proven BI

Value of all capabilities working seamlessly together

Simplified role based interfaces for personalized experience without separate products:

Each business user can access a single, familiar interface delivering consistent information in the format that makes sense to the user role. Based on a person's role, IT can enable more or less functionality at the push of a button to fit the need.

Single, adaptive authoring environment for all BI capabilities:

Gain a single adaptive authoring environment and adaptive report-authoring model for the complete range of enterprise reports, dashboards, scorecards, and other BI capabilities, based on a combination of either OLAP or relational data sources.

Create dashboards and reports in one product:

Create visually engaging strategic, tactical, and operational dashboards with gauges, charts, maps, and other graphical elements with built-in, fully automated drill-through capabilities — all from the same reporting interface you use for production and business reports. Use all of the same reporting distribution options for your dashboard, such as scheduling and bursting.

Collaborative report development:

Various users can collaborate when producing a report. A casual BI user can author a simple ad hoc report and give it to others for their reference, or to a professional author to be enhanced or edited. The report then returns to the business manager, and he or she can share the finished report(s) with intended recipients. Integrated security ensures people only view what they should.

Guided analysis from scorecard, dashboard, or report:

View information in a scorecard, dashboard, or report and get further detail all in one product, with content automatically maintained as you navigate. Interactive, dynamic scorecards, dashboards, and reports let business users follow their questions about how the company is progressing against its strategy.

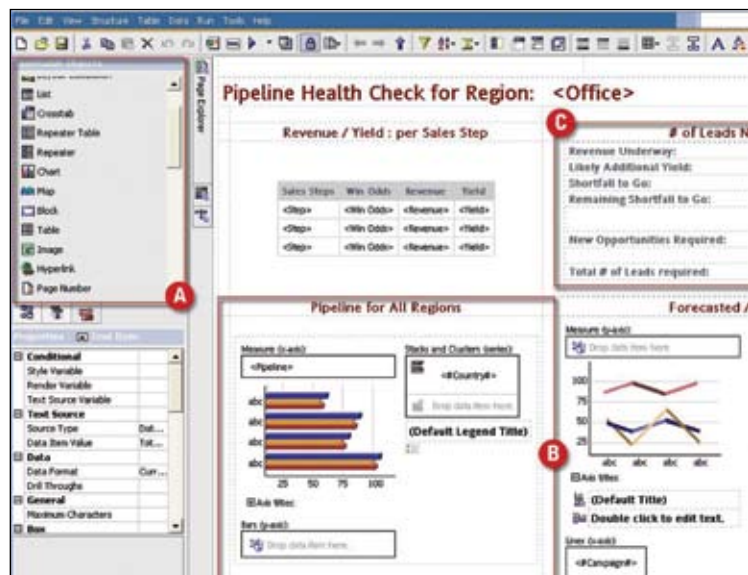
Deep comparative analysis:

Analyze large volumes of data from all business dimensions, regardless of where the data is stored — OLAP or dimensionally aware relational sources, or any relational source. Use drag-and-drop techniques such as pivoting and filtering to analyze large data sets with fast response times. All BI capabilities in IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence provide a dimensional view on top of relational data.

Reporting

IBM Cognos Reporting provides you with complete reporting coverage, advanced report authoring capabilities that match user needs, and a collaborative workflow environment that operates on a proven, Web services architecture.

- Create a complete range of reporting needs – with managed, operational, production, ad hoc, and statement-style reports from a single, collaborative authoring environment.
- Author content once; deliver to any format, device or language.
- Report against all operational systems, OLAP, and relational data sources. Display reports in all desired output formats (Email, HTML, Adobe® PDF, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, CSV, and XML).
- Drag-and-drop data elements, formatting, and selection extends self-service report authoring to users, offloads IT requirements, and reduces the reporting backlog.
- Single, zero-footprint, and adaptive authoring interface for reports and dashboards.
- Drill-through and drill-down automatically built-in.
- Annotate reports to insert commentary for additional context.
- Data and report lineage to ensure integrity of information and business confidence.



With drag-and-drop authoring, create compound reports that bring together disparate data sources and then distribute the information widely.

