ONE TEAM

MAKING

IT WORK

THE POWER OF

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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1. Introduction

Understanding the real information that you have in your business is more critical now than ever to ensure the success of any organisation. Businesses are challenged to capitalise on all the data available to them to drive those valuable insights about their business, improve operational efficiency, and discover smarter ways to engage with customers. Microsoft's Power BI suite of business analytics tools makes it easy to analyse and gain powerful insights from your most critical business data.

Technology and particularly digital advancements have completely transformed the business world. Power BI can now help businesses learn more about their customers and themselves than ever before and give them that competitive advantage they may desperately need.

This paper attempts to outline what BI is and how Power BI can help businesses to harness the power of their data to deliver benefits that will not only help you drive efficiency but also provide you with that competitive advantage.

2. What is Business Intelligence?

The term Business Intelligence (BI) refers to the technologies, applications, strategies, and practices used to collect, analyse, integrate, and present relevant business information.

Business can be a powerful resource for businesses. When analysed and presented properly it can become a powerful tool to support and facilitate better business decisions. BI provides organisations access to information that is critical to the success of multiple areas including sales, finance, marketing, and a multitude of other areas and departments.

By leveraging the BI you have you will gain a greater insight into industry trends, and therefore help your business become more agile and able to flex to those changes, ultimately making you become more competitive and effective. For example:

- **Human Resources**: utilizing employee productivity analysis, salary compensation and payroll monitoring, and insights into employee behaviours and satisfaction.

- **Finance**: tracking monthly, quarterly and annual budgets, identifying variances quicker and providing simulation analysis.

- **Sales**: understanding the sales cycle properly through visualizations of the sales cycle, in-depth conversion rates analytics, revenue analysis, win/loss ratios and sales performance and contribution by salesperson, sector and campaign.

- **Marketing**: the performance and trends of sales campaigns, a breakdown of the cost per lead and the actual return on investment, site traffic analytics.

- **Executive Leadership**: Business Intelligence helps businesses to reduce costs by improving efficiency and productivity, improving sales, and revealing opportunities for continuous improvement.

So, the benefits to be had are broad and **eacs** is here to help you begin that journey and tap into its strengths and maximise the availability of the data you have already to enable you to make those time sensitive business critical decisions based on real-time live information.

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3. Power BI Service from **eacs**

The Power BI Service from **eacs**, uses a cloud-based suite of business analytics tools that allows nominated individuals to connect to, visualise, and analyse data with greater speed, efficiency, and understanding. It enables users to connect to a broad range of live data through:

- easy-to-use dashboards,
- interactive reports, and
- delivers compelling visualisations that will bring data to life.

Irrespective of the data source, Power BI can connect to any range of data sources, from basic Excel spreadsheets to databases, and both cloud-based and on-premise apps. As a result, your data can become meaningful and available regardless of where it is stored.

4. Why do people use Power BI

For businesses who want more reporting power and analytical muscle than that offered from Excel and other business applications, Power BI can give you access to the next level in business intelligence. By harnessing the power of Power BI, businesses can assemble, scrutinise, and visualise data from right across the company, thereby providing businesses with a far greater and deeper insight into the actual operations and performance of the business areas allowing you to make more informed decisions based on real time data.

Here are some of the key benefits of using the **eacs** Power BI solution:

- Businesses can input huge quantities of data into Power BI that many other platforms would struggle to process.
- Built-in machine learning features can analyse data and help users spot valuable trends and make educated predictions.
- Information can be visualized using powerful templates to allow businesses to better make sense of their data;
- Power BI is cloud-based, so users get cutting edge intelligence capabilities and powerful algorithms that are updated regularly.
- Powerful personalization capabilities allow users to create dashboards so they can access the data they need quickly.
- Alerts can be set up on KPIs to keep users up to date important metrics and measurements.
- Power BI has an intuitive interface that makes it far more user-friendly and easier to navigate then complex spreadsheets.
- The platform integrates with other popular business management tools like SharePoint, Office 365, and Dynamics 365, as well as other non-Microsoft products like Spark, Hadoop, Google Analytics, SAP, Salesforce, and MailChimp.
- With data security a massive talking point for modern businesses, Power BI ensures data is safe, offering granular controls on accessibility both internally and externally.

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5. What components make up Power BI?

The **eacs** Power BI service is made up of a number of applications, each with their own features and uses. These include:

- **Power Query**: a data connection tool that lets you transform, combine, and enhance data from several sources
- **Power Pivot**: a data modelling tool for creating data models
- **Power View**: a data visualization tool that generates interactive charts, graphs, maps, and other visuals
- **Power Map**: another visualization tool for creating immersive 3D visuals
- **Power Q&A**: a question and answer engine that lets you ask questions about your data in plain language

6. Key features of Power BI

Features are changing on almost a daily basis - with over 5 million instances of Power BI now reportedly in use, Microsoft has added yet more data analytics features to Power BI since its inception, and it will continue to do so.

