Asckey Data Services Ltd

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Why Business Intelligence (BI) is your most valuable asset

Business Intelligence is one of the greatest returns on investment available to organisations and is key to on-going efficiency savings. `Real-time' outputs can be used to feed live, multi-level dashboards and reports to display instant `on-demand' status snapshots from a centralised data source. This ability to respond to potential threats or opportunities and make timely, well informed decisions is invaluable for organisations looking to outperform their rivals or budgetary restraints. The decision making process is supported through the application of reliable business intelligence against key performance indicators.

Intuitive Business Intelligence software systems are rapidly transforming the way organisations manage essential operational data. Controlled, quantitative data collection and analysis is a powerful operational tool that can be used to forecast and inform the management decision making process with reliable, targeted, data manipulation. Decoding large scale historical data provides the essential clarification necessary to help shape and predict future developments with the application of constructive business intelligence.

Through focussed data interrogation, organisations can discover relationships between previously unconnected data sets, potentially uncovering opportunities for innovation and growth and best deployment of resources. Applied correctly, this knowledge can ultimately help organisations to minimise risk and identify effective strategies for improvements in operational efficiency and productivity.

Data processing software solutions are continually evolving along with their potential application. In addition to traditional database functionality including data mining, reporting and analysis tools; contemporary data analytics programmes are able to provide an effective `self-service' business intelligence solution that can be easily incorporated into day-to-day management processes.

Methodology/ usage

The quality of data extraction is ultimately reliant on front-end data quality and consequently, the success of any data gathering exercise requires full cross-organisational buy-in. Controlled data capture is essential if data is to be relied upon to fully support evidence-based decision making. There needs to be a clear information strategy with centrally controlled master data formats and stringent monitoring of front- end data collection. Data consistency and quality is vital in order to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved. All users need to understand the importance of data accuracy and the ways in which business intelligence can make an important contribution to daily work scheduling, critical budgeting decisions and forecasting.

The application of pre-programmed equations supports simple, fast and accurate data extraction. Interlinking vital business functions, targeted data analysis can generate instant performance insights and enable full end-to-end business reporting and the identification of longer term consumer, finance and marketing trends. The integration of data analytics into daily operational processes can be a vital step in establishing a highly credible source of informative, live management data.

Business Intelligence in the NHS

At a recent Healthcare Efficiency through Technology Expo, Executive Medical Director for the NHS Information Centre (IC), Dr Mark Davies, spoke of the role of the IC being to turn a "tsunami of data" into a "tsunami of actionable business intelligence." He talked about opening up access to data to allow more in-depth analysis, he concluded: "If we are looking for integrated services, we need integrated, linked, data".

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In May 2012 the Government outlined its `Power of Information' strategy for the Health Sector. The primary target of this ten year strategy is the integration of NHS systems designed to transform the patient experience by enabling control of the information they receive in order to improve their health and wellbeing. The strategy calls for, "better use of information and innovative technology [that] can help professional teams prioritise more face-to-face support where that is needed" it calls for "clear national standards to ensure that locally developed IT systems can `talk` to each other and exchange information effectively and securely". The emphasis from the Government is the transformation of the healthcare through the effective application wide scale data analysis to inform the future of the NHS.

The Department of Health (DoH) is an active player in the area of data analysis and are actively involved in the development of systems that allow NHS Hospital Trusts to "benchmark" their performance in comparison to national and peer group standards in the form of their mandatory ERIC performance returns. The Information Centre's NHS efm[1].-Information suite is a web based data collection portal used by every Trust in England and Wales. The systems benefits from N3 connectivity which provides enhanced system speed, security and vital security. Module upgrades are undertaken each year to reflect changes in the data required by the Department of Health. The actual number of modules upgraded and the volume of changes within those modules varies year to year as central government's priorities change.

In 2011 the Prime Minister made a commitment to increase the involvement of patients in assessing key elements of their care and environment. In support of this, the current PEAT efm module is to be replaced by PLACE (Patient Led Assessment of Clinical Areas). This development has required a complete product rewrite and relaunch ahead of the first PLACE data collection in April 2013. In order to ensure consistency and continued data quality, the system is maintained and developed by specialist NHS IT system provider. Asckey Data Services Ltd have a long standing relationship with the Information Centre and through this they have been able to create a finely tuned data collection system. Simplified and intuitive functionality meets the needs of front-end users. Reliable and robust reporting tools and dashboards support the end goal of creating a robust data set to inform the decision making process within the Healthcare sector - supporting greater efficiency while ultimately enabling more targeted care.

The efm case study effectively demonstrates how the application of Business Intelligence software can make a vital contribution to assisting organisations in meeting their operational objectives. Organisations of any size can benefit from harnessing the power of information held within their own business data, with the considered application of the correct data analysis solutions.

1. The efm-Information Suite is developed and maintained by Asckey Data Services Ltd. Asckey are the UK Channel Partners for DataAccess, owners of the Visual Dataflex software application. This highly adaptable programming tool is ideally suited to large scale data interrogation processes, enabling streamlined data acquisition and fast real-time data analysis. Visual DataFlex's tiered development system is designed to accommodate the latest trends in distributed, rule-based, client/server business solution architecture. The combination of Visual DataFlex's methods provides an easy-to-master environment for business process-based application design. Visual DataFlex enables the quick deployment of multiple solutions through well-controlled and structured development processes. Business solutions powered by Visual DataFlex today will continue to deliver value tomorrow with open connectivity to database management systems, efficient life-cycle maintenance, and future access to changing application client and server environments. The processing power of these tools across extensive data sets with the application of both actual and theoretical outcomes, offers limitless potential for the discovery of new business development opportunities and efficiency strategies.

Contact Asckey today on 0845 270 7747 to find out how the application of Business Intelligence extraction software can positively support your business objectives.