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Data at Your Fingertips:

The State of Analytics in Northern Europe

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Data at Your Fingertips: The State of Analytics in Northern Europe

Organizations are increasingly eager to harness insights and contextual data to run their business. After all, more data and analytics clearly result in better decision-making. But the question remains: how are business intelligence tools best used? And how do IT departments and users work in harmony across divergent BI tasks? We posed these questions to 171 IT and business decision-makers from Northern-European enterprises with 500+ employees.

Charts

1. Frequency of BI-output use
2. Data importance
3. Responsibility for reports
4. Distribution of respondents

The results of the research confirm that Northern-European businesses are increasingly data-driven. 86% of the respondents indicated that data played a supportive or leading role in making decisions (see Chart 2). 74% of respondents make at least weekly use of BI-output such as analyses, reports, and dashboards (Chart 1), while only 23% use them monthly or less. 51% of the participants rely on central IT and BI competence officers or departments (hereafter "central"), and this reliance is increasing. At the same time, users also want to modify their reports within their own departments (64%), indicated on the charts as "business" or "local."

Consumption of Analytics

The consumption picture becomes clearer when we dive further into the responsibilities. As is evident in Chart 5, decision- and policymakers prefer to focus on front-end tools: producing and publishing customized reports, drill downs, or dashboards. They want to use control panels while being assured that the IT department secures data definitions and the quality and integration of the data sources. They generally prefer to be less involved with data security, data modeling, cleanup, processing, and editing.

Chart 5:
Responsibility for BI-output

Self-service BI

Self-service BI is an emerging concept in the BI and analytics domain. Leading business research and advisory firm Gartner defines this as, "end users designing and deploying their own reports and analyses within an approved and supported architecture and tools portfolio."

In practice, there is still uncertainty around the issue, so it isn't surprising that respondents give different reasons for their interest in self-service BI. The main reasons are the integration of master data and faster delivery of reports. The respon-dents also note potential drawbacks associated with the introduction of self-service BI, particularly software maintenance, the responsibility for data quality, and the risk of uncontrolled growth.

The shift towards self-service BI is not universal: users want more, but not total, control. They also consider it essential that a central IT team provi-des a suitable and secure framework. This is in line with the conclusion that the Gartner researchers published in February 2018: "By 2020, organiza-tions that offer users access to a curated catalog of internal and external data will derive twice as

much business value from analytics investments as those that do not."

IT and Business Cooperation

79% of the respondents feel that successful cooperation between IT and business is a major factor for success (Chart 6). Only 5% disagreed with this statement. Concerning governance, we see that 32% of respondents prefer not to worry about data security. More than three quarters of participants want to be able to trust the reliability of the data.

The respondents are generally satisfied with their self-service tools. Most find them user-friendly and easy for data-sharing. However, 32% do find self-service BI tools too time-consuming. They would like to spend less time processing and editing data.

"Self-service BI is vital to modernize our business and to distinguish ourselves from our competitors. This enables us to allow our business stakeholders to fully exploit the value and potential of our data and take ownership of the products used."

JAKOB RIIS BENTSEN,
HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION (BI),
MAERSK LINE

Conclusion

Quickly gaining more insight is the main goal of today's business users. Ideally, decision- and policymakers can rely on the data quality and integrity of the source data and do not have to be concerned about the boundary conditions. The respondents clearly preferred to work with a flexible consumption model with user-friendly tools and strong IT support responsible for integration, clear definitions, and data governance. The optimal balance between central and local BI is thus a key building block for any data-driven organization.

Intelligence is Everywhere

MicroStrategy is one of the market leaders in Enterprise analytics, self-service BI and their associated apps. They provide innovative software that enables organizations to support every aspect of their business with data and analysis, and continuously improve their working practices. Intelligence is everywhere: from management teams to sales. MicroStrategy software and expert services enable customers to roll out unique intelligence applications. Want to learn more? Visit MicroStrategy Online or follow the latest developments on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Chart 6
IT and Business Cooperation

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Opinion on Various Questions per Topic

IT collaboration
- Good collaboration between IT and the business is crucial for success
- IT adds no value to me and only slows things down
- There is a growing demand for reports from the BI competence center (or IT)

Governance
- Data security should not be my concern
- I should be able to trust that data is checked and correct

Self Service
- I want to be able to customize reports
- Making analyses myself with self-service tools (analytics) is too time consuming
- We increasingly move from centralized reporting to self-service reporting

10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%

Opinion
- Agree
- Disagree