Analysis

Analysis enables the guided exploration of information that pertains to all dimensions of your business, regardless of where the data is stored. Robust, easy to use, and easy to deploy, IBM Cognos Analysis lets you explore and analyze large volumes of data covering all dimensions of the business, whether stored in OLAP or dimensionally aware relational sources.

- Analyze large and/or complete data sets with an easy-to-use, drag-and-drop user interface.
- Compare performance across dimensions to spot trends and anomalies over time.
- Pursue business questions through analysis and exploration with fast and predictable response times.
- Powerful, yet easy-to-use, comparative analysis lets you see performance outliers, such as most and least effective suppliers, in one view.
- Explore and perform multidimensional analysis on IBM Cognos 8 BI data in a familiar spreadsheet environment with IBM Cognos 8 BI Analysis for Microsoft Excel.

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet interface with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Settings, Run, Help) and a toolbar. On the left, the 'Insertable Objects' pane shows a tree structure for 'Go Sales (PC)' with dimensions like Years, Products, Staff, Sales Territory, and Retailer. The main area displays a pivot table with 'Rows' set to 'Combination' and 'Columns' set to 'QTD Grouped'. The table shows revenue data for various order methods, grouped by retailer site.

Revenue		Prior QTD	QTD
Telephone		\$2,437,167.60	\$5,4
E-mail		\$1,394,147.12	\$3,3
Sales visit		\$3,486,518.14	\$4,8
Web		\$4,130,883.24	\$5,2
Fax		\$754,480.44	\$1,2
Mail		\$342,898.46	\$4
Special		\$243,098.32	\$2
Order Method		\$12,789,193.32	\$21,01
Camping Equipment	Canada	\$888,852.88	\$2,2
	United States	\$1,193,602.78	\$2,0
	Brazil	\$288,350.30	\$9
	Subtotal (included)	\$2,370,805.96	\$5,21
	Subtotal (excluded)	\$4,999,571.18	\$7,6
By Retailer site		\$7,370,377.14	\$12,88
	Italy	\$58,133.58	\$2

Spot trends with multidimensional analysis against both OLAP and relational sources.

Dimension management with IBM Cognos 8 Business Viewpoint

Empower the business to own the dimensions, hierarchies and attributes for performance management.

IBM Cognos 8 Business Viewpoint provides the business users, such as business and financial analysts, and brand and category managers, an easy to use interface for them to create, maintain, govern and share their views for performance management. IBM Cognos 8 Business Viewpoint is a collaborative, workflow-oriented business process that manages the changes to the dimensions related to how enterprises analyze and manage their business. Business users are given the responsibility to manage dimensions in their areas of domain responsibility. By using workflows, proposed changes and additions to dimensions are approved and validated before being distributed throughout the enterprise.

Not only does IBM Cognos 8 Business Viewpoint empower the business, it also gives IT the confidence that any changes are put through a governance cycle and approved by the appropriate stewards before being publishes as the shared common view.

IBM Cognos 8 Business Viewpoint provides the following features and benefits:

Create and maintain

Enable business definition of common dimensions.

- Create, edit, manage, compare, and import.
- All line item dimensions required for PM (chart of accounts, cost center, product etc).
- Assemble multiple hierarchies, views or versions to support the performance management process.
- Work within familiar tools such as Microsoft Excel.
- Notifications by role as changes occur.

Govern and collaborate

- Enable governance of common dimensions.
- Workflow collaboration, multi user contribution. Audit who makes changes and what changes are made.
- Version control and roll back.
- Security for dimensions, users and user roles.
- Lineage of maintenance history back to the source.
- Central dimension store.

Share and synchronize

- Enable consistent use of common dimensions across PM.
- Pre-built integration with IBM Cognos 8 Planning, IBM Cognos TML, IBM Cognos 8 BI, and IBM Cognos Transformer.
- Selectively publish changes to authorized applications.
- Subscribe and synchronize master dimensions.
- Impact analysis for downstream effects.

Dashboards

Business dashboards communicate complex information quickly. They translate information from your various corporate systems and data into visually rich presentations using gauges, maps, charts, and other graphical elements to show multiple results together. IBM Cognos 8 Go! Dashboard delivers dynamic and customizable dashboarding capabilities that enable end user to quickly create and personalize their dashboard from trusted IBM Cognos assets with drag-and-drop ease.

