

5 KEYS TO ENDING THE BATTLE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND IT



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Introduction

The battle between business and IT has never been more profound. Growing customer expectations, evolving market dynamics, increasing competition, and changing regulatory conditions are compounding the pressure on business decision makers, who can't seem to get the data they need when they need it.

A study by IDC discovered that 64 percent of business managers have seen their decision window shrink in the last 12 months. And 42 percent say they need to make data driven decisions within one day. However, the same study found that industry average deployment time of Traditional BI equals 18 months and the time to build one report using Traditional BI methods is 6.3 weeks.

IT teams are feeling the pressure. Their list of pains is long and growing. According to Forbes Insights, combining data from multiple sources, ensuring data security and integrity, and getting the right information into the right hands are three top concerns.

PWC recently surveyed 1,800 senior business leaders in North America and Europe and found that 43 percent of them "*obtain little tangible benefit from their information,*" while 23 percent "*derive no benefit whatsoever.*" That means three-quarters of the organizations surveyed lack the skills and technology to use their data to gain an edge on competitors.

So that's the bad news. The good news is, we can do something about it. According to Forrester, "Vendors that can deliver the business user self-service features without sacrificing essential enterprise capabilities will position themselves to deliver the best BI platforms."

But how can you do that in an efficient and affordable manner? That's what this eBook is about. There are several critical elements or keys to success.

We'll explore 5 of them in this report.

Go Beyond Visualization



A picture is worth a thousand words – especially when you are trying to understand relationships, identify trends, or predict outcomes. But when the data behind the image is inconsistent or inaccurate what you have is a pretty picture that’s useless or even worse, dangerous. According to Gartner, “Many of the dashboards delivered are of very little value because they are silo-specific and not founded on a connection to corporate objectives.”

The data behind the dashboard needs to be verified, and checked for consistency and accuracy. In other words, more is needed than just a pretty front end. What’s needed is an end-to-end solution that incorporates the tools and algorithms needed to prepare the data.

Once prepared, it needs to be maintained. With the number of data sources and users growing and changing every day - misnamed, outdated, and messy data is inevitable. For analysis tools to be truly useful, they must be updated constantly. That means there’s a relentless and ongoing need for scripting and re-scripting.

If a beautiful report is all that you need, then visualization alone might work. But powerful, reliable, and ongoing business intelligence, requires more. What’s needed are built-in back-end components that automatically do the syncing, and cleaning processes required.

So if your goal is to end the battle between business and IT by making it easy for business users to get the information they need when they need it, you’ll need to go beyond visualization.

Create a Data Discovery Hub



Every day we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of new data which means companies are adding new data sources all the time. Each integration can take weeks or even months. By the time the work is complete – it’s highly likely that a newer, better source has taken its place.

The speed of business today mandates that business users have access to the data they need when they need it. The value of this is undisputed. But in order for the data to be truly meaningful, it must be, comprehensive, trustworthy, clearly understood, and actionable.

In the past, that meant, you needed to build a traditional data warehouse to ensure that data quality and consistency was governed and maintained. But building a traditional data warehouse is a long, costly and risky process. Even the father of data warehousing, Barry Devlin, recognizes there’s room for a different approach. In his whitepaper, [*Data Discovery Automation: Learning from the Warehouse Experience*](#), Devlin describes the need for what he calls a Data Discovery Hub – a place “where core business data can be cleansed, reconciled and

documented prior to making it available to business users.” According to Devlin, “Its design allows and encourages business users to make it the trusted foundation in their discovery processes.”

A Data Discovery Hub is a data store where ALL core business information can be cleansed, reconciled, and made available as a consistent resource for business users.

It provides a single, consistent and managed source of all internal core business information in a governed data discovery environment. It also offers a consistent, managed location to store other internally and externally sourced data. And finally, it stores ongoing historical snapshots of this core business information. When quality issues arise, or bad data is found, the error can be corrected once in the data hub for all users – which results in one single source of the truth. It is a place where data quality and consistency is maintained. A place that acts as a central repository so the right person can access the right data at the right time.

