

SEI WHITEPAPER

Better visibility,
extraordinary
decision support



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Introduction

Data. Years ago, businesses were looking for more. However, many of today's business people struggle to keep up with it all.

As the amount of data your business is collecting continues to grow, it's more important than ever to find a way to both manage and make sense of it all. To gain that competitive edge, you need to find a way to convert all your data into tangible insight and opportunities.

Most likely, you are familiar with the problem: Business is more complex than ever before. Data is coming in from a variety of sources and systems. Everything is coming in all at once, and you barely have time to sort through the deluge, much less interpret it and act on timely analysis. You know you need to be agile to respond to changing economic conditions, but the volume of data is simply overwhelming. Instead of wishing for more, you find yourself wishing for better, more concise information.

In this paper, we'll explore some of the data challenges businesses are currently facing and how modern BI solutions like Sage Enterprise Intelligence can help you reveal new opportunities, quickly adapt to market changes, and make faster, more accurate decisions.



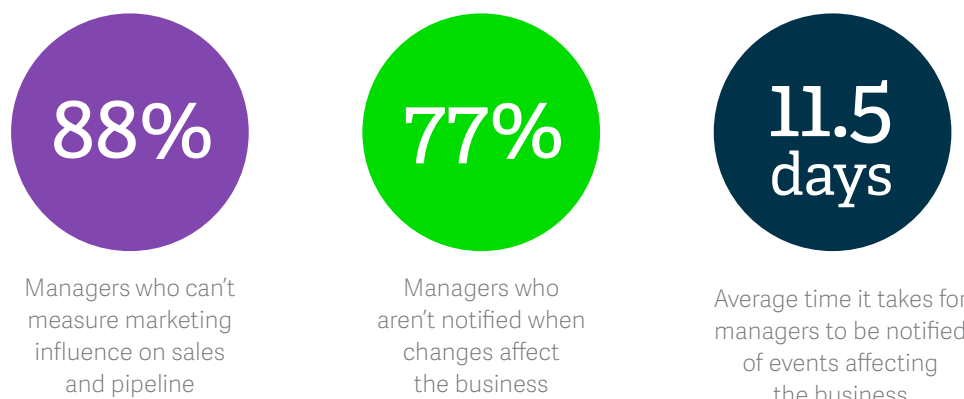
Data: *We have a problem*

To run your business effectively, it's critical to make timely operational decisions. Your ERP system can help streamline operations and provide better visibility on what's happening in your business—but it's not designed to facilitate decision making.

And most ERP systems do not provide simple tools to dynamically explore data, unveil opportunities, or share analysis without technical skills.

In fact, a recent Aberdeen¹ study found that 46% of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) recognize that too little data is actually used for business analysis. SMBs note a lack of access to the concise information needed in order to make well-informed decisions. The fact is that traditional tools simply can't handle the massive volume of data generated today. Plus, it requires manual data transfer in order to combine these fragmented data sources. By the time you gather all your data, you may have missed your window of opportunity!

A big need for decision-making support



Source: Aberdeen Group

¹ Aberdeen Group, "SMBs Without BI Integration," September 2012

To add to the problem, BI tools have traditionally been too sophisticated and complicated to use. But there are new options available today that no longer demand expert skills or a big investment.

What does a modern business analysis tool look like? BI solutions like Sage Enterprise Intelligence easily connect to ERP transactional data and provide the intuitive self-service tools you need to drive accurate analysis and better decision-making.

BI is designed to address that “overwhelming volume of data” challenge by providing easy access to self-service analytics and reports. With real-time integration with your ERP, you can make informed and timely decisions and reduce the time spent on reporting and analysis. Plus, you can access these tools anytime, anywhere through mobile devices.

The four keys to greater visibility and better business decisions are:

- Real-time information access.
- Interactive data visualization and analysis tools.
- Collaboration tools.
- Self-service and mobility.

With real-time integration with your ERP, you can make informed and timely decisions



Four keys to greater visibility and better business decisions

1. Real-time information access

There is no substitute for having real-time access to data. Sage Enterprise Intelligence offers fast online analytical processing (OLAP) of even the largest volume of data. This drives value to business users by supplying the information you need to make decisions in a timely fashion.

With integration with multiple data sources, Sage Enterprise Intelligence supplies business users and managers with accurate, up-to-date information whenever it's needed.

Real-time business analysis tool

Sage Enterprise Intelligence provides self-service tools and reduces the time spent on analysis. On average,² businesses that have integrated BI with ERP are twice as more likely to gain real-time visibility into the status of all processes. Using an intuitive web interface and access to real-time data, you can analyze and report on every aspect of your business including:

- Budget management and control
- Sales
- Inventory control
- Quality control
- Customer service
- Productivity

2. Interactive data visualization and analysis tools

Sage Enterprise Intelligence provides business users, managers, and executives with a simple tool to both access and analyze enterprise data. It's easy to set up KPIs and personalized dashboards so you can view data that's most meaningful to your role in the organization.

