



S2 | Connecting Customers

Business Intelligence

Microsoft



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For Business Decision Makers

Microsoft



Microsoft's Technology Solutions

Microsoft® technologies help you develop and deploy end-to-end solutions. In this guide you will find a detailed overview of Microsoft's Business Intelligence Solutions; enabling the delivery of intelligent, relevant and appropriate information through a portfolio of simplified and integrated services.

Solutions for the Agile Business:

Connecting Customers

- Business Intelligence ■ Internet Business

Empowering Employees

- Collaboration ■ Mobility ■ Corporate Intranet Portals

Integrating Business

- Enterprise Application Integration

E-Business Infrastructure

- Systems Management ■ Server Consolidation ■ Security

For further information on Business intelligence and other Microsoft Solutions visit:
www.microsoft.com/uk/servers

Microsoft's Business Intelligence Solutions

We have been hearing about the significance of Business Intelligence, and of timely analysis and action for years. Today, we're entering a new era where Business Intelligence is truly becoming a "must-have" technology, driven by the importance of securing competitive advantage by developing a thorough understanding of the customer.

Microsoft's vision for Business Intelligence is to improve the speed and quality of decision making through Microsoft SQL Server 2000 and Microsoft .NET. These enable the rapid delivery of intelligent, relevant information through simplified, integrated services and the provision of open interfaces to access and share data, both internally and with partners, in mixed-technology environments.

Business value

The pressure for good Business Intelligence has increased as the pace of business has accelerated. On top of this need for speed, the nature and dynamics of business are changing.

Customers increasingly expect outstanding – and often personalised – service; businesses are outsourcing more and more non-core functions; and the market demands better planning and less uninformed risk-taking. In short, knowledge workers are often expected to do more in a shorter period of time with fewer resources.

Gone are the days when large teams of analysts supported major business units within an organisation. Today, analysis has become part of all knowledge workers' jobs, so they need access to relevant information and analytical tools tailored to their needs.

On the following pages, you will find details of how Microsoft provides the power to turn information into business insight. Working with partners, we enable Business Intelligence to be delivered to anyone, anywhere and on any platform at the lowest cost.



Microsoft's Business Intelligence platform provides the power to turn information into business insight.

Better information, better decisions, increased profits.

It all comes down to Business Agility: the more readily you can access relevant, useful intelligence about your business, your customers, your partners and your operations – the more your organisation can make better decisions and increase competitive advantage.

The value of Business Intelligence systems

By providing an accurate portrayal of your customers, Business Intelligence provides critical competitive advantage, allowing you to make business decisions quickly and with confidence. The impact of Business Intelligence is realised throughout your organisation, in increased revenue, lower operating costs and improved customer relationships.

■ **Business agility.** Accurate Business Intelligence enables your business to respond faster to new opportunities and changing demands. Combining intelligent prediction mechanisms with rapid execution gives your organisation the ability to move from concept to implementation as quickly as possible – the key to survival in today’s dynamic new economy.



■ **Increased profitability.** Business Intelligence provides an accurate snapshot of the profitability of specific customer relationships, allowing you to focus your energies on your most lucrative customers. By integrating systems that span the enterprise – e-commerce, CRM, and point-of-sale – you can create a complete profile of your customer and offer insight into their buying patterns, sensitivity points, and preferred methods of contact and communication. Profitable customers are coveted customers; understanding their value to the organisation, their motivations and preferences, and finally, how you can increase their spending and interactions with your company, are all critical to retaining them.

■ **Reduced operating costs.** Business Intelligence minimises the time required to collect relevant business information (including financial, inventory, and procurement data). By bringing powerful analysis and reporting tools to the desktop, these solutions empower decision makers to easily conduct their own queries, prepare reports, and in many cases implement new campaigns or changes to an e-commerce site – with minimal support from database administrators and IT specialists.

■ **Streamlined customer acquisition.** Business Intelligence enables marketers to identify and target potential customers and to present effective, focused campaigns, dramatically reducing the per-customer costs of marketing and advertising.

■ **Increased customer loyalty.** With competition for customers only a click away, your business must focus on optimising its relationships with existing customers. Building trust with these customers will positively impact their relationships with your company, and in turn, increase customer loyalty. Understanding who those loyal customers are is the first step, but developing an individual, one-to-one marketing message for the customer demonstrates a level of personalisation that provides competitive advantage. Business Intelligence tools that combine customer insight with rapid marketing deployment build trust, inspire loyalty, and prove to the customer that they are truly valued by the organisation.



Technological requirements for Business Intelligence

An effective Business Intelligence solution must offer exceptional performance, robust tools and services, and fully developed Web capabilities. The points below identify the demands placed on Business Intelligence solutions by today's dynamic business environment.

- **Speed to insight.** For Business Intelligence to have maximum value, it must be fast. Timely access to data and analysis requires high performance software on a robust platform.
- **Fast time to benefit.** The faster your organisation deploys its Business Intelligence solution, the sooner it captures additional revenue and cost savings. In today's fiercely competitive economy, fast time to benefit is a must.
- **Ease of use.** With more people using Business Intelligence, the solution must have a familiar user interface and be understood by the broadest audience. This speeds up knowledge workers' productivity and minimises the downtime and costs associated with training or retraining.
- **Offline/remote access.** An increasingly mobile workforce needs continuous access to the corporate Intranet in order to remain productive on the road, at home, or even in the air. This means providing data and services to both online and offline users, and to the full spectrum of non-PC devices, such as wireless PDAs or mobile phones.
- **Distributed, self-service data marts.** With more employees conducting their own analysis, Business Intelligence has to be immediately available to any authorised user. This often means maintaining separate satellite data marts, which replicate and are synchronised against the enterprise data warehouse.