- Rich graphics leveraging Flash technology.
- Powerful personalization capabilities allowing end users to build their own dashboard.
- Built on trusted data.

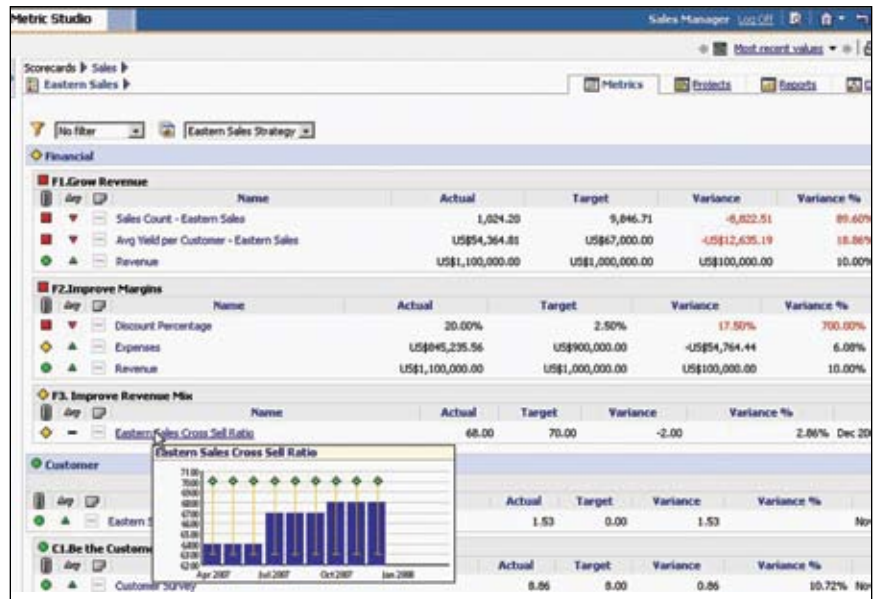


Create dashboards that communicate complex information graphically with the same capability you use for all reporting.

Scorecarding

Use IBM Cognos Scorecarding to link initiatives and projects to strategy, with metrics and strategy maps. Scorecarding helps you align your teams and tactics with strategy, communicate goals consistently, and monitor performance against targets. Use the same scorecard metrics to drive enterprise planning for integrated performance management.

- Easily see and track the status of key performance indicators and initiatives.
- Understand the impact and the root cause of performance issues.
- Attach reports, notes, and analysis to get the information underpinning metrics and understand what drives performance.
- Link metrics to owners to help drive accountability.
- Support Balanced Scorecard, six sigma, or other scorecarding methodologies.
- Scorecards and metrics use the same single metadata model that drives analysis and reporting.



Deliver dynamic scorecards that are more than pretty pictures; let people drill down on their metrics to make better business decisions.

Flexible access

IBM Cognos solutions have added functionality to ensure that the same quality of content can be delivered to users regardless of their environment. Reach more users with the IBM Cognos Go! family of products – BI through search, BI over mobile devices, BI accessible through Microsoft Office – and the IBM Cognos Now! family that adds more dashboard and operational BI capacity. IBM Cognos 8 Go! access modes help you increase business intelligence user adoption rates within your organization by letting users interact with reports, analyses, and other BI content using familiar applications or devices, such as a BlackBerry, Microsoft Windows Mobile®, and Symbian devices, Google, IBM WebSphere® Information Server, OmniFind® Edition, search engine, Microsoft Office application, or Web browser. All IBM Cognos 8 Go! access modes leverage the IBM Cognos 8 architecture, including security and metadata. There is no need to deploy or maintain a separate business intelligence environment.

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Mobile

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Mobile extends the value of the proven IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence architecture by providing users with access to timely, secure, and personalized information on their BlackBerry, Microsoft Windows Mobile, or Symbian wireless devices.

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Mobile fits the needs of all mobile workers across the organization – salespeople who need customer and pipeline details, operations personnel who need supply chain information, executives who must have information from every part of the business. It extends their reach by delivering the right information at the right time.

With IBM Cognos 8 Go! Mobile, users will be able to increase their productivity and improve their decision-making when working remotely by accessing operational and strategic information about customer orders, product performance, and more.

