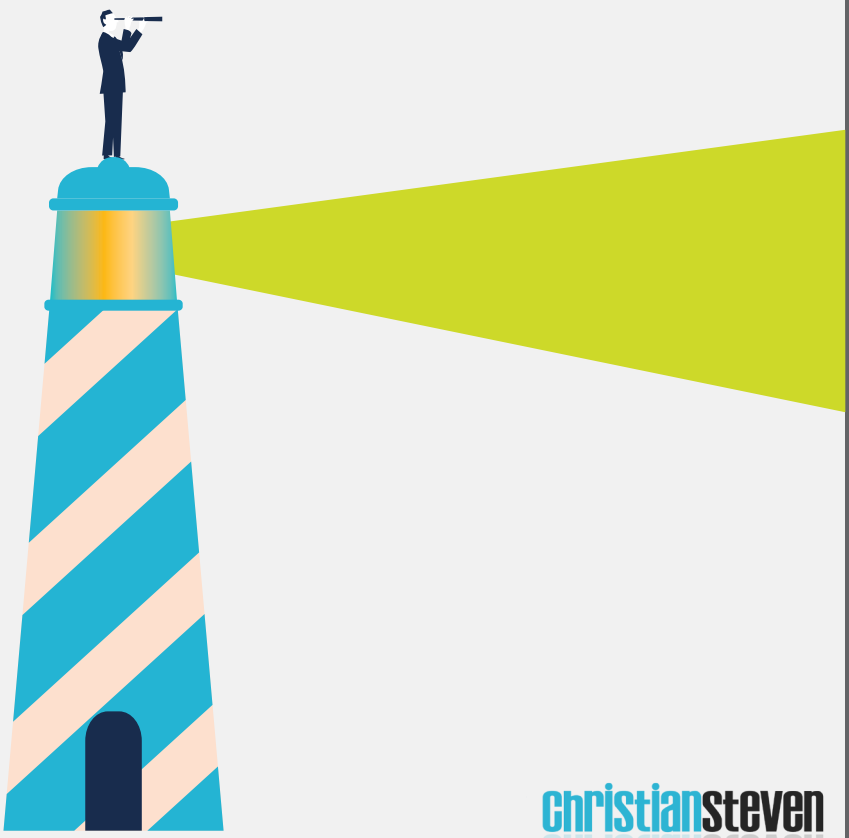
e-Book

3 Critical Reasons You Need a BI Early Warning System



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Early Warning Breeds Success

How many times have you felt yourself shrinking smaller and smaller as you face another inquisition by the executive team? “Why didn’t we know the inventory levels were so low?” “Did you know that lost tracking slip cost us millions in SLA penalties?” “Do you have any clue how much revenue we lost when the inbound ordering system crashed at peak time?”

If this scenario is a familiar one you’re not alone. The majority of respondents in a 2014 survey conducted by SunGard reported using reactive and “after-the-fact” analyses as their main method of data analysis.[1] But, as the classic Dylan tune says, ‘the times they are a changin”. As big data grows even bigger the organizations that have automated business processes with a reliable early warning system are the ones who will thrive.

In this eBook you’ll discover how implementing an effective BI early warning system will position you and your team as proactive leaders and trusted advisors to the organization—driving down operational costs and effectively managing risk.

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Critical Reason #1:

Make Your People More Efficient—Focus on the Exceptions.

If your organization is like most, your IT team is responsible for managing the reporting and report deployment process for each individual system across your enterprise. This equates to a lot of time and effort spent on ensuring the data is accurate, correct, timely and meets compliance requirements. Running a report and emailing it is just one piece of the process. There is also the challenge of keeping pace with the constant need to change information and generate new reports. Typically, if one cog fails in the process either your business has no idea it failed or has no easy way to back track to where it failed.

If your business has reached this milestone you're most likely experiencing both excitement and frustration. It's exciting to see new customer logos added to your website yet frustrating that your team is constantly playing 'whack a mole' because of process failures. The time and money you're losing relying on your people to identify and rectify failure points would be better spent investing in a system that cuts instances of error to zero. This will allow you to focus the time and energy of your people on revenue-producing activities.

More than ever, businesses must pursue strategies that maximize their human capital and avoid wasting time on operational activities that can be better managed by a machine. Automation with an ironclad early warning system is a key tactic to both amplifying the skills and talents of your people and scaling the operations of your business.

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Make Your People More Efficient—Case in Point:
A leading financial credit institution with more than 300 branches, over 11,500 agents and two million customers hit their threshold when their call center staff could no longer manually run, collate and send daily performance reports. As the demand for information increased—what initially took one hour per day quickly increased to three plus hours per day. By automating this one business process, the organization now systematically runs over 180 different schedules and distributes 350 different reports across the business on a daily, weekly, monthly and specific date/time basis. The change prompted one branch to create a custom report with slightly different parameters. The result? The ability to track and improve their sales performance by converting more inquiries from their call centers and websites into new business. This particular report was picked up by other branches and is now a standard practice across all branches. The technology has paid for itself several times over and the organization is in the process of implementing it in other areas of the business.

