

# The Executive Guide to BI Success:

A revolutionary new approach to BI that incorporates the best practices of traditional business intelligence with the benefits of real-time information flow

## Summary

This white paper discusses how to collaborate, explore and integrate vital business information across your organization to improve business performance:

- Correlate your financial strategy to actual operational data
- Transform BI initiatives to a predominantly business user driven initiative
- Leverage real-time insight to improve daily decision-making and business processes
- Drive direct productivity gains throughout your organization while minimizing your IT investment and on-going maintenance
- Build advanced requirements from exploration that will drastically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your current BI implementation

## **Enhance Performance via Operational Business Intelligence: Collaboration, Exploration, and Integration**

Companies today are looking across the enterprise for new opportunities to improve business performance. As performance management becomes more closely intertwined with operations, business intelligence itself is moving ever closer to operations. By analyzing real-time data, feedback and input to operations managers can be immediate and impactful. Performance management is also penetrating lower levels. Effective business managers are pushing the decision point down so that decisions are made as close to the customer as possible.

Business intelligence traditionally aggregated data from operational sources into a data warehouse for financial reporting and analysis. This infrastructure provides valuable information for rear-view mirror financial reporting. But business performance management demands a real-time dialog. This calls for an evolution of business intelligence.

Whereas traditional BI solutions focus on strategic planning and high-level decision-making, operational BI is a newer form of BI that empowers executives, line-of-business managers and other business professionals across the enterprise. Operationally focused BI provides access to both dynamic (transactional) and static (historical) data in a real-time environment.

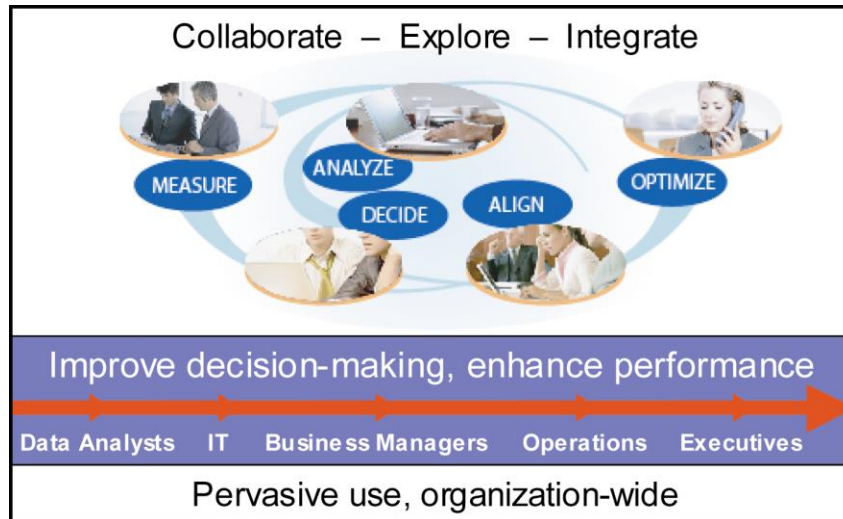
*Leading analyst firm IDC clearly understands the relationship between operations and performance management. Dan Vesset, Dennis Byron, and Brian McDonough wrote; "Today's global markets require businesses to share information in real-time, between multiple business entities and throughout the enterprise. Critical business decisions are made on operational levels that increasingly impact top-line revenues and bottom-line profitability and forward-thinking companies are already mandating collaborative environments to improve business processes and productivity, to build and maintain a competitive edge".*

### **InetSoft Operational Business Intelligence**

The InetSoft operational BI solution has a successful track record because it provides three fundamental capabilities beyond the typical reporting and analysis tools available today. These capabilities are: a collaborative environment, the ability to perform exploratory business analysis, and seamless integration with business processes and applications.

### **Collaboration through Building Blocks**

Business operations rely on many entities and departments throughout an organization. Performance management and improvement are inherently collaborative across these entities. Data and distilled information flows in both directions and in iterations. Disagreements and discrepancies invariably occur and require reconciliation. Reports and analysis based on a financial data warehouse need to be correlated with operational data so that business managers can drilldown. Business managers' findings may further involve other domain experts to identify root causes and actions.



Traditional collaboration is achieved through a mixture of business intelligence reports, desktop application files, emails and other means. It's the equivalent of collaborative document editing through email. The limitations of this approach become apparent as the number of parties involved grows. There is no uniform way to publish information. The scattered information raises the question of trustworthiness that is a major concern of auditing and compliance. Moreover, collaborating parties cannot easily build upon each other's work.

The rapidly growing Wikipedia on the web is quickly overtaking the traditional encyclopedia, and is produced by a user community. Wiki refers to web-based online publishing that is openly available to participants. Collaboration is the foundation instead of a consequence. Domain experts participate by building upon existing work in a uniform and open editing environment.