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Mobile offers:

- **Author once, consume anywhere:** secure, timely and personalized information delivered to the mobile.
- **Decision-making:** Anytime, anywhere.
- **Location aware:** relevant information based on the mobile workers' location.



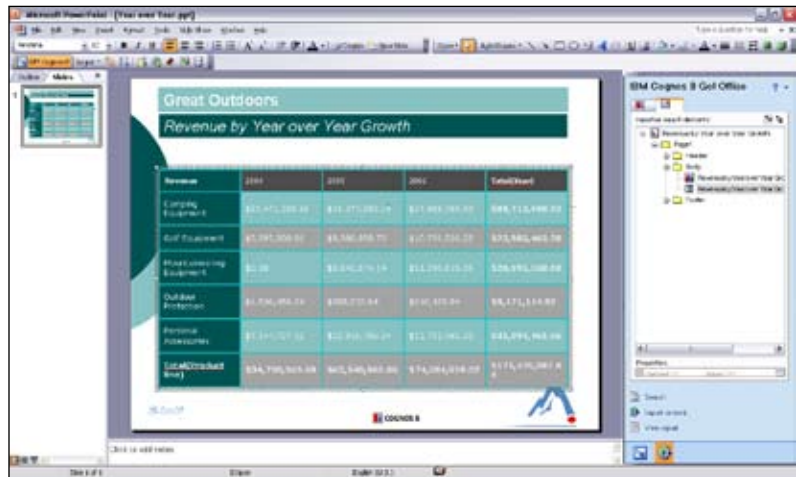
IBM Cognos 8 Go! Mobile fits the needs of mobile workers across the organization.

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Office

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Office lets you view and consume IBM Cognos business intelligence content within Microsoft Office applications such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Word. IBM Cognos 8 Go! Office brings trusted business intelligence data to familiar Microsoft Office applications like Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft PowerPoint. You can use Microsoft Office to exploit IBM Cognos 8 BI content while streamlining administration and extending the value of both investments. With IBM Cognos 8 Go! Office you can centralize data management, empower users with trusted information, and improve business performance with minimal training. IBM Cognos 8 Go! Office eliminates users' need to cut and paste or manually load data into spreadsheets or presentations. This saves time, prevents errors, and allows users to focus on making decisions rather than data entry.

IBM Cognos Go! Office offers:

- Distribution of business intelligence to everyday users.
- Central data management.
- No desktop administration.
- Access to import a wide range of BI content.



IBM Cognos 8 Go! Office lets you view and consume Cognos business intelligence content within Microsoft Office applications.

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search allows any user, regardless of their knowledge of Business Intelligence, to embrace the decision-making power of IBM Cognos 8 BI by allowing them to quickly and securely access and dynamically create BI content using standard search interfaces to access both structured (business intelligence) and unstructured information (all other corporate information).

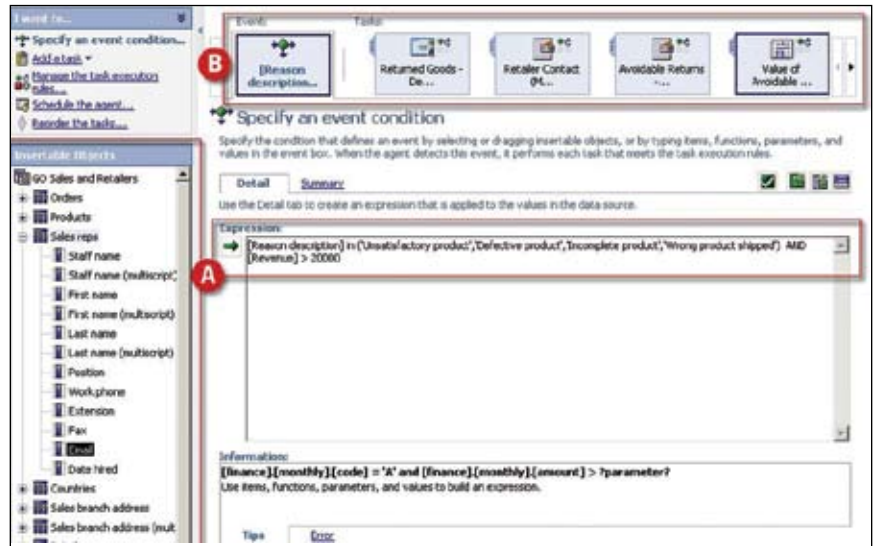
- IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search delivers easy access to BI.
- Fast and secure access to ranked and relevant BI content.
- Search all BI content and create views of information to answer search criteria.
- Search assisted authoring and exploration.
- Integrate BI content and enterprise content for a more informed view.