Interactive tools enable you to explore information in a variety of ways. You can drill down or drill up to see transactional details and how they are affecting your bottom line. Sage Enterprise Intelligence provides an instant diagnostic—whether you want to look at supply chain performance, quality issues, or how to build a bigger sales pipeline. You have the power to pull the necessary data and analyze it in a variety of ways.

Integrated with a Sage ERP solution, Sage Enterprise Intelligence improves access to data and ultimately the time to decision. On average,² business users have reduced the time to decision by 20% when using integrated BI and ERP.

Your formidable decision-making tool

Sage Enterprise Intelligence accelerates the distribution of relevant information across the organization so you can make coherent, better-informed decisions. It offers:

- Extensive search capabilities
- Data visualization tools such as gauges, maps, and charts
- Live access to enterprise data from Excel
- Personalized dashboards and KPIs

² Castellina, Nick and White, David, "BI and ERP in SME," Aberdeen Group, July 2013

3. Collaboration

When building your analytics strategy, it's important to support collaboration and knowledge sharing. This ultimately leads to better decisions and business performance. An Aberdeen survey³ found that 74% of "collaborators" reported an improvement or substantial improvement in the speed of decision making. This boost in performance resulted in tangible benefits in three key areas: customer response, process cycle times, and employee productivity.

Sage Enterprise Intelligence helps you simplify and accelerate the distribution of critical information across your organization. Based on appropriate security, it's easy to share information, and you can automatically generate and distribute reports based on a predefined schedule. You can also send snapshots of important business data in email attachments to others for review and analysis.

Your collaboration tool

Sage Enterprise Intelligence not only facilitates timely, fact-based decision making, it allows you to easily share information across your organization based on security and job role. You'll improve collaboration and cross-functional performance with the ability to:

- Share consistent, up-to-date information that supports coherent decision making
- Notify managers and executives of critical events affecting the business
- Provide elegant, graphical reports for timely review

Those businesses that offer interactive data visualization are 48% more likely to have a strategy for making more self-sufficient BI users

"Interactive Data Visualization,"
Aberdeen Group, March 2014

4. Self-service and mobility

There's a reason so many businesses have relied on Excel for so long to analyze their data. It's easy to use, and just about everyone knows how to use it. However, Excel is not designed to handle the amount of data we have today. Sage Enterprise Intelligence is easy to use and offers an intuitive web interface. You can also leverage existing skills on your team and work with the power of Excel to report on your data.

As discussed, the interactive visual tools also support self-service and agility. Managers and business users can get a real-time overview of the company's top KPIs and trends with access to graphical dashboards. Sage Enterprise Intelligence also supports access from a variety of mobile devices so you can track performance from anywhere you are. This not only increases productivity, but also allows managers to make timely decisions even when they're out of the office.

Heavy data volume?

Sage Enterprise Intelligence helps you access and analyze enterprise data in an intuitive self-sufficient manner. This enables businesses to:

- Improve visibility into operations
- Accelerate notification of important changes
- Reduce time to decision by 20% on average

Make self-sufficiency a priority

One way to empower collaboration is to reduce the reliance on IT. Top-performing companies enable self-service analytics so that managers can easily access the information they need and accelerate the decision making process.

³ Aberdeen Group, "Analytical Collaboration: The Whole is Greater than the Sum of Its Parts," July 2013

Conclusion

With Sage Enterprise Intelligence, you can finally go beyond the limits of spreadsheets to get a real-time view of your data and transform it into meaningful information. You can connect to ERP transactional data and get the intuitive tools you need to deliver fast and accurate analysis. Leveraging BI and ERP integration, you'll reduce the time to decision and improve the coordination of operations across your organization.

Sage Enterprise Intelligence unlocks the power of your data and delivers true visibility. You can improve access to information with self-service analytics and reports through an easy-to-use web interface or mobile devices. With a wide range of reporting templates, data visualization tools, and fast data processing engine, Sage Enterprise Intelligence is a perfect fit Sage ERP customers looking to make faster, more informed decisions.

The benefits of BI integration:

Without BI:

- Only 12% are able to measure marketing influence on sales and pipeline
- Takes 11.5 days on average for managers to be notified of events that are affecting the business

With BI:

- Three times more likely to measure marketing influence
- 5.5 hours reduced time to notification

Source: Aberdeen Group



Learn how Sage Enterprise Intelligence can work for your business by visiting us online at infoman-inc.com or by calling 425-673-9299.



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