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Critical Reason #2:

Get Ahead of the Curve—Anticipate and Be Proactive.

We've identified the value of an early-warning function within a business automation solution to be a reduction in human error and a refocusing of your team on revenue-producing activities. Now think about what it offers from a 'staying ahead of the curve' standpoint. Businesses—no matter the size—benefit from the ability to set thresholds on their data that serve as trigger points when certain values (i.e. inventory, cash flow, resource capacity, etc.) either exceed or drop below a specific point. The ability to avert missing a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) or Service Level Agreement (SLA) can literally add up to millions of dollars in less than a minute.

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Smaller firms lack the armies of developers, contractors, and IT gurus that large conglomerates have at their disposal. Large firms, even with the might of these armies, typically lack the ability to react quickly to unexpected changes. Automating critical business processes and implementing an early warning system can aid firms in proactively managing day-to-day operations and swiftly adjusting to market demands.

When shopping for a solution to automate your business processes it's critical to understand the extent of its early warning capabilities. Be leery of a solution that doesn't have the ability to monitor a database, file system, port and email inbox and trigger a series of reports, alerts and tasks as email, fax and/or text messages. Also, to guarantee reduced work cycle times and increased response rates you'll want to ensure it offers more than just canned thresholds. A solution with highly customizable thresholds is the key to meeting your unique operational needs.

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Get Ahead of the Curve – Case in Point:
The maintenance-engineering department of the largest US builder of light and midsize business jets was wasting time and money by relying on a manual, time-intensive system to schedule maintenance operations, generate reports and write work orders. In addition, the maintenance operations were scheduled based on time instead of usage. For example, a part on a piece of machinery would be changed every three months, regardless of use.

By shifting from time-based maintenance to predictive maintenance, the company has completely transformed their maintenance operations saving $1.4 million dollars over seven years. Reports that were previously compiled manually—or not at all—are now automatically delivered to the people that need the information. In addition, all work orders are generated automatically with no manual inputs or processes required; the equipment is simply linked to the reporting software and when it hits a specified level of usage, a work order request is triggered. The system generates internal customer notifications of work order changes, invoices and notifications of purchase orders that have not been delivered. Altogether, the organization is now generating more than 1,000 reports a week.

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Critical Reason #3:

Establish a Foundation for Growth and Sustainability—Do More With Less And Achieve Greater Profits.

What would the world of business be like if every company had a digital nervous system which gathered data in real time from its internal processes and its external dealings with customers and suppliers? What if the companies could respond at the speed that the human body responds when threatened? Do you remember these provocative questions asked by Bill Gates in his book, "Business @ the Speed of Thought" back in 1999? [2]

As your business moves to the next level a set of clearly defined processes that enable you to create a seamless mode of communication between your various departments is key to doing more with less and achieving greater profits.

The majority of organizations are still overwhelmed with data sitting static in disparate systems across their enterprises. And, in today's increasingly data driven world the challenge is becoming particularly acute. As your business moves to the next level a set of clearly defined processes that enable you to create a seamless mode of communication between your various departments is key to doing more with less and achieving greater profits.

Automating your business processes and establishing thresholds that keep you ahead of the curve is critical to establishing a foundation for growth and sustainability. Business is not about how many resources you have; it's about how well you manage them. Automated processes with early warning alerts further increase capacity and service quality without the need to hire additional staff and provide the ability to effectively identify and manage risk. The greater your efficiency, the greater your bottom-line.

Establish a Foundation for Growth and Sustainability—Case in Point: The UK's leading mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) with more than four million customers needed an automated way of scheduling reports for their busy Supply Chain team. The UK mobile market is very competitive which means it is vital to have a clear picture of stock movements and levels, especially for popular and in-demand items. The organization operates six days a week, and receives and dispatches thousands of different items, including mobile phones, SIM cards, mobile broadband, netbooks and numerous accessories. All of these items needed to reach their web and telesales customers, high street retail outlets and major retail partners in a timely and efficient way.

In order to improve efficiency and operate more proactively the Supply Chain team needed a wide variety of reports, including stock level monitoring, quotes, orders, dispatched orders, inventory of parts, goods in and products shipped. By automating this process the need for night shift and weekend workers was eliminated and auto-generated reports run hourly, daily and weekly. The unique event and data-driven capabilities generate an alert to key individuals when stock levels of certain fundamental items fall below set levels. The technology has paid for itself several times over, even if only measured against the cost savings of not requiring full-time administrators to simply churn out reports.

Automating your business processes and establishing thresholds that keep you ahead of the curve is critical to establishing a foundation for growth and sustainability.