Events and alerts

Events and alerts go beyond the basic notification functionality provided in other products to automate the decision-making process, launch business processes, and integrate with Business Process Management (BPM). Where human intervention is required, through decision process automation, events and alerts notify the people who are accountable and provide the relevant information they need to resolve the issue. Where human intervention is not required, events and alerts initiate business processes such as data updates or Web service procedures to resolve the issue. Throughout the event lifecycle, events and alerts continue to monitor and notify, ensuring that all relevant players and systems take appropriate action at the right time.

Events and alerts benefits include:

- Linking different parts of the organization together for enterprise-wide event management.
- Compressing the time to action and resolution.
- Defining compound events and tasks using event conditions.
- Managing events in context.
- Using both decision-based and business-process issue resolution.
- Tracking critical events.



A user receives a news item alert in their BI browser that notifies them of a potential pipeline issue and delivers background information to jump-start the decision making process.

The IBM Cognos 8 platform - underpinning the BI value, to your standards

IT is being called upon to seamlessly integrate information, technology, and processes. The wide range of required capabilities, the number of users and communities involved, the large and varied data sources, and the complexity of enterprise infrastructures drive important considerations for IT when assessing the platform and architecture of BI solutions. In working with customers to deliver BI solutions, IT considerations can be summarized with three key questions:

- How does IT have everyone trust and use the same view of data across the organization?
- How do you scale IT to support mission-critical deployments and minimize strain?
- How does IT gain value from existing investments with the flexibility to respond to new demands?

Having a solid foundation in place to address today's requirements and support on organization's performance management journey is critical to ensure long-term successful BI implementations. With the right platform in place, the solution can change and grow as the organization's needs evolve – with new capabilities, new users, new data sources, and new technology environments – all without adding extra burden on IT. The IBM Cognos 8 platform is an open, enterprise-class platform providing a common foundation for data access, system management, and information delivery that underpins IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence and other IBM Cognos performance management products.

With the IBM Cognos 8 platform, IT professionals and the entire organization benefit from:

- Flexible and optimized access to all data
- Complete, consistent access to information the business can understand, own, and trust.
- Broad system management for IT to deploy, manage, and scale with confidence for service commitments.
- Modern service-oriented architecture (SOA) to leverage your infrastructure, adapt to change, and embrace open standards for long-term use and growth.

With the IBM Cognos 8 platform, you have the capacity to deliver on business needs today and grow your solution as your performance management journey evolves.

Complete, consistent view of information in terms that the business understands

Organizations are accumulating massive amounts of data. Data comes from ERP systems, data warehouses, operational data stores, customer-facing systems, and a wide array of other sources. Data resides in numerous locations, often in different formats, and isolated silos. Managed effectively, this data becomes information that enables people at all levels of an organization to gain a clear understanding of how they are performing, why, and what they need to do to perform better. The result can be an organization where processes and people are aligned; driving higher performance, and building competitive advantage.

The information must also be delivered in terms the business can understand and use without any requirement to know SQL or be technically savvy – and in a way that insulates them from the underlying physical complexity of data sources. It must be multi-lingual so that information need not be duplicated for different countries or user communities as that introduces risk of errors. And it must be published so that each user only receives the information they need, no more and no less, so the shared view is easily consumable. In this way, IT is freed from business demands of having to explain the data, having to duplicate data for different views or languages, or having to create all the reports users want because they the information simply isn't in a form they can use and trust.

In order for information to be in terms business understands and can use, data modelers need to translate the physical source, massage the information, and make it digestible. And they must consistently deliver that information to all business users so everyone works from the same information, and yet not overwhelm them by delivering only what is relevant to them. And to respond to the business they must do this efficiently so that information is made available to business users before they decide to create an information set for themselves in a spreadsheet.