InetSoft's operational business intelligence solutions are designed with the same concept. Domain experts bring their knowledge of a business area and the associated data blocks, reports and visualization sheets. These objects are not only intelligence themselves but also the building blocks for future intelligence needs, even when data sources and formats are dissimilar. The uniform infrastructure exposes the needed data and intelligence while leaving the details to the respective domain experts.

This approach drives direct productivity gains throughout the organization and minimizes both the initial IT investment and on-going maintenance. It also leverages existing investments in business intelligence for new uses.

## Exploration

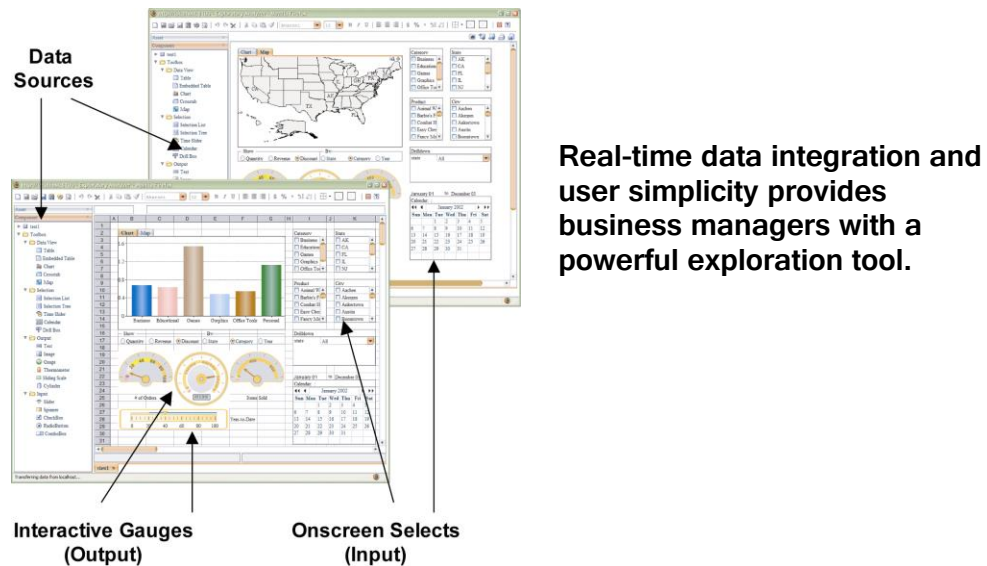
Exploration is the process of finding information without a specific question in mind. On the other hand, traditional ad hoc query is for answering a specific question. The dynamic of operations makes exploration essential to make sense of the quickly changing environment.

Investigating the cause of financial performance is an example of exploration. An operations manager needs to sift through a wide array of possibilities. Real-time data, like a newly launched

marketing campaign, needs to be aggregated with historic data, like sales trends, for a complete view.

Traditional BI invests expensive IT resources to incorporate new data into the BI infrastructure before any analysis is possible. The implementation cycle is long and carries high risk. If the new campaign is discontinued, the IT efforts will be wasted. If inadequate questions are defined, the new implementation will not serve the original purpose.

InetSoft operational BI combines data block technology with visualization for highly dynamic analysis. Data blocks assemble disparate data sources including databases, data warehouses, web services and flat files for data exploration. Visualization uses intuitive presentation and interactivity to allow users to analyze the data from new angles.



This low overhead approach opens the door for a wide range of operational business intelligence needs that otherwise would be too expensive to serve. Building advanced BI requirements from the results of exploration also drastically improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the BI implementation.

**Integration: People, Process, and Technology**

Integration is not only a technological concern. It is more about the people and the processes.

Operational users are a more diverse group than traditional BI users. In addition to highly trained analysts, operational users include basic office users and sophisticated business managers. An operational BI solution must be easy to use so that every member of this population can play a role. It also needs to allow IT to work with users collaboratively.

Operational BI needs to deliver immediately actionable items tightly linked to existing systems. This requires an unprecedented degree of integration between operational BI and business

processes. In fact, operational BI often becomes a seamless part of everyday business applications.

Integration beyond the superficial level becomes possible only if technology standards are applied. SOA, XML and application servers are ready components. Fully leveraging standard platforms also drastically reduces the total cost of ownership.

InetSoft's Style Intelligence™ operational BI platform integrates people and processes through standards based technology. Analysts and domain experts collaborate through InetSoft's data blocks to explore and visualize complex data. Managerial dashboards, scorecards, and alerts focus on distilled, high level KPIs identified by exploration. Production reports and interactive reports disseminate business intelligence down to the front line in a secure environment.

InetSoft establishes a revolutionary new approach to data analysis, incorporating the best practices of traditional business intelligence. The end result transforms BI from a predominantly IT centric initiative to a more business user directed initiative.

*For more information on InetSoft's Style Intelligence software, please visit [www.inetsoft.com](http://www.inetsoft.com).*