Some of the most important features include:

Artificial Intelligence – This is where users can access image recognition and text analytics in Power BI, to create machine learning models using automated machine learning capabilities and integrate with Azure Machine Learning.

Hybrid deployment support - This feature provides built-in connectors that allow Power BI tools to connect with a number of different data sources from Microsoft, Salesforce and other vendors.

Quick Insights - This feature allows users to create subsets of data and automatically apply analytics to that information.

Common data model support - Power BI's support for the common data model allows the use of a standardized and extensible collection of data schemas (entities, attributes and relationships).

Cortana integration - This feature, which is especially popular on mobile devices, allows users to verbally query data using natural language and access results using Cortana, Microsoft's digital assistant.

Customization - This feature allows developers to change the appearance of default visualization and reporting tools and import new tools into the platform.

APIs for integration - This feature provides developers with sample code and application performance interfaces (APIs) for embedding the Power BI dashboard in other software products.

Self-service data prep -- Using Power Query, business analysts can ingest, transform, integrate and enrich big data into the Power BI web service. Ingested data can be shared across multiple Power BI models, reports and dashboards.

Modelling view -- This allows users to divide complex data models by subject area into separate diagrams, multiselect objects and set common properties, view and modify properties in the properties pane, and set display folders for simpler consumption of complex data models.

7. Power BI Mobile

Power BI Mobile is (unsurprisingly) Power BI's native mobile app and is available for Windows, iOS, and Android devices.

Through the app, users can get secure access to real-time dashboards and reports, whether that data is stored in the cloud, or on-premise in SQL Server. Mobile users can also create and share reports, submit natural language queries, and set up push notifications to get personal data alerts sent to their device.

8. Conclusion

We hope that this paper has helped you appreciate and understand what Business Intelligence is, what it's capable of, AND why it is so important to modern-day organisations.

As we know every business is unique and there will be different reasons why business invest in Power BI. However, there are some common themes why companies need to review their BI Strategy and look at the systems which are available to support them achieve their desired outcomes. These could include:

- **Gain New Customer Insights**: One of the primary reason's companies are investing their time, money, and efforts into Business Intelligence is because it gives them a greater ability to observe and analyse current customer buying trends. Once you utilize BI to understand what your consumers are buying and the buying motive, you can use this information to create products and product improvements to meet their expectations and needs and, as a result, improve your organization's bottom-line.

- **Improved Visibility**: Business Intelligent organizations have better control over their processes and standard operating procedures, as the visibility of these functions is improved by a BI system. The days of skimming through hundreds of pages of annual reports to assess performance are long gone. Business Intelligence illuminates all areas of your organization helps you to readily identify areas for improvement and allow you to be proactive instead of reactive.

- **Actionable Information**: An effective Business Intelligence system serves as a means to identify key organizational patterns and trends. A BI system also allows you to understand the implications of various organizational processes and changes, allowing you to make informed decisions and act accordingly.

- **Efficiency Improvements**: BI Systems help improve organizational efficiency which consequently increases productivity and can potentially increase revenue. Business Intelligence systems allow businesses to share vital information across departments with ease, saving time on reporting, data extraction, and data interpretation. Making the sharing of information easier and more efficient permits organizations to eliminate redundant roles and duties, allowing the employees to focus on their work instead of focusing on processing data.

- **Sales Insight**: Sales and marketing teams alike want to keep track of their customers, and most utilize Customer Relationship Management (CRM) application to do so. CRMs are designed to handle all interactions with customers. Because they house all customer communications and interactions, there is a wealth of data and information that can be interpreted and used to strategic initiatives. BI systems help organizations with everything from identifying new customers, tracking and retaining existing ones, and providing post-sale services.

- **Real-Time Data**: When executives and decision-makers have to wait for reports to be compiled by various departments, the data is prone to human error and is at risk of being outdated before it's even submitted for review. BI systems provide users with access to data in real-time through various means including spreadsheets, visual dashboards, and scheduled emails. Large amounts can be assimilated, interpreted, and distributed quickly and accurately when leveraging Business Intelligence tools.

- **Competitive Advantage**: In addition to all of these great benefits, Business Intelligence can help you gain insight into what your competitors are doing, allowing your organization to make educated decisions and plan for future endeavours.

9. Summary

In summary, BI makes it possible to combine data from multiple sources, analyse the information into a digested format, and then disseminate the information to relevant stakeholders. This allows companies to see the big picture and make smart business decisions. **eacs** is here to help you.

Further information can be found our website at www.eacs.com. To speak to one our experts, either call **eacs 0800 8047 256**, or alternatively email information@eacs.com.

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