IBM Cognos software provides the key capabilities to deliver

- Common business model as a foundation for common understanding across the full range of capabilities, regardless of location, language, or information requirement. Textual descriptions can be provided for complex calculations and derived information. And information can be grouped into logical packages digestible by each user community.
- Multi-lingual model to capture text properties associated with metadata, like descriptions and tooltips, so they can then be translated, or dynamically substituted, upon access. This ensures one model can support multiple languages so there is no unnecessary duplication, easy management of translated metadata in a single metadata location, and reduction of report proliferation simply to support multiple geographies.
- Multi-dimensional IBM Cognos PowerCube constructed in quick response to various business demands for specific views of data and do so without compromising the enterprise model or making the user wait until it is incorporated back in the warehouse for example. Without any requirement for database skills, business users, data analysts and IT modelers can model complex dimensional structures, incorporate 3rd party data such as SAP BW, apply business rules, and set security needed by the business. The IBM Cognos PowerCube is published as part of the enterprise model so business can use the full range of capabilities against them, address the one-off business demands, and yet ensures the information stays within the IT managed environment.
- Published sections of the common business model to different users communities so they that only receive relevant information making it easier for them to find the information they want. This model once, package for many facility ensures users receives consistency and the time and effort IT needs to deliver different models to different user groups is dramatically reduced.
- Information security to make the right information accessible to the right user group via granular row and column security, and restricting users, groups and/or roles to only be able to access certain parts of the publish model or an IBM Cognos PowerCube. This leverages existing security infrastructure and again reduces the need to proliferate reports as a report can be built more generically to contain all necessary information with the certainty that when a user access the report their view is restricted to only the information they are permitted to see.

Broad system management for IT to deploy, manage and scale

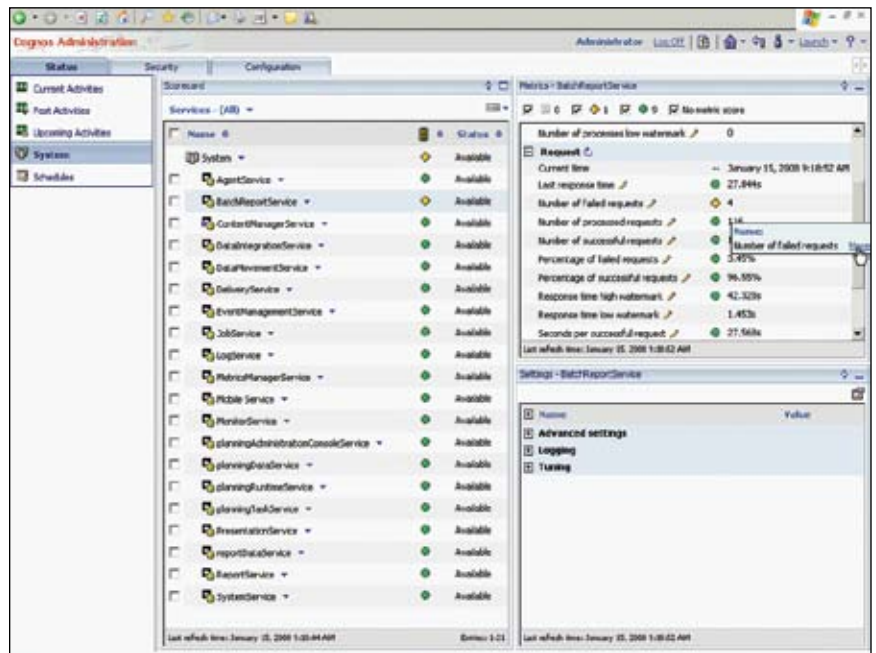
Technology hurdles can dampen business and IT enthusiasm for new applications and solutions, such as business intelligence. Users without access, users accessing the wrong information, poor performance, and random system errors; all of these shake business confidence and reduce the user community's willingness to adopt the solution. Even worse, these hurdles can undermine IT's confidence in the technology itself.

IT managers need to trust the technology solution and know that it enables them to meet their required service level commitments, provide the right access to all users, and minimize the risk of additional strain on IT staff. This confidence needs to exist at the time of initial deployment, and it needs to be able to grow as the solution extends across the business.