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Summary

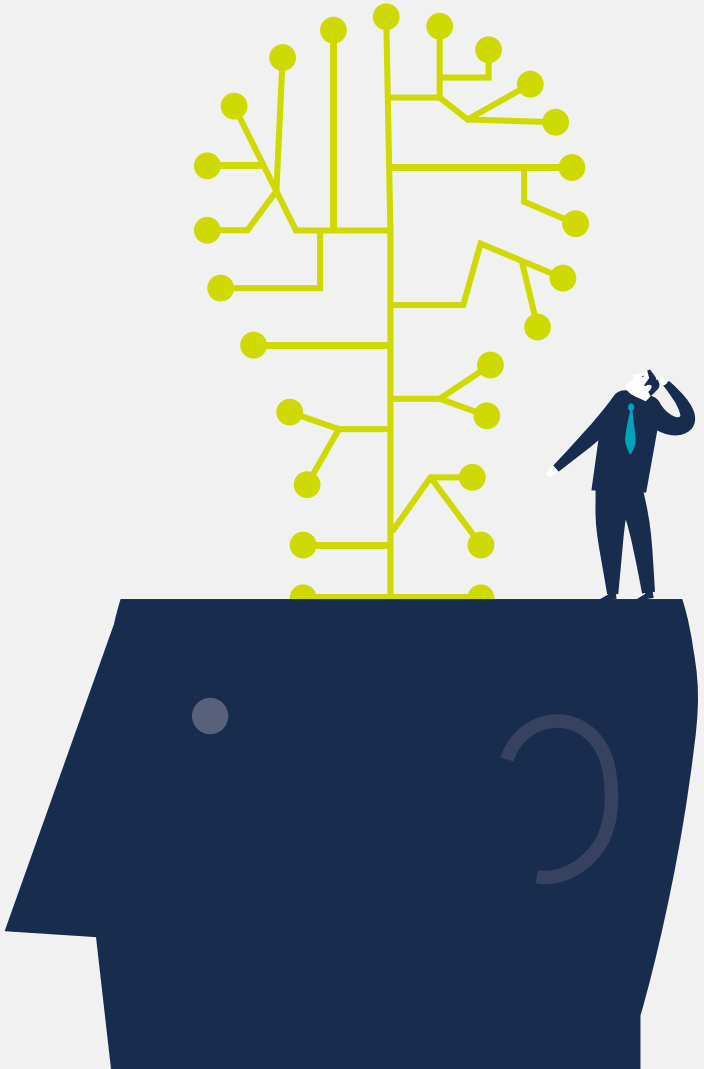
The CSS BI Solution enables your decision makers to be proactive rather than reactive with its advanced automation and robust scheduling capabilities. Highly configurable, our solution provides an affordable, dependable way to improve operational efficiency and ensure the data thresholds your organization depends on to drive revenue and remain competitive is both available and accurate.

To position you and your team as proactive leaders and trusted advisors to the organization it's important to educate your colleagues on the value of business automation and early warning technology. An early warning system can breed success in your organizations by:

1. Amplifying the skills and talents of your people and scaling the operations of your business while effectively identifying and managing risk.

2. Enabling your organization to proactively manage day-to-day operations and swiftly adjust to market demands.

3. Increasing capacity and service quality without the need to hire additional staff.



Attributes:
1 2014 Trends in Exposure Management. A Survey by the Professional Risk Managers' International Association. (August 2014).

2 Gates, Bill, & Hemingway, Collins. (1999). Business @ the Speed of Thought: Succeeding in the Digital Economy. New York, NY. Warner Books, Inc.

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About Christian-Steven Software

With the CSS BI Solution, you can eliminate administrative bottlenecks with self-service business intelligence. Sophisticated yet simple, the CSS BI Solution is flexible, scalable, and application agnostic enabling you to connect to multiple data sources across your enterprise and centrally manage all of your report distribution.

During implementation, which typically is complete in 60 days or less, we work with you to easily configure the system to mirror the workflows in your environment. Once operational, the solution can talk to any database or system. In fact, you can have thousands of reports talking to thousands of databases. The CSS BI Solution works behind the scenes to ensure your data is accurate, secure and delivered on time with the same look and feel regardless of native application.

For individuals who need immediate access to information, the CSS BI Solution offers an easy to use portal that allows users to log in, create and run reports themselves from their laptop, tablet or phone. Depending on your organizational needs, our solution can be used as your complete BI infrastructure or as a complement to your existing investments in hardware, software, email and other applications. We're experts in helping organizations automate BI processes so that meaningful information can be delivered at the precise moment it's needed. Rather than spending days worth of time and resources exporting BI reports, updating BI databases and executing manual BI processes, let CSS handle the BI grunt work.

Key Values:

- Ensure quick set up and simple use
- Minimize and eliminate repetitive tasks and manual processes
- Reduce costs and cut labor by automating business processes and reports from one application
- Improve customer satisfaction through mass personalized distribution
- Provide reliable data, and SOX Compliance, through automated report generation
- Experience a browser-based Rich Internet Application interface
- Leverage existing investments in hardware, software, email and other applications
- Sustain low training and implementation costs
- Deliver low total cost of ownership

Contact us today for a complimentary BI Assessment:

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