CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLATFORM
for Enterprise Business Intelligence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SISENSE

HAVE YOU FUTURE-PROOFED YOUR ENTERPRISE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE?

With the number of connected devices poised to reach 31 billion by 2020, and data engineers and data analyst jobs growing sixfold in the past 5 years, it's critical for enterprise organizations to maintain agile and scalable business intelligence (BI) infrastructures that make big, complex data actionable.

However, today's enterprise information technology (IT) organizations are often stuck between dated legacy Business Intelligence tools and limited data discovery tools. In this paper, we'll guide you through the things you should consider in order to overcome this problem and help you choose the best BI solution for your enterprise.

If you find yourself in this situation, you most likely need to select and deploy an end-to-end Enterprise BI platform that bridges the gap between legacy BI and modern data-discovery tools; providing a single full-stack solution for your entire BI workflow at scale. A platform of this kind eliminates usability barriers and long back-and-forths between IT and business teams common to traditional BI stacks. It creates business user autonomy at scale, while modern data-discovery tools grind to a halt when consolidating big data sources from several platforms with complex data or when scaling with more data. The limitations of these technologies are exacerbated by clunky and expensive workarounds that require IT to manage multiple tools in order to get the best of both worlds.

REALIZING WHEN THE PLATFORM WAS REALLY BUILT FOR ENTERPRISE BI

Your ideal platform should simplify end-to-end BI management, drastically reducing time-to-insights by allowing business teams to autonomously analyze and visualize data of any size, from any source, via a single data hub. A hub of this kind facilitates IT workflows for building flexible data models from any source, enabling easier adoption for non-technical users and eliminating back and forth between IT and business teams. Ensure that your solution has a wide range of database connectors, so that you can speed up analysis from less efficient data sources or query data live from high-performance sources via a single user interface.

Your solution should enable you to create a layer of administration and governance between IT and the analysts, allowing IT to be the data steward instead of the hands-on data wrangler. This leads to faster, better-informed reports and ad hoc analyses that help businesses reduce costs and make decisions based on data faster.

Another important consideration is the ease of migration from other BI systems, and the ease of deployment. Consider what customer service you'll receive from your provider, and how you'll be supported from onboarding to expansion. With optimized IT workflows, business teams can lead more effective campaigns, optimize business operations, and solve business-critical challenges fast.

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IT IS POSSIBLE TO SIMPLIFY COMPLEX ENTERPRISE BI ?

Whether you're managing complex enterprise data from many sources or scaling governance and adoption, your choice of enterprise BI platform should simplify and optimize IT workflows to reduce operational costs and resource expenditure.

TAME YOUR ENTERPRISE DATA LANDSCAPE

To optimize your BI, look for a solution that can combine multi-source data into reusable models, connect live data with a high-performance data engine and enable multiple analysis from each flexible data model. The following features will give you these capabilities:

1. **Hybrid Data Management:** Seamlessly combine multi-source models and live data for analyst consumption from a single hub. Decoupled data models speed model preparation, data management, and user access.

2. **Mashup Data from Anywhere:** Mashup any data source including relational databases, web, flat file, or Big Data repositories into a logical semantic layer. Provide the broadest context and demystify complex data—empowering analysts to work autonomously from data developers and IT.

3. **AI-Assisted Data Prep:** Automatically see connections and suggestions for data modeling. Proactively solve joining issues such as many-to-many relationships.

With an agile, flexible hub of this kind, IT teams can leverage your high-performance database directly or increase analytical performance of large data in slower relational DBMS such as PostgreSQL, MySQL, and any other source.

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YOU CANNOT COMPROMISE ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE

Managing access to data and security is another significant issue that should be addressed. Choose a solution that offers thorough but simple governance processes. Streamline management of security, sign-ons, and data access manually or programmatically depending on IT need. Once again, this is where you'll benefit from a single data hub, which will also act as an administrative center for governing access and multi-level security. Important factors are:

1. **At Scale, As Needed:** Manage data and dashboard access for teams and individuals from central IT at scale or autonomously by department.

