

PERFORMANCE **G2**



*The New Promise of Business Intelligence*

WHITEPAPER

## **Introduction:**

A lot has changed since business intelligence first came on the scene promising to help IT deliver information to the business. Information assets have grown exponentially, business users have become far more proficient with technology, and the pace of business has accelerated. And so business intelligence must evolve too. Today, for business intelligence to succeed, it must meet the needs of both business users and information technology (IT) professionals. That is often trickier than it sounds, because the needs of these two groups, at first glance, seem diametrically opposed. Business users clamor for the freedom and flexibility to access and analyze information on their own terms. IT, however, needs to maintain standards that will ensure the integrity and security of information as well as overall architecture and performance of the systems. IBM® Cognos® Business Intelligence strikes just the right balance. It delivers business users the freedom they need and IT the performance, security and reliability they demand.

Cognos Business Intelligence can access virtually any corporate data source, regardless of platform, and provide detailed, understandable views of that data to all users, regardless of location, from executives and analysts to managers and business intelligence (BI) professionals. It also offers innovative tools that allow these diverse users to easily access and analyze the information they need from their desktops or from mobile devices while on the road, sharing information and gaining new insights through collaboration and making better decisions faster.

## **The Challenge to Outperform: Inform, Engage, Align, Optimize**

Imagine that your organization effectively used all the relevant information available to it to make smarter decisions. Imagine that business decisions were made by business users with their fingers on the pulse of markets, customers, channels and operations at all times. And imagine that government programs were managed with full and timely insight into all the factors critical to their success. That is the new promise of business intelligence.

The dictionary defines “intelligence” as the “capacity for learning, reasoning, understanding... aptitude in grasping truths, relationships, facts, meanings, etc.”<sup>1</sup> Business intelligence starts by delivering relevant information to knowledge workers but it doesn’t stop there. The “new promise of business intelligence” envisions a working environment in which IT departments collect and distribute information throughout the enterprise at minimum cost and effort, and business users are empowered to derive timely, actionable insight from their information when and where they need it.

## **Inform: Deliver the right information to the right people at the right time**

Information can be your organization’s greatest asset. Enterprise information, whether it comes from day-to-day operations, enterprise resource planning systems, data warehouses, operational data stores, or other sources, is critical to understanding and managing your business performance. And the Web holds a wealth of information about your

<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com Unabridged, based on the Random House Dictionary, Random House, Inc. 2010.

customers, markets, competitors, suppliers and partners. Getting this information in the right hands at the right time can mean the difference between winning and losing.

The most valuable information, however, depreciates very quickly. Consider, for example, information used by a market analyst to identify emerging trends. If he or she can use that information for first mover advantage in the market, the information is priceless. But once the competition has the information, it's significantly less valuable. Likewise, identifying indicators of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is much more valuable before an account representative visits the customer than afterward.

So, the key to maximizing the value of information is getting the right information to the right people at the right time. This means that IT must be able to provide business users with easy access to data from all sources, in all time horizons no matter where it resides. And they need to do so in a way the users can understand, trust and use it.

Cognos Business Intelligence delivers:

- A unified BI workspace that gives business users the freedom to search and assemble any amount of BI content from any source onto a single interface—uncluttered by menus so they can personalize a view and gain business insight quickly
- BI content usable on mobile devices including Blackberry®, iPad™ and iPhone®
- Self-service drag-and-drop authoring in a zero-footprint user interface, to give business users the ability to simply search and/or create their own reports

- Access to a broad range of information sources including operational, analytical, internal and external data
- Access to information in all time horizons
- Capacity for IT professionals to author reports once and distribute to different types of users and devices in the format they need, including reports, dashboards, visualizations or any combination
- Business dashboards that communicate complex information quickly with visually rich presentations using gauges, maps, charts, and other graphical elements to show multiple results together
- Transparent IBM Cognos data lineage
- Consolidated data sources so a user has only one place to go to find needed information.



