Resultant

How to Pitch and Deliver an
Internal Business Intelligence Strategy

As strategic data use becomes increasingly crucial for businesses to thrive, more companies are implementing business intelligence (BI) initiatives. But some hesitate to make the leap because they can't get all decision-makers on board with a plan. Other common obstacles may also be getting in the way:

– Does your company lack a data-driven culture?

– Is leadership skeptical of the ROI of a business intelligence initiative?

– Has the organization previously experienced failed or suboptimal data projects?

– Is your company without the right tools to begin such a project and reluctant to provide resources?

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There are many reasons companies hesitate to embark on a BI strategy. Communicating potential value effectively always serves as fertile common ground to begin conversations with stakeholders. From there, you'll need to know how to build your initiative from the ground up and implement a BI system that gives strategic, actionable insights.

Read on to find steps you can take to sell your idea and take your strategy from concept to reality.

THE SELL

1. Reinforce quick wins.

A quick assessment of the BI strategy or proof of concept (POC) will show leadership how it can deliver quick wins for the company. Demonstrating the value BI provides within a short time frame via a pilot implementation before full-scale change allows everyone to realize benefits with minimal risk.

2. Ease any concerns.

Reassure leadership that a BI implementation isn't all or nothing—they don't have to entirely reconfigure or replace every single existing strategy and process. Organizations today already use multiple tools within daily operations, and BI is no different. Even a full-scale project will come online in stages, each utilizing a different tool. Emphasizing the timeline and iterative aspect of an implementation can help assuage many concerns about risk.

3. Determine scope and success.

When leadership is receptive to the idea that BI strategy is worth trying, define the scope and determine what would make a pilot successful. Keep the scope sized appropriately to your company. For example, the time period for a single department trying out data visualization software might be a couple of weeks; a large enterprise auditioning a complex platform might take a few months. It's all about finding the right balance between showing value and the price point.

4. Define use cases.

Once leadership is sold on the pilot, set up a charter for it and define the approval process upfront. Stay current on project happenings and report them to stakeholders. When it's time to present results upstream, provide detailed costs and show turnaround time, what specific business challenges the BI strategy solves, and—most importantly—the ROI this BI implementation will provide the organization.

5. Communicate success.

The most critical step of the process is to continuously and clearly communicate the success BI strategy can provide. Deliver as much detailed information as necessary to ensure leadership is comfortable with the rollout plan post-pilot. Including outside expert guidance and training in your plan will give them additional confidence that the BI strategy will be optimized for maximum benefit to the organization.

6. Seek help from a consultant.

While you can effectively sell a BI strategy upstream using the above steps, partnering with business intelligence consultants can expedite the process and give leadership even more assurance about implementation. For example, if you execute a pilot without external resources, internal team member skillsets determine the value generated. But when you engage outside expert assistance from Resultant you gain access to:

- ☑ BI pros who are also well-versed in your specific industry

- ☑ Empathetic listeners who can help determine the ideal BI tools to accelerate the entire process

- ☑ Previous experience that fuels a greater success rate

- ☑ Proven best practices and processes to get the most from your implementation

THE DEVELOPMENT

1. Increase self-service.

Once you've helped build a culture that embraces and recognizes the value of data, the next step is to increase self-service.

Why increase self-service?
Increasing self-service also increases team member investment in and recognition of data's value. More people contribute their ideas and expertise, adding more resources to BI initiatives. Decision-makers can better interact with data directly and ask their own questions about the data. The result is higher quality data and more relevant insights.

How can your organization increase self-service?
Get tools designed to support self-service and enable easy data access, like a cloud-based data warehouse.

2. Increase automation.

Increasing automation will accelerate your BI strategy and boost its ROI.

Why increase automation?
Automation saves time by eliminating redundant processes and streamlining others, reducing the risk of human error and allowing you to focus on more important priorities. It frees you to respond (not react) faster to business changes and arising needs.

How can your organization increase automation?

- Implement a data warehouse automation solution to mitigate risk, improve quality and performance, and cut development time.
- Build repeatable workflows. Most tools eliminate the need for cumbersome manual processes that few can properly use.
- Push reports automatically, making it easy for team members to use data to course-correct and inform decisions at regular intervals.

3. Expedite tool implementation.

Bringing new tools online quickly through these steps enables your organization to start reaping BI project benefits as soon as possible:

- Proof of Concept (POC): See the tool in action and identify benefits, weaknesses, and ROI prior to investment.
- Demo: Use your POC to build a demo for leadership buy-in. An outside expert help speeds up the process, as you won't have to first learn the tool's ins and outs.
- Invest: Obtain the required amount of desktop or server licenses.
- Adopt: Use the tool to its full potential and take the time to show others how it can solve their problems. Companywide training will help get maximum ROI.
- Measure: Determine whether the tools are increasing efficiency and improving key metrics. If they aren't, optimize your process to get the most out of your business intelligence strategy as quickly as possible. Bringing in the right tools to increase self-service, self-reliance, and automation will greatly accelerate this delivery.

STRATEGIC DATA ASSESSMENT

Advanced data analytics can pay significant dividends when done well, but getting your BI machine humming will take some time and planning. Starting with a strategic data assessment can help determine where your company currently stands and how it can effectively upgrade current BI platforms and predictive analytics capabilities.

Talk to an expert today about a strategic data assessment.

Learn more about Resultant data analytics services.

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