



# Rethinking Enterprise Data Analytics

The hopeful vision of enterprise data is that companies will be able to quickly harvest and harness the trove of data sitting in their numerous systems and use it to make profitable decisions. Enterprise data analytics not only supports the ability to collect and manage large amounts of data but more importantly, provides the ability to understand and take advantage of its full value.

In starting an enterprise data analytics initiative, many companies will typically follow the standard 'go interview the business stakeholders for what they want' approach – gather reports, determine the report's layout, define different data sources, etc. Companies often get stuck in an over-analyzing the requirements and never take further action towards identifying and building the underlying data technologies.

Experience shows that this, in fact, is not the most effective in achieving results.

More often than not, the business analysts in IT and others who have worked with enterprise data assets often have as much, if not more, understanding of the data and reports that business stakeholders request. The IT team often understands the data flows from system to system, the data that is available and the quality of the data more than the business stakeholders.

## Rethinking approach to building enterprise data analytics

Having built several enterprise data warehouse and BI systems for mid and large-sized firms and having listened to stories of business and technology colleague's, there are lessons learned that point to a '*Just Do It*' approach. While this mantra may be counter-intuitive to starting up a strategic enterprise data analytics initiative at your company, we encourage you to think again.

The following guideline provides a high-level roadmap to getting started with an enterprise data analytics program, keeping in mind the goal of garnering broad buy-in across the company to properly build out, develop and govern an enterprise data analytics program.

- **Develop a prototype**

'A picture speaks volumes' captures what prototyping is all about: using report and dashboard visuals that show how an analytics system should behave and look. Staff a small team of highly skilled and experienced technologists, 3-5 people, and quickly mock up screens that can display key company data. Business analysts and data engineers are key participants in this prototyping phase. Do not worry about the enterprise aspects at this time.



- **Gather feedback**

Share the prototype with key business executives, evaluate whether it meets their needs and expectations; point out the data anomalies and show users how easily they can develop and distribute standard reports as well as custom/ad hoc reports.

- **Initiate project**

By this point the business stakeholders are generally excited about the prospect of having an enterprise view of data and are willing to begin funding, staffing, kicking off a proper enterprise data analytics initiative; IT can now begin to build the implementation plan with the assurance that they will have the support of an excited end user.

### Blueprint for action

In this age of 'big data', a business executive is bound to ask about building an enterprise reporting system to provide him/her more insight into how to better run their respective businesses.

Running businesses on 'gut feel' is history – applying analytical rigor to supply chains, warehousing, procurement, customer behavior and all other areas of their businesses is imperative.

The steps listed above will provide a springboard when you garner support for an enterprise data analytics initiative.

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