*Active Report gives mobile employees a rich, interactive BI experience even when disconnected.*



## Engage: Make the most of a workforce driven to outperform

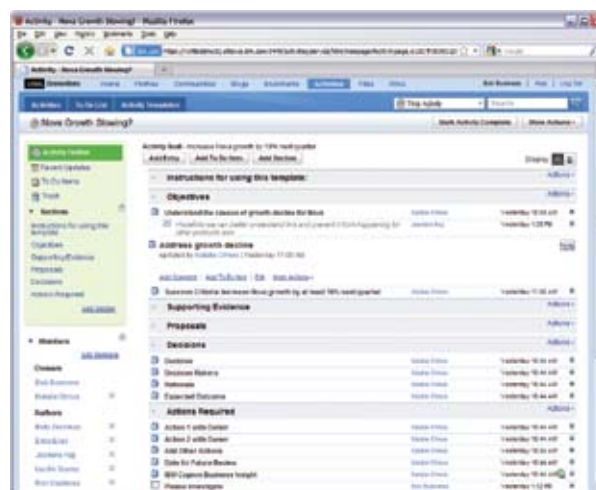
Delivering timely, relevant information is a good first step. However, if your business intelligence stops there, you'll never achieve the full benefits of BI. That can happen only when business users are actively engaged in exploring, analyzing and using information.

In every organization, there are a few outperformers whom the team relies on for both information and insight. These outperformers know what information to look for, where to get it and how to use information to assess a situation from all angles and understand the tactical and strategic implications. The ideal is to create an enterprise-wide culture of outperformers who actively engage with information to contribute new and actionable insights.

This requires a business intelligence solution that goes well beyond the traditional toolset. Business users need the ability to analyze the immediate situation and to consider all possible outcomes.

Cognos Business Intelligence delivers:

- A progressive experience that lets users understand the tactical and strategic implications of proposed actions by easily shifting their BI view to more advanced, predictive or what-if analysis
- Visualizations and dashboards that enable users to look at information in new ways to derive new insights
- The ability to analyze large data sets with an easy-to-use drag-and-drop user interface
- The ability to compare performance across dimensions to spot trends and anomalies
- Fast and predictable response times
- The capability to conduct comparative analysis to identify performance outliers, such as most and least effective suppliers, in one view
- Multidimensional analysis on Cognos Business Intelligence data in a familiar spreadsheet environment with IBM Cognos Analysis for Microsoft® Excel®



*Collaborate about BI content to share insights, gain consensus and speed decision-making.*

## Align: Drive alignment to accelerate the decision making process

Ultimately, the goal is to enable companies to make better decisions faster. Decisions are rarely made based on a single data point or a single individual's opinion made in isolation. Multiple inputs must be combined, shared, analyzed and agreed upon. Teams must be able to hypothesize and test the strategic and tactical impact of possible courses of action.

Business intelligence spans many decision-makers, functions, departments, data systems, and business processes. Enabling a collaborative decision-making process requires an approach that aligns tactical decisions with strategic goals, and ties business processes together across organizational boundaries.

This requires alignment in two directions:

- Vertical alignment, where strategic goals and objectives are set at the executive level tied to operational objectives at the functional level, and then to specific decision-making areas within those functions. Then the results and status are tracked and monitored back up through the decision chain

- Horizontal alignment, where different functions can collaborate and execute strategic decisions across business processes and departmental boundaries

In terms of information requirements, this alignment requires every decision-maker to be able to rely on consistent and complete information. They need a method to capture and share decisions and plans within the performance management system, and a shared, agreed-upon set of definitions — a common language that defines how the business wants to shape the information that underpins its drive to improve business performance.

Cognos Business Intelligence delivers:

- Real-time monitoring of information for user communities that are challenged to perform real-time analytics in compressed decision cycle times
- Integrated BI through mashups and business-driven workflow that links BI to everyday human tasks
- Built-in collaboration and social networking to fuel the exchange of ideas and knowledge in decision-making
- The ability to initiate activities, engage others with expertise, post messages, files, links, and discuss or review others' opinions so everyone can work together towards a common goal
- The ability to show the greater business context by attaching annotations down to the cell level, definitions of terms, data lineage, and how decisions were made
- Workflow that establishes accountability, provides decision templates, sequences next steps and ensures communication and coordination to engage the right people at the right time to accelerate alignment and action

- Scorecarding to align initiatives and projects with the overall business strategy, communicate goals consistently, and monitor performance against targets. The same scorecard metrics drive enterprise planning for integrated performance management.

