

# SMB Intelligence Reporting



## Introduction

Microsoft Excel is one of the most popular business tools for data analysis and light accounting functions. The SMB Intelligence Reporting powered by Solver is designed to combine the familiarity of using Excel with integration directly to Microsoft Dynamics GP for ERP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM. In addition the Reporting tool can connect directly to SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse making it possible to report on consolidated data from multiple data sources. SMB Intelligence Reporting can be used for financial as well as operational reporting as it is not limited to just the financial modules like many other popular financial report writers such as Microsoft FRx and Microsoft Management Reporter.

With all, or a majority of the reports built with SMB Intelligence Reporting, organizations typically find that they now get 80% of the “BI” and reporting done with 20% of the effort it previously required.

### Some of the key reasons for implementing SMB Intelligence Reporting are:

1. Excel interface that most business users are familiar with and use regularly.
2. Easy to build reports with drag and drop wizards and pre-built formulas reducing learning time.
3. General Ledger Reporting as well as sub-ledgers and Microsoft Dynamics CRM.
4. Reporting on SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse (if implemented)
5. Single report writer for multiple purposes
6. Consolidations across companies. Can be used with SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse to combine data from multiple sources.
7. Currency conversion. (Requires SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse for advanced currency conversion).
8. Special needs such as allocations and reconciliations.
9. Eliminate any manual Excel exports/reports as well as proprietary report writers.
10. Ad-hoc reporting without the need for formulas, OLAP cubes, and pivot tables.

SMB Intelligence Reporting is Excel-based and it is part of the two SMB Intelligence packages. The two SMB Intelligence packages include the following modules:

### SMB Intelligence Foundation

- SMB Intelligence Reporting
- SMB Intelligence Planning (budgeting and forecasting)
- SMB Intelligence Dashboard Portal

## SMB Intelligence Advanced

- SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse (support of Reporting across multiple ERP systems, etc.)
- SMB Intelligence Dashboard Portal (provides a dashboard interface to data stored to the Data Warehouse Manager)

SMB Intelligence Reporting interacts with the other SMB Intelligence modules. In essence, it serves as a report writer and an ad-hoc query tool both for live reporting on Microsoft Dynamics GP and Dynamics CRM systems, as well as for the SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse, in which case data can come from any source system.

### **Here are some scenarios for when to use SMB Intelligence Reporting with the SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse Manager:**

- Reporting across multiple source systems (like multiple ERP systems)
- Advanced currency conversion
- Performance (for faster reporting without slowing down the source system)
- Budget reports (either for SMB Intelligence's Planning module or for other budget system)
- Designing budget templates and other business input forms (with SMB Intelligence's Planning module)

## User Interface Overview

SMB Intelligence Reporting powered by Solver is a modern Excel add-in that has been designed with the latest Microsoft technologies and follows Microsoft best practices for interface design and usability. The Interface was designed to maintain a similar look and feel to the Microsoft Office products, including the use of a ribbon and an Outlook-style menu bar as the main navigation components.

SMB Intelligence Reporting also has a back-end tool called the Meta Data Designer. It is the tool used by power users to create integrations between the Excel front-end and the data source (such as the ERP system). The meta data produced by the Meta Data Designer provides SMB Intelligence Reporting with major advantages over standard query tools and report writers that connects directly to a data source without any form of meta data. To begin with, it translates often difficult SQL field and table names of Dynamics GP & CRM into plain English business terms. More importantly, the Meta Data Designer allows developers and power users to pre-define important logic such as time/period logic, which then can eliminate the use of technical period formulas when users design reports.

## Reporting Components

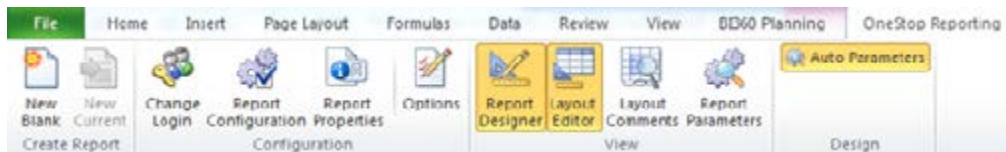
SMB Intelligence Reporting is an Excel add-in just like the SMB Intelligence Planning module. As you see in the image below, both SMB Intelligence Reporting (OneStop Reporting) and SMB Intelligence Planning are located right next to each other on the Excel ribbon. In other words, Reporting and Planning are available side-by-side without the need to leave Excel.

The Reporting consists of two menus: The Excel ribbon and the Excel task pane. The Excel ribbon is usually only used by administrators for setup and maintenance of SMB Intelligence reports.

### Excel Ribbon:

The Excel ribbon has buttons that provide access to the following functions:

- Start the design of new reports (either from scratch or based on an existing Excel report)
- Manage your login (server connection)
- Manage configuration of the current report (as it relates to the data source)
- Manage report properties and setting options
- Open/close Task pane and Design windows
- Manage report parameters (prompts)



### Excel Task Pane:

SMB Intelligence's Reporting task pane features the popular Microsoft Outlook-style menu bar. It comes in two main flavors:

#### 1.) SMB Intelligence Reporting

Designer: Gives access to both design and run reports (typically for power users).