The enterprise-scalable IBM Cognos 8 platform provides broad system management with a complete view of system activity and the ability to streamline environment changes. The IBM Cognos 8 platform provides IT managers with the capacity to plan the required resources for a deployed solution. It offers built-in fault tolerance, predictable linear response, and the ability to implement comprehensive security; all without client-side install or downloads for end-users.

In a single, intuitive interface, BI system administration provides users with improved visibility into BI system activity, and the flexibility and control needed to manage the system proactively. System managers can see at-a-glance all relevant system metrics, quickly spot those flagged as potential problems, drill down to find the causes, and take steps to identify problems before they happen.

IBM Cognos solutions help you manage environment change in a visual way. Administrators can test, compare, and summarize report results between two application environments (e.g., new and older versions of IBM Cognos 8 BI) to identify and quantify issues during the upgrade process, ensuring faster and more streamlined upgrades.



Use the IBM Cognos 8 BI administration console to view metrics and manage a BI system.

Conclusion

When organizations choose new IT applications, IT managers must ensure important technology requirements are addressed:

- IT managers and architects need to know that technology solutions support broader enterprise standards such as portals, Web, security, and operating systems.
- IT managers also evaluate how the technology solution fits with their preferred deployment strategy; influencing how and where an application is deployed, and what hardware is required.
- IT managers must also consider that the solution is flexible enough to fit future requirements. With these criteria in mind, IT managers ensure the solutions are simple – both for the users to adopt and for IT to build. The IT manager must think about how to best deploy the solution in the work environment to which users are accustomed.

Service-oriented architecture

The IBM Cognos 8 platform is built on a modern, service-oriented architecture, based on open standards, and is completely environment neutral.

The platform can scale up or out as needed with peer-to-peer services locatable anywhere on the network. Customers, partners, and IBM Cognos consultants can innovate and customize performance management applications with the SOA-based IBM Cognos 8 platform and its purpose-built services. The single, open API gives full access to functionality to embed performance management capabilities into other applications.

IBM Cognos 8 BI, built on the IBM Cognos 8 platform, delivers on the need to standardize on a BI solution, and takes organizations down the path of performance management.

“Cognos has established the architecture for customers to enable this vision. Now it’s up to those same customers, along with partners, to take the next step to make pervasive BI/PM the reality it should be.”⁴

John Hagerty, Vice President, AMR Research

Foundation for performance management

Good decisions are the building blocks of great business performance. BI improves decision making. The IBM Cognos performance management system includes BI, integrates software, services, best practices, and partners. The result – a common understanding and actionable information based on answers to your performance management questions:

- ***How are we doing?***

Measure and monitor performance with scorecards and use dashboards to track your key metrics.

- ***Why?***

Reporting and analysis let you see data, gain context, understand trends, and spot anomalies.

- ***What should we be doing?***

Planning, budgets, and forecasts let you set and share a reliable view of the future.

Dashboards let you see where you are right now. Scorecards put the performance of strategic initiatives into perspective. The variety of reports lets you answer key business questions to understand the ‘why?’ behind your results. Through the analysis of relational or OLAP data, you can discover trends, threats, and opportunities. Events and alerts proactively notify you of relevant events which accelerate the time to action; reducing the need for people to maintain constant vigilance.

IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence supports corporate performance management because it delivers complete, consistent information. Together with integrated planning capabilities, you can then determine budgets, plan targets, and manage both effectively. This combination of integrated business intelligence and planning capabilities is core to a complete, closed loop performance management system that seamlessly connects forecasts, metrics, targets, actuals, reports, and underlying factors.

IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence breaks through these limits and more. The full promise of business intelligence is that all users be able to access all data, through all capabilities, across the IBM Cognos 8 platform. They should understand what happened and why, and determine what action they should take to help the organization succeed. This is the promise IBM Cognos 8 BI uniquely fulfills.



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About IBM Cognos BI and Performance Management

IBM Cognos business intelligence (BI) and performance management solutions deliver world-leading enterprise planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. IBM Cognos solutions bring together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers an open, adaptive and complete performance solution. Over 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries around the world choose IBM Cognos solutions.

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Endnotes

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