- **Web access.** Corporate Intranets rely on Web-based technologies. Web access is the fastest, least expensive way to make data or tools available to employees, vendors, and suppliers, and can create new profit centres as a result of customer or market data and Business Intelligence.
- **Clickstream analytics.** To maximise the power of e-commerce, companies must be able to capture the unique information generated by their Web sites, and to translate it into actionable intelligence. A Business Intelligence solution must be specifically designed to store and analyse the rich data of e-commerce clickstreams.
- **B2B commerce.** Business Intelligence plays an important role as companies evaluate their supply chains and partner interactions. Traditionally considered for business-to-consumer interactions, Business Intelligence solutions can support business-to-business activities and contribute to increased profitability and partner loyalty.



- **Customised and third-party applications.** Availability of third-party products and add-ins, as well as the ability to integrate custom applications and components, ensures that your Business Intelligence solution can meet the unique needs of your company or industry.
- **Integration with existing systems.** For a complete business picture your Business Intelligence solution should integrate seamlessly with all of your systems. These include both ERP (such as inventory management) and customer-facing systems (such as CRM). Decision-makers can then access all relevant information from anywhere in the company, while you leverage your investment in legacy systems.
- **Extendable platform.** To adapt to changing business needs, your solution's component parts need to be easily modified to add functionality or to work with other systems. Open, extendable software interfaces, which allow integration with third-party systems, custom applications, and future technologies, help create a future-proof Business Intelligence solution.



Business Intelligence and Microsoft

Business Intelligence solutions on the Microsoft platform unleash opportunities to improve customer service, control costs, maximise profits and make better and swifter decisions.

Microsoft's complete integrated platform uniquely delivers Business Intelligence as a fundamental component of your enterprise infrastructure. In providing a proven computing platform, rather than a single application, Microsoft provides key advantages:

- **Agility.** Microsoft enables your organisation to implement new business initiatives as quickly as your strategies change. By providing a comprehensive set of 'building blocks' for business solutions, Microsoft ensures that your systems can adapt quickly to a constantly changing business environment.
- **Fast time to benefit.** Whether you're starting from scratch or updating existing systems, you can deploy Business Intelligence faster with Microsoft software. Fast time to benefit. Ease of development, straightforward integration with legacy systems, manageability, and use of familiar tools for analysis and reporting ensure rapid delivery at every level.
- **Reliability and scalability.** Microsoft's new generation of .NET servers is the cornerstone of the agile enterprise in today's dynamic business environment. Unparalleled reliability means your systems are available when you need them. .NET servers scale both up and out, expanding their ability to support growth and take advantage of market opportunities.

- **Integration with Microsoft Office.** Microsoft Office Tools are familiar fixtures on millions of desktops worldwide. With their built-in support for SQL Server Analysis Services, they provide a powerful front-end for enterprise data and Business Intelligence. This brings two benefits: it increases the productivity and efficiency of nearly every employee, and it saves the cost of retraining in specific analysis tools or of outsourcing analysis and reporting.
- **Support for mobile users.** SQL Server 2000 Analysis Services provide offline access to multidimensional data via the Multi-dimensional Microsoft PivotTable® Services component (client components). Because it is available for Pocket PC, SQL Server 2000 allows mobile users to access enterprise data directly from a handheld or portable device.
- **Web-based access to information.** As your business becomes increasingly global, you need Business Intelligence solutions that deliver knowledge over the Internet. Microsoft software is designed for the Internet, so you can harness the Web more quickly to work with customers and partners in innovative ways.
- **Customised solutions.** When you require a completely customised analysis or reporting solution, the Microsoft platform offers further opportunities for integration and customisation, serving as a powerful development platform on its own.



Figure 1. Microsoft provides a truly comprehensive Business Intelligence platform. Using the Microsoft platform and tools, you can build your own complete solution directly, or extend the platform with ready-made products and services from Data Warehousing Alliance vendors.

Case studies

GAB Robins roars ahead with SQL Server 2000

GAB Robins wanted to provide leading insurers with bespoke claims information in real time. Its existing system was slow in drawing together data from the company's various databases. Using Microsoft SQL Server 2000 and Microsoft Internet Information Server 5.0, GAB Robins was able to overcome this problem and get accurate data to its clients quickly.

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/casestudies>

The integrated Microsoft systems solution makes for efficient distribution at Simms International

UK and Australian customers of Simms International are benefiting from the company's recent investment in an integrated business solution based around Microsoft SQL Server 2000 and Microsoft Commerce Server 2000. The solution delivered by Metaphorix Ltd and based on the award winning Navision Financials ERP solution is revolutionising the way that Simms International do business.

"I felt that my business needed to be based on Microsoft products if we were to be at the cutting edge of technology. In addition, Microsoft products offer a low cost of ownership, are user friendly and inexpensive to maintain."

Andrew Henderson, Managing Director, Simms International Plc distributor of memory products to the UK computer reseller market.

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/casestudies>

AT&T growth markets

This \$8 billion business unit of the AT&T Business Services division provides field sales personnel with access to the vast amounts of internal and external data that is used to quickly identify and target new business opportunities across the business telecommunications market. The solution stores over a half of a terabyte of information in the data warehouse.

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/casestudies>



How to find out more

For more information on Microsoft Solutions and .NET Servers, go to: <http://www.microsoft.com/uk/servers>

For more information on case studies, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/casestudies>

For technical information on Microsoft .NET services, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/technet>

To find out about other Microsoft products and services, downloads, licensing, training, events and much more, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/askIT>

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