

# Intelligent Solutions For Business Problems

**BI provides a very intuitive, interactive and highly visual interface that would help small and medium sized businesses in the most cost-effective way, feels Sanjay Mehta, CEO, MAIA Intelligence**



**B**usiness Intelligence (BI) is one of the most sought after solutions in the world of business, especially in those businesses that require sites to be networked and business operations to be integrated across states/nations. As far as the Small and Medium Sized Businesses (SMBs) in India are concerned, the concept is gradually picking up and is expected to grow in the years to come. Researches undertaken by several prestigious agencies have indicated BI to be one of the high priority engagements for CIO's in India and abroad.

Until few years ago, BI was considered to be a business tool accessible only to the large conglomerates considering the sheer enormity of investments one was required to make. Not anymore! With several service providers entering the BI domain, today, a host of tailor-made BI solutions are available off-the-shelf for SMBs at a price that would not pinch them. It is widely known that SMBs in the country are moving up the IT

curve, and with their existing IT infrastructure maturing, there has been a corresponding rise in deployment of applications, especially those that render ad hoc analysis using spreadsheets. Businesses are aware of the fact that most of the conventional software currently being used are outdated and are slow, often unreliable for strategic decision making purposes. Considering the fact that most SMBs are engaged in varied business practices there is a growing realisation that they need to do a lot more data mining and data analysis to take informed decisions. The very fact that BI is capable of interacting with multiple applications and can provide reports and analysis on a single screen gives BI an unbeatable edge vis-à-vis conventional low-end business software. As for those SMBs who are presently using financial accounting and inventory management packages like Tally, they can also harness the power of BI which could not only facilitate connect with them, but

also talk to their existing databases. In short, BI can help SMBs to analyse and process information from different sources.

It may not be evident, but it is equally true that SMBs like large enterprises produce tons of important data. Though the amount of data produced by them may seem negligible vis-à-vis large corporate houses, in majority cases it has been found that SMBs lack requisite analytical abilities to make best use of the data generated. Traditionally, SMBs were seen to be hunting for affordable BI, but today we see a paradigm shift in their approach as they have begun to realise its criticality as a decision making tool. SMBs are realising that generating complicated spreadsheets on a sustained basis is highly time-consuming and manpower intensive process. SMBs, especially those in the mid-market segment (100-999 employees) who are on the lookout for a more effective and efficient alternative are

switching over to BI to not only comply with the regulatory requirements, but also to increase the decision-making abilities of their managers, front desk executives and back-office staff.

The scope of traditional BI aimed at the large players were limited to large enterprises and tailor-made to the requirements of 5-10 users, whereas today operational BI tools empower SMBs to make informed decisions by leveraging knowledge and best business practices. Operational BI is for SMBs who are seeking better decision-making power, statutory and regulatory compliance with standards. Companies can also use BI to consolidate and co-relate information securely in single window from multiple systems and disparate data sources. Normally, it has been found that unstructured way of reporting, results into

SMBs wanting to deploy BI to stay competitive. Undoubtedly, there is a huge demand for affordable BI solution.

Nowadays, SMBs also have access to bundled solutions for BI as well as their enterprise application. Several OEM partners have taken proactive steps to integrate BI technology for functions like Web intelligence, data analytics and dashboards. SMBs in the retail sector are leading the use of BI to develop the right pricing models and insights into customer buying patterns. In the manufacturing domain, SMBs can now use BI to get better visibility into inventory and supply chain operations. As for SMBs in the health and insurance sectors, they can use BI system to encourage employees to focus on strategy rather than simply creating and distributing transactional reports.

By and large, the SMB

investments by providing visual reporting and guided analysis for business users. Presently, BI software is aimed at business users within their existing transactional applications. BI provides a very intuitive, interactive and highly visual interface that lets users see problems, both summary and details, in a very understandable way. BI product users can quickly comprehend and navigate vast amounts of data using BI.

BI is the buzz in the SMB Segment, where the need for solution is increasing. SMB's have now started to adopt BI software to help meet their business objectives. BI today has been made affordable and easily scalable for companies having narrow budgets. Operational BI favours SMB's with its cost effective price point. Moreover, it is easy to implement BI with a few experts, but rolling out to

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unforgiving data errors. However, with operational BI in place, SMBs can now rely on a wide range of computer generated reports designed to facilitate decision-making. Operational BI enables data traceability for audit purposes; and SMB users can trace the data source of any piece of information.

Of late, there has been a gradual rise in the number of

market in India for BI continues to remain untapped, prime reasons being affordability and scalability. Understandably, SMBs need MIS reporting tools which is not only affordably priced, but also easy to learn, use, deploy and maintain. The BI applications amongst SMB users in India are growing at an exponential rate. BI products can help to unlock the full potential return on a SMB's IT

thousands of users within the enterprise and beyond is very difficult. With operational BI, organisations get a low - TCO, quickly deployable, easily manageable, integrated end-to-end BI with stunning analytics. The importance of BI to SMBs underlies the sense of urgency for many of these firms to make better use of their enterprise data for enhanced and faster decision making. ■■