### **Optimize: Enable IT to respond promptly and effectively to changing business demands**

Having a solid foundation to address both today's requirements and those in the future is critical to ensuring sustainable benefits. With the right architecture in place, the solution can change and grow as the organization's needs evolve, without placing an extra burden on IT.

Cognos Business Intelligence delivers:

- Access to all data wherever it resides, inside or outside the organization
- Information organized in terms that capture business-entered performance drivers
- Ease of deployment and management to meet and exceed service level agreements
- The ability to fit with existing infrastructure choices and adapt to future requirements

### Support All Types of Information in All Time Horizons

The IBM Cognos platform is designed to provide open access to any combination of heterogeneous data sources. It provides a single point of access to data from multiple systems and technologies, including:

- Relational sources such as 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® NetWeaver Business Warehouse® and Microsoft SSAS, which are all accessible without the need to re-engineer or duplicate metadata.
- IBM Cognos TM1 and IBM Real-time Monitoring sources, as well as the full range of their reporting and analysis capabilities.
- SAP R/3, PeopleSoft® Enterprise, JD Edwards® EnterpriseOne, Oracle eBusiness Suite, Siebel® CRM, and Salesforce.com, which are easily accessible with the complex ERP data sources being presented in common business terms.
- Modern and legacy sources, which 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 from IBM Cognos planning solutions.
- 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.



Access and view financial information from IBM Cognos TM1 and sales reports side by side.

### **IBM Cognos 10: Intelligence Unleashed Smarter Decisions. Better Results.**

Cognos 10 delivers a revolutionary new user experience and expands traditional business intelligence (BI) with planning, scenario modeling, real-time monitoring and predictive analytics. With the ability to interact, search and assemble all perspectives of your business, Cognos 10 provides a limitless BI workspace to support how people think and work.

Cognos 10 enables organizations to outperform by providing:

- Analytics everyone can use in a BI workspace that sharpens individual skills to answer key business questions
- Collective intelligence with built-in collaboration and social networking to connect people and insights to gain alignment
- Actionable insight everywhere in mobile, real-time and business processes to instantly respond at the point of impact

Built on a proven technology platform, Cognos 10 is designed to upgrade seamlessly and to cost-effectively scale for the broadest of deployments. Cognos 10 provides you and your organization the freedom to see more, do more—and make the smart decisions that drive better business results

### **Conclusion**

It's time to expect more from business intelligence. Today's markets demand it. Today's business managers expect it. And Cognos Business Intelligence delivers it. With Cognos Business Intelligence, you don't just inform business users. You arm them with the most powerful, progressive set of analytics available, empowering them to see more of the information that matters to your business. Cognos Business Intelligence gives business users the freedom to collaborate and extend BI so they can share insights, gain alignment and make better decisions faster. That is the new promise of business intelligence. And that is the promise that IBM Cognos Business Intelligence uniquely fulfills.

## About PerformanceG2, Inc.

PerformanceG2, Inc. is a full-service performance management consultancy that can help your organization achieve breakthrough performance. We do this by offering a comprehensive package of performance management solutions, services and software including: Business Intelligence, financial and data management, Cognos onsite and online training, Cognos support, consulting and staffing services, all delivered by our team of experienced consultants and award-winning trainers. PerformanceG2, Inc. is an Advanced IBM Cognos business partner with multiple IBM Cognos technology certifications.

## For more information

For more information about PerformanceG2, or for more information about Cognos Business Intelligence, visit <http://performanceg2.com>, call (877) 742-4276 or email us at [info@performanceg2.com](mailto:info@performanceg2.com).



## About IBM Business Analytics

IBM Business Analytics software delivers complete, consistent and accurate information that decision-makers trust to improve business performance. A comprehensive portfolio of business intelligence, advanced analytics, financial performance and strategy management and analytic applications gives you clear, immediate and actionable insights into current performance and the ability to predict future outcomes.

Combined with rich industry solutions, proven practices and professional services, organizations of every size can drive the highest IT productivity and deliver better results.

## For more information

For further information or to reach a representative:

[ibm.com/cognos](http://ibm.com/cognos).

## Request a call

To request a call or to ask a question, go to [ibm.com/cognos/contactus](http://ibm.com/cognos/contactus). An IBM Cognos representative will respond to your enquiry within two business days.

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