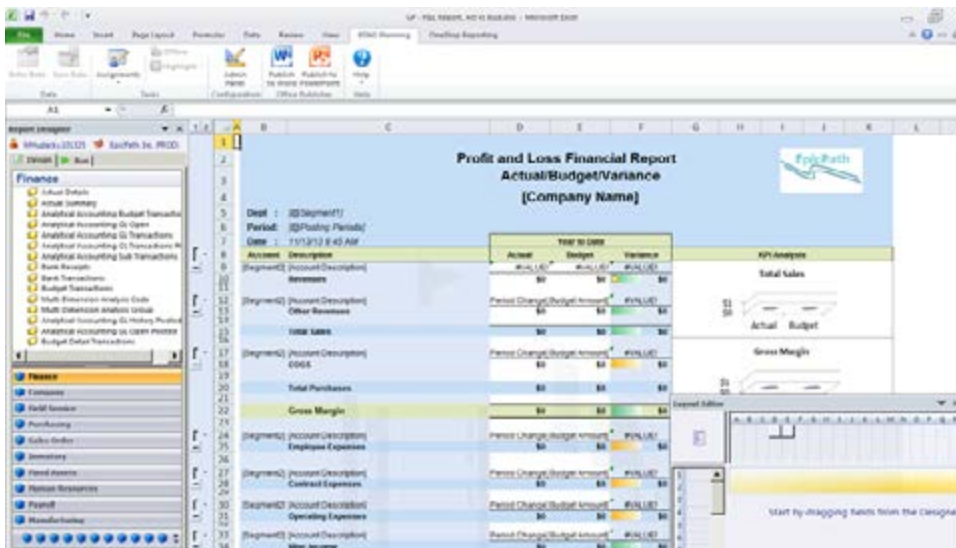
#### 2.) SMB Intelligence Reporting

Player: Gives access to run reports (typically for end users).

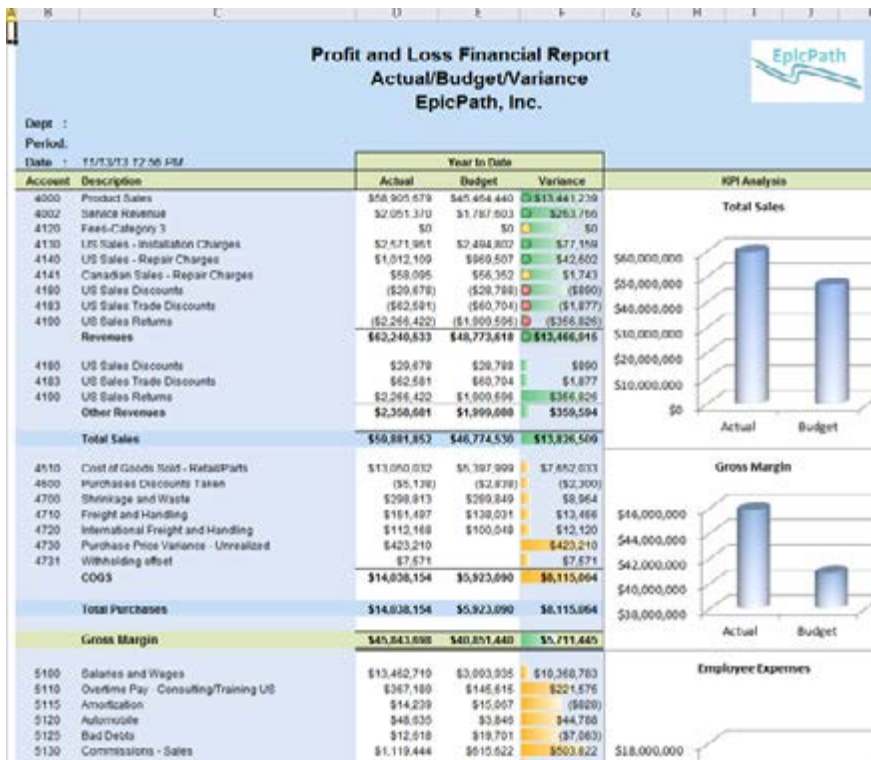
The Designer menu is shown on the left side of the image below and it offers the following main features:

- Access to fields in different modules in the source database (like GL, Sales, Accounts Payable, etc.)
- KPIs (KPIs can be pre-defined and dragged into any report)
- Functions (pre-defined period functions such as: Current Month, YTD, Rolling 12 Month and many more)
- Expression Trees (pre-defined trees that can be dragged into any report. E.g. Profit & Loss account trees)
- Report Parameters (access to the parameters that will display for the users as filters when they run a report)

When designing a report, the user selects the fields, trees, periods, etc. from the Designer menu and drags and drops these items into the appropriate location in the Excel sheet. Most reports can be designed without entering a single formula, with the exception of for example a standard Excel formula that deducts one Excel cell from another to calculate the variance between a column with actual figures and a column with budget figures.



