



Business Intelligence & Information Management
Symposium Community

Trip Report

Business Intelligence & Information Management Symposium Community

Members: 769

This year's Gartner Symposium/ITxpo — held from 12 through 16 October in Orlando, Florida — was organized around the theme of IT and the economy. This report offers an overview of what was on attendees' minds and what they learned from Gartner analysts and each other.

Key Takeaways

Leaders of business intelligence and information management (BIIM) initiatives learned how to define business value and impose governance over their projects. While much of the buzz at the conference was on the economic downturn, BIIM initiative leaders were confident their projects would take on increased importance because of the heightened need for IT to help the business to use information and insight to make better decisions, function smarter and increase revenue. Among the lessons learned:

- BIIM encompasses five kinds of initiatives that must be managed separately, since the technology and value opportunities will mature at different rates. But they must also be guided by a common vision, architecture and governance principles.
- Any BIIM project must include careful planning, demonstrated business value and buy-in from senior leaders if it hopes to succeed.
- Management of these projects will require the IT organization to be approachable and actively engaged in the business. Leaders need to promote their projects and successes and offer education, training and support to increase user buy-in and engagement.

Conference Highlights

A Scenario: The Future of Business Intelligence and Information Management

Leaders of BIIM initiatives need to resist the view that BIIM is just one big project or initiative. Rather, BIIM encompasses five initiatives. They tie together, but each has its own future, uncertainties, challenges and opportunities:

- Business intelligence and performance management
- Social software and collaboration
- Enterprise information management (EIM)
- Enterprise content management (ECM)
- Data management and integration

Recommendations:

- Identify the business drivers for an improved information infrastructure and better tools and capabilities for thought leaders and business managers. Map these drivers and user needs across the five BIIM initiatives.
- Prioritize investments in the initiatives needed to run, grow and transform the business today and tomorrow.

Three Hot Issues Explored in BIIM Workshop

About 60 leaders of BIIM projects attended a community workshop to brainstorm ideas to solve problems around three hot BIIM projects: data quality, data warehouses and Microsoft SharePoint. Some common questions and recommendations from the workshop participants emerged from the session:

How should we approach governance for data quality?

Each business unit should have data stewards who are responsible for watching for use of one authoritative repository for data. Users need to be told they are responsible for their personal entry and use of the data. Finally, the data quality project leaders should receive frequent reports on the deviation from quality standards.

Too many people still use Excel and Access to store and analyze data. What can we do to increase adoption of our data warehouse?

Training is key here. No matter how good the applications and tools that replace Excel are, people won't use them if they aren't trained on them and don't know how they add business value. As part of that, IT needs to invest in marketing the capabilities and developing competencies as well as being perceived as helpful, accommodating and cooperative instead of strict enforcers of the rules.

SharePoint has proliferated wildly in my organization and is viewed as a panacea for all technology needs. How do I get some control?

Start by communicating what SharePoint is, and what it isn't. Prospective users should be required to show the business benefits of SharePoint. Then, the organization should employ a central group made up of IT and business-side people as a gatekeeper for creating new sites.

Best Practices for Data Quality Improvement: Delivering Data You Can Trust

Most organizations view data quality as an IT issue, and they rely on the IT department to make sure the data is high-quality, accessible and secure. But this is an incorrect view; data quality is really a business issue. It directly affects compliance, customer retention, growth and profitability – which are all business issues and need business involvement. Poor-quality data or an IT only view to the solution will expose an organization to great business and compliance risks, harm productivity and increase costs.

Recommendation: Define data quality for the organization, set the vision and choose a reasonable initial scope. Use Gartner's Data Quality Maturity Model to plan a data quality program and measure its impact.

Information Governance Helps Control Costs and Realize Information Value

Anecdotal evidence suggests that up to 90% of all data stored on local devices (not in data centers) is redundant, outdated or otherwise not useful. Companies that save less could cut their storage costs in half or more. Information governance can help companies clean up unwanted, unnecessary and risky stores of legacy data, while also ensuring that costs stay under control.

Information governance requires a cross-disciplinary business and IT strategy as well as dedicated projects that better relate people, policies, processes and technology to the information needs of business leadership. If not stored, protected, harnessed and metered effectively, information is wasted, weakens in value, or can pose many risks.

Recommendation: Focus on one or more of these benefits, then set the objectives for an information governance program and measure the outcome.

Harnessing the Social Software and Collaboration Explosion

Actively collaborating with colleagues, partners and customers can improve productivity, innovation, and decision-making. But most organizations start with collaboration by alternating periods of working apart and then working together. Collaboration technology is changing that pattern, so that tasks are pulled together, and transitions between review and work periods are more seamless. This approach improves productivity and effectiveness. But unless the infrastructure delivers performance and flexibility, it's like not having one at all.

So organizations need different kinds of collaborative technology and support that's more integrated with the way people work — systems that have low barriers to entry and evolve quickly as business needs dictate and can support and promote non-routine interactions.

Recommendations:

- Plan how your organization will absorb these new technologies, and the ways of working they bring with them. Facilitate a guided discussion with users.
- Users find it difficult to imagine how collaboration technologies can improve the way that they work. Experiment with social software and consumer offerings, while ensuring that traditional systems are well-managed and well-run.

Keynotes

Welcome Address and Analyst Keynote

Most IT budgets will take a hit from global economic problems, but the situation is not as dire as IT leaders who lived through the dot-com bust might expect. Gartner's recent surveys of CIOs show that at worst, IT spending worldwide likely will increase 2.3% in 2009, down from Gartner's earlier projection of a 5.8% increase. IT spending at worst will be flat in the U.S. and down in Europe.

