

Top Ten Tips For Integrating Business Intelligence Into Business Operations

*By Mike Ferguson
Intelligent Business Strategies*

Business intelligence (BI) has become strategic but still needs to be integrated into every business process to guide business operations towards achieving strategic objectives. The following tips will help you achieve this

1. Clean up your BI before trying to integrate it with any operational applications or portals. First establish consistency across all BI tools and data stores by defining common data names, common data definitions and common data integrity rules for all data in these systems. Avoid different names for the same measure in different BI data stores or BI tool business views. Avoid the same name for different measures in BI data stores. Avoid different formulae for measures with the same data names. Hold this common metadata in XML preferably in an ETL metadata repository
2. Establish a common business intelligence platform of integrated tools from a single vendor for all BI development
3. Integrate your BI before integrating your BI. Link corporate performance management (CPM) scorecards to dashboards and analytic applications by defining metrics trees in CPM that calculate scorecard KPIs from underlying lower level metrics in custom and packaged analytic applications. This allows managers to drill from scorecards all the way into detailed data to identify the reasons why there is a business problem
4. Focus BI integration around achieving a single specific prioritised business objective – e.g. to reduce operational cost
5. Establish a methodology to identify where BI is needed, who (target user communities) or what (applications) needs it and when they need it. This involves identifying, who in your organisation contributes to the SAME business objective. From here you must identify their role in the business, the applications they use every day, whether they have time to use a BI tool or need BI integrated into specific applications, the BI they need to help them contribute to the common objective, the business process tasks they perform, the process tasks where BI is needed, the form they need it in (e.g. guided recommendations, alerts, reports etc), the actions they need to take and whether they need to collaborate with others before taking action.
6. Don't assume one approach for BI integration. Recognise that there is a different closed loop strategy needed to integrate BI into operations for different roles in the enterprise. For example an executive needs BI integrated into CPM software while a customer service representative in the call centre needs BI integrated into a specific operational application.
7. Implement BI web services by taking advantage of web service APIs available from BI tool vendors. BI web services allow you to easily integrate BI into portlets in enterprise and BI

portals. They also allow you to dynamically integrate with other applications without the need to 'hardwire' BI integration into applications

8. For fast results and for people who need to collaborate over BI before making decision, integrate BI into enterprise portals so that users can take advantage of portal collaboration tools to have net meetings and threaded discussions over BI content. BI integration in enterprise portals is a strategy particularly well suited to managers and executives. This strategy is may not be sufficient for operations personnel who are 'tied' to a specific application when performing their job function.
9. For tight integration with operational application and application performance leverage BI in the database by exploiting SQL analytical functions, materialized views and vendor supplied BI application components such as analytical Java Beans
10. Use real time processing (near real-time event capture, on-demand data integration, automatic analysis and automated decisioning) and business activity monitoring (BAM) to integrate on-demand recommendations into customer touch points and for dynamic web personalisation driven off customer intelligence

Mike Ferguson is Managing Director of Intelligent Business Strategies Limited

(<http://www.intelligentbusiness.biz>). As an analyst and consultant he specialises in business



intelligence and enterprise business integration. With over 26 years of IT experience, Mike has consulted for dozens of companies on business intelligence strategy, technology selection, enterprise architecture, enterprise portals, business process integration, SOA and data integration. He has spoken at events all over the world and written numerous articles. Mike is a resident expert on the Business Intelligence Network, providing articles, blogs and his insights on the industry. Formerly he was a principal and co-founder of Codd and Date Europe Limited – the inventors of the Relational Model, a Chief Architect at NCR on the Teradata DBMS and European Managing Director of Database Associates. He teaches popular Enterprise 2.0 master classes in Operational Business Intelligence and Performance Management, Master Data Management, Service Oriented Architecture and Enterprise Portals.

He can be contacted on info@intelligentbusiness.biz or +44 1625 520700.

For more articles visit <http://www.intelligentbusiness.biz/ArticlesList.html>