2. **Usage Analytics:** Monitor engagement, performance, and usage across individuals, departments, or domain. Monitor behavior to identify and act on patterns to promote adoption.

3. **Multi-Level Security:** Manage data security across the organization and down to the individual row from one environment. Programmatically implement protocols regardless of data or user volumes.

In addition to the fundamental security concerns, your platform's administrative tools should:
- Monitor adoption and usage for internal or OEM products to drive adoption and revenue
- Create performance and usage alerts to act on patterns and changes, leading to less downtime and better response times

SCALING IS A REQUIREMENT

As your enterprise grows and changes, you should be sure that your BI solution can scale up and grow with you. Scaling to meet enterprise demands does not need to be expensive and time-consuming. Make sure that your chosen solution has the power and technology for scaling up users, data, or complex analysis as required, without extra infrastructure or consultants. Then, you'll be able to:

1. **Accelerate** query and analysis speeds of any data source by leveraging built-in machine learning to optimize memory usage.

2. **Support** large amounts of concurrent users and create redundancies to ensure business continuity. Deploy a distributed architecture automatically.

3. **Scale as Required:** Scale to millions of users and terabytes of data out of the box. Never worry about usage limits or processing slow-downs.

SISENSE

DEPLOY AND ADAPT TO CHANGING NEEDS QUICKLY

Your platform should also be equally as adept at handling other changes that your organization might experience. Eliminate the hurdles of enterprise deployment and keep your end-to-end enterprise BI ecosystem agile to quickly meet changing business demands. From granular customization of functionality to adapting to new requirements and driving shorter times-to-insights, your platform's infrastructure should ensure performance regardless of the challenges ahead.

FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS

With a modern platform, you should be up and running enterprise-wide in days instead of weeks or months, managing different requirements from one place and creating IT data autonomy by department.

1. **Deploy as Required:** Implement your enterprise BI platform on-premise, private cloud, managed cloud, or any hybrid combination without complex processes.

2. **Deploy and Access Anywhere:** Launch your server architectures on Linux or Windows and enable anyone to access insights from any OS-agnostic web-browser.

3. **Visibility Across Systems:** Plan and streamline your DevOp workflows with built-in performance, monitoring and logs.

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CUSTOMIZATION READY

Consider how well your choice of enterprise platform architecture is designed with versatility and custom tailoring in mind. With the right solution in place, there is no need to wrestle with clunky customization libraries requiring long, complex development cycles, and even the most in-depth changes can be handled with ease. So, make sure that the platform you choose is:

1. **Built for Customization:** Solutions with API-First architecture makes it easy to create unique visualizations and functionalities that fit the exact needs of your enterprise.

2. **Purpose-Built for Developers:** With a complete developer toolkit, you can cut development time for embedding, thereby extending and enhancing the BI experience.

3. **Embedding Analytics Anywhere:** Easily white label and embed analytics into both your internal and external products. Deliver proven value for your clients by integrating analytics in your products and services for them to benefit and use.

Beyond white-labeled and embedded analytics, an API-first approach enables low-code, full-widget customization beyond charts and graphs, ideally including interactive data-driven widgets and adaptive interactions, plus custom plugins.

AGILE DATA EXPLORATION

With the right platform, you'll have the versatility and freedom to explore data at all stages in the BI journey. You'll enable your IT or business teams to explore, manipulate, and join data, equipping analysts and end-users with paramount flexibility for data exploration and drill down. Check that your preferred platform offers the following:

1. **One Model, Many Answers:** Data models are not hard-coded and joins are made at the query level, offering unparalleled flexibility to combine any data source and ask many questions of a single model.

2. **Drag-and-Drop Analytics:** An intuitive user interface makes statistical calculations and data visualization easy to execute and efficient.

3. **Extendable End-User Drill Down:** Non-technical business users can filter and drill into any part of the data, enabling ad-hoc analysis and fast time-to-insights.

SISENSE

DRIVE IMPACT WITH THE LOWEST TCO

Of course, let's not forget the issue of value, which can be addressed by optimizing IT resources, eliminating back-and-forths with business teams, drastically reducing time-to-insights, and facilitating deeper discovery as new information is exposed. Enable analysts and users to mashup, prepare, analyze, and explore data, then deliver full control of insight drill-down as required across devices and use cases.