IT budgets will be largely spared because IT runs almost all aspects of business, and IT is increasingly viewed as the means to improve and transform the business, but IT leaders still have to deliver. Economic downturns tend to amplify disruptive technologies, so IT leaders should research virtualization and modernization opportunities. IT leaders also should take stock of the whole IT portfolio to see what the business can run for less or live without. For every application and system, ask:

- Why is this needed?
- What does it cost?
- How can it be implemented with fewer resources?

Mastermind Keynotes Show Other Organizations' Strategies

Gartner analysts interviewed three IT leaders to gain insights about their strategies and outlook for 2009:

- John Chambers, CEO of Cisco Systems, said Cisco plans to work on dozens of projects in 2009 that aim to expand the company's scope beyond networking into networked-enabled processes to improve productivity. Cisco will use partnerships to help customers boost scale and speed. Cisco has a unique opportunity in the economic downturn to help its clients enable transformative business strategies, Mr. Chambers said.
- Joseph Eng, Executive Vice President, Systems and Technology at JetBlue Airways, urged IT leaders to show how IT can help transform and differentiate the business, as his group has done to make JetBlue a customer-centric airline. Mr. Eng described how JetBlue customers are empowered to make their own decisions and receive perks to make the trip better. This strategy has greatly helped JetBlue grow and has provided more opportunities for revenue.

• Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, insisted that what has been an apparently slow uptake of the Vista operating system among enterprises doesn't indicate a problem with Vista. In fact, he said, Vista's uptake is roughly comparable to the uptake of Windows XP at a similar stage. Ballmer also said Windows 7, Vista's follow-up, will be a true release, not a mere update. He acknowledged competition from Google but was critical of Google Apps, saying that it is "just not good enough today" for enterprise-level adoption. Cloud computing will also be a challenge for Microsoft, he said, since it involves a paradigm shift, but he predicted the company will adapt. Cloud computing will be delivered "piece by piece by piece," he said. "This is a technology that Microsoft is embracing, but it won't be ready the day after tomorrow."

What People Asked About

There's a no-man's land growing between people who run business processes and people who provide the technology. How can we bring them together?

Try a competency center or program management office to bring together the complex workflows, people, processes and technologies associated with BIIM initiatives. These centers and programs don't solve problems themselves, but they coordinate resources among all stakeholders to solve problems and may be especially useful for user training and user support, application development, data quality and governance.

Why is SharePoint so slow in a global environment?

SharePoint was designed for a controlled environment where all information is stored in one data center on one server. SharePoint was not designed to work in set-ups where global organizations operate with servers around the world. Users should push Microsoft to address these latency and replication issues in the next release.

We have all these capabilities to analyze the business, but users don't want to use them. What can I do?

The IT organization needs to do a better job presenting and selling itself and show workers how the technology has value for their everyday jobs. Sit down with these users and show them what the technology can do in terms of helping them improve their performance. Provide the training and support to make the technology effective. Market success stories!

My organization has a problem with bad data quality. Can I do any BI if have such bad data quality? Should I fix it first and then go forward, or do I fix as I go?

You need to get started. You can't wait to fix every data quality problem, but you need to let people know data quality will be exposed. Set expectations that data quality problems will arise, and they need to fix them. A lot of data quality problems arise because of the way the data gets entered in the first place. Data quality needs to be fixed at the point of entry — not with some tool after the fact. And be sure to retrain people as needed to ensure people enter information correctly.

What's different in attendees' interests at this Symposium over previous years'?

Attendees were a lot less interested in software features and functions than they were five years ago. This change shows that tools and technology are starting to reach a point of parity, so questions are now more about how to use these tools more effectively, drive business value and gain economies of scale.

Things to Watch For

BIIM divergence: BIIM leaders may view their work as a giant project, but in fact BIIM projects will diverge in the future, depending on a variety of factors. Leaders need to recognize that these initiatives, while tied together, are ultimately individual, traveling at their own pace. This view will help make decisions about BIIM investments.

"Shadow IT": Shadow IT is now exploding, with, for example, work teams using Google Apps and Facebook for their collaborative projects, without the IT organization's approval, and even providing support for one another. This is scary to the typical top-down IT organization. But younger, prospective employees are fully versed in technology and believe they need this flexibility to see new opportunities to which many others may be blind. BIIM leaders should look for examples of shadow IT to discover areas where the business is being underserved by the IT function.

CIO leadership on BIIM projects: More CIOs are jumping in to the details of BIIM projects, including how to set up a strategy, where to start and what size investments to make. This is a shift from the kinds of technology-related questions BIIM leaders usually deal with. This trend is gaining momentum as more CIOs view BIIM as a way to get a broad view of the business by using information from their own systems.

Interactive Polling Results

Delegates who attended the session on mobile messaging and social networking were polled about their enterprise policies and total cost of ownership (TCO).

Are Mobile E-mail Users Accessing Social Networking On Their Phones?

No, we have no mobile e-mail users yet — **4%**

No, there is no demand for social networking — **7%**

No, they are not allowed to access social networking — **13%**

We do not know — **17%**

Yes, on a personal basis, but we don't promote or control — **48%**

Yes, on a personal basis. We have policies — **7%**

Yes, we promote social networking as a corporate tool — **4%**

Monthly Wireless E-mail TCO per User (in US dollars)

\$10 or less — **3%**

\$10 to \$30 — **3%**

\$30 to \$50 — **7%**

\$50 to \$70 — **17%**

\$70 to \$100 — **20%**

\$100 to \$150 — **24%**

Over \$150 — **9%**

Don't know — **17%**

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