The SMB Intelligence Player menu is available as a second tab on the report task pane for users with the Designer license and it is also available as a stand-alone for true end-users that only need it to run reports. Either way, it looks and works exactly the same. Essentially, it displays the report parameters as prompts on the left side of the screen (see image below) and the user can click on the lookup buttons to choose from a dimension list that will appear (e.g. to choose a period or one or more departments). The report parameters (prompts) are created by the person designing the report. They make reports truly dynamic so it can be run for any month, any department, any vendor, any project, etc. The resulting data will be filtered before it is pulled from the source database, thereby making reports faster and eliminating the need to push all data to Excel and then filter it.



Once a report has been run (see image above), the user can right-click in any cell to drill down and analyze the underlying detailed transactions. The drill-down function is always available without the need to pre-define any drill down functions when the report is designed.

## Compose Ad Hoc Reporting

SMB Intelligence Reporting also offers an optional module called Composer (see image below). The Composer is designed to solve ad-hoc (on the fly, instant) Reporting needs as compared to the SMB Intelligence Reporting Excel add-in which is focused on creating and running formatted reports. Typical ad-hoc users are accountants needing to see e.g. how much has been paid to a certain vendor so far this year, or a sales manager that wants to see what they have actually invoiced to a customer and if they have been paid.

The Composer has a very simple interface where everything is accomplished with drag and drop from the familiar Outlook-style menu on the left. This menu is the exact same menu that SMB Intelligence Reporting utilizes in Excel (see prior paragraphs about the Designer).

The composer is also connected to the Designer and a query designed in the Composer can, with a few clicks, be turned into a fully formatted Excel report template in the Designer.



Below is a table listing various deployment options:

Deployment	Advantage	Disadvantage
Power users run reports centrally and distribute/ email to users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No license required for end users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End users cannot get reports exactly when they need them.</li> <li>End users may want to see reports for other filter criteria</li> <li>End users cannot drill down</li> </ul>
Power users run reports and post to a shared network drive or SharePoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No license required for end users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End users cannot get reports exactly when they need them.</li> <li>End users may want to see reports for other filter criteria</li> <li>End users cannot drill down</li> </ul>
Power user create ad-hoc queries and export the results to Excel and e-mail/ print/save to server	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No license required for end users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>License required for end users</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End users get reports exactly when they need them.</li> <li>End users can run reports with different filter criteria</li> <li>End users can drill down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>License required for end users</li> </ul>
End users create ad-hoc queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End users can answer instant questions when they need it and without requesting information from power users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>License required for end users</li> </ul>



The table below provide examples of numerous potential uses of the SMB Intelligence Reporting module:

Purpose	Usage Examples
Financial Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Statements in various formats, like Profit &amp; Loss, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow</li> </ul>
Operational Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales Reports</li> <li>• Vendor Reports</li> <li>• Project Reports</li> <li>• HR &amp; Payroll Reports</li> </ul>
Dashboard Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based Dashboards that combine metrics and KPIs with charts and indicators (Excel 2007 and later supports traffic lights, arrows, etc.)</li> <li>• If data is coming from multiple sources, deploy SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse module, import data and deploy Dashboard Reports on top of the Data Warehouse.</li> </ul>
Scorecard Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based scorecards with KPIs. (Excel 2007 and later supports traffic lights, arrows, etc.)</li> <li>• Management's scorecard comments can be stored with SMB Intelligence Planning module.</li> <li>• If data is coming from multiple sources, deploy SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse module, import data and deploy Dashboard Reports on top of the Data Warehouse.</li> </ul>
KPI Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based reports that generate and display KPIs. (Excel 2007 and later supports traffic lights, arrows, etc.)</li> </ul>
Allocation Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based reports that calculate allocations.</li> <li>• If you want to store the allocations and them back to your Dynamics GP system, use SMB Intelligence Planning module. You can use the SMB Intelligence Planning module to collect and store allocation drivers.</li> </ul>

Purpose	Usage Examples
Commentary Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based reports (e.g. a P&amp;L) and set up SMB Intelligence Planning to collect and save text comments.</li> <li>• Create Excel based reports to show all comments made to certain accounts for certain variances, etc.</li> </ul>
Budget Template Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based input templates for use with SMB Intelligence Planning module.</li> </ul>
Budget Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based reports to consolidate /view budget.</li> </ul>
Workflow Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Excel based reports for instant views of all Approved/Pending/Rejected budgets</li> </ul>

## Typical Implementation Process

A typical implementation process of SMB Intelligence Reporting could look like this (in this example assume that SMB Intelligence Reporting is being used for typical reporting processes):

1. Train power users.
2. Identify Reporting needs.
3. Preparation for the SMB Intelligence Data Warehouse Manager – Not needed if SMB Intelligence Reporting will only be used for live reporting from Dynamics GP or Dynamics CRM.
  - a. Populate the Data Warehouse Manager with data and dimensions from your source systems. Examples of dimensions are: Account, Department, Project, Product, Employee, Asset, etc.
  - b. Enter any other dimensions or data directly in the Data Warehouse Manager if they do not already reside in another database from which they can be imported.
4. Design Excel report templates with SMB Intelligence Reporting.
5. Set up security (if different users require different access rights).
6. Train end users (will only take minutes as they just need to learn how to run reports and drill down).