END-TO-END BUSINESS AUTONOMY

If your platform enables you to eliminate tech-heavy requirements for data analysis and enable more people across your organization to adopt and act on business data, then you'll rapidly add value and reduce costs. There'll be no need for on-hand power users to execute functions and deliver business insight, and more non-technical users will be encouraged to use BI and gain insights from it, ultimately benefiting the entire enterprise. So, when choosing your platform, make sure that it offers:

1. **Intuitive User Interfaces:** For everything from data modeling to analysis and consuming insights, your BI platform should simplify complex workflows via visual tools at every step of the BI journey.

2. **No Specialized Training:** Ensure that statistical functions and analysis have clear guidance for maximizing impact. And optimize the use of BI throughout your enterprise, with a platform that doesn't require users to learn a custom language, although analysts can write full SQL if desired.

3. **AI Throughout:** Automatically make data connections, see suggestions for analysis, and identify anomalies or significant insights hidden in your data. Choose a platform that can learn from your users and data to solve problems intuitively.

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BROAD ANALYTICAL USE CASES

From internal business optimization to external OEM implementations, the right choice of BI platform will deliver value across a broad spectrum of use cases. Uncover insights across platforms and devices.

1. **Governed Analytics:** Balance IT resources to more agilely meet business user needs. Fast-track analysis and data discovery without compromising data management.

2. **Embedding Analytics:** Add value to your internal and client-facing products with white labeled and custom analytics.

3. **Automatic Insights from Apps and Devices:** Set alert thresholds and receive insights automatically. Access insights from integrated applications and devices, such as email, Slack, or even smart bulbs, and Amazon Alexa.

SUCCESS REQUIRES A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

At the outset of this paper, we mention the important consideration of what customer service you'll receive from your provider, and how you'll be supported from onboarding to expansion.

You should be confident that your provider is committed to ensuring that you realize the highest possible ROI from your BI platform. Check what your provider can offer you in terms of support and make it part of your BI license; for example:

1. **Personalized Onboarding:** From connecting data, building models, and realizing your first dashboards, dedicated BI consultants are on hand at no extra cost.

2. **Dedicated Success Team:** Does a client success manager come standard with your license to help you realize the full potential of your enterprise BI?

3. **Consulting and Elite Support:** Need around-the-clock support? Do you have the option to work closely with a full set of designated professionals who are on-hand at every step of deployment, management, and growth, to help you plan and complete your target goals?

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READY TO ELEVATE YOUR ENTERPRISE BI?

All these considerations should enable you to choose the right BI platform for your enterprise. In short, they will help you identify whether your choice of platform:

- Fits your needs
- Is user-friendly enough to be of value to business users in your organization
- Is flexible enough to generate insights from a wide array of sources
- Adds value in many different use cases
- Is versatile and customizable
- Can handle the amount of data you hold and generate
- Is scalable enough to grow with you

And although you can get a sense of how well a vendor ticks the boxes from checking and discussing the product's capabilities, the best advice is to try out your preferred platform yourself. At Sisense, we encourage you to see our demo and test our BI platform with a free trial using your own data, so that you can get an accurate picture of how much value our technology will really bring to your business.

Sisense takes a radically innovative approach to business intelligence and analytics that answers all these questions and considerations. We believe that insights should be easily accessible to everyone, everywhere, regardless of technical ability, and we back this belief with a solution that simplifies every step of the BI process for all users – from data preparation to delivery of insights.

Sisense gives you a complete picture of your data and a powerful, comprehensive set of tools to ensure you get the answers you need, from data that's always fresh and complete. Plus, we pair innovation with an obsession for customer success, enabling both startups and global brands to instantly reveal insights from complex data.

So, start optimizing your enterprise operations, delivering measurable results, and driving ROI with the most robust enterprise BI platform on the market. Take the Sisense platform for a test drive.

SIGN UP FOR A DEMO

START YOUR FREE TRIAL

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