Give More Power to the People



In February 2016, Gartner revamped its *Magic Quadrant for Business Intelligence and Analytics Platforms* to focus heavily on self-service analytics and platforms centered on governed data discovery by business users.

Business executives, managers, and frontline users in operations want the power to move beyond the limits of spreadsheets so they can engage in deeper analysis and use data insights to transform all types of decisions. Newer tools and methods are making it possible for organizations to meet the demands of nontechnical users by enabling them to access, integrate, transform, and visualize data without traditional IT hand-holding.

The age of self-service demands that business users have full and flexible access to the data in the Discovery Hub. It also demands that business users be the ones who determine what data should

be included in the system. And because business users need the expert help of IT to ensure the quality, consistency, and contextual validity of the data, business and IT need to work together, more closely than ever before.

Organizations can effectively “democratize” data by addressing the needs of nontechnical users, including business executives, managers, and frontline users, if they grant more power to those users, not just in terms of access and discovery, but also in terms of sourcing what goes into the Discovery Hub.

Giving more power to the people is one surefire way to help end the battle between business and IT.

Reject Status Quo



“Old habits die hard,” says Wayne Eckerson, a thought leader in the business intelligence and analytics field since the early 90s. “Too many companies rely on traditional hand-coded and labor intensive approaches to building a Data Warehouse.”

The process historically has gone something like this: Gather requirements from business users, design a data model to support those requirements, locate the data sources, and load the data into a star schema and develop BI objects. It sounds perfect. Until the business team realizes that what was considered ideal during the requirements process isn't so great now. That's why flexibility must be built into the system and why the old ways of working aren't working anymore.

To build an agile and powerful Discovery Hub, it is important to bring in all data and not make any decisions about which data will be used. This is a major difference between the Discovery Hub approach and the classic approach of

building a star schema where only select data can be discovered. By rejecting status quo and keeping things simple, you can enable both flexibility and success.

So why aren't more companies doing this? Again, according to Eckerson, “Data warehouse automation is a really well-kept secret.” This is because many companies have multi-million dollar investments in traditional tools. And many developers fear that automation tools will put them out of work. What's more, many consultancies make a lot of money through hand coding and they don't want to upset their business models. Building an agile self-service architecture, requires abandoning old approaches and embracing new ones. For the sake of both business and IT, it's time to reject the status quo.

Embrace Automation



I'm personally passionate about automation because I believe the human mind should be freed from tedious tasks. I also believe it is the only way to achieve a truly agile and flexible system. From reducing risk to slashing development time and freeing up talent to work on generating business value – automation offers a broad range of possibilities.

It's been estimated that 50 to 80 percent of an analyst's time is spent on data preparation. I think this is tragic when tools exist to automate the process. If you want to speed up delivery times, lower the cost of development, and make better decisions, sooner – you need automation.

Data Warehouse Automation, or DWA, refers to the process of accelerating and automating everything that can be automated in the data warehouse lifecycle. This includes data exploration, warehouse data models, ETL generation, test automation, metadata management,

managed deployment, scheduling, change impact analysis, and easier maintenance and modification of the data in the Discovery Hub.

Self Service BI tools have obvious value to the business. When paired with Data Warehouse Automation, the result is a flexible, affordable, and reliable end to end system that's unmatched in the market.

Know That You Know What it Takes, Are You Ready?

Ready to learn more about building an agile BI architecture that enables business users and liberates IT? Give us your email address and we'll send you a copy of [Barry Devlin's Whitepaper: Data Discovery Automation: Learning from the Warehouse Experience.](#)

Implementing a data warehouse is often a long, costly process, see how TimeXtender can eliminate all the normal implementation pains with Data Warehouse Automation (DWA).

[Schedule a demo today](#)

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Who We Are

TimeXtender democratizes access to corporate data enabling business users and liberating IT. With Headquarters in both Denmark and the USA, TimeXtender has more than 2,600 customers across six continents.

It is the world's leading provider of Data Warehouse Automation for Microsoft® SQL Server®. In combination with Qlik, TimeXtender offers the most comprehensive end to end solution for Qlik users.

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