

The State of Business Intelligence and Analytics

 **BI+Analytics**
Conference

ASUG

Executive Summary

SAP customers are facing barriers as they aim to get the most from their business intelligence (BI) and analytics functions. Though this work now crosses departments to meet the desire for data-driven decision-making, it currently lacks the formal executive support and resources needed to sustain it. Only 21% of participants in this study report having executives who support the BI function.

Data in Question

BI and analytics professionals rely on self-service tools to help them provide access to analytics across their organizations. But they're struggling to find the quality data needed to fuel these tools. They also lack the resources for training needed to make these tools useful to everyone.

Making Business Intelligence a Priority

Respondents told us they're looking for leadership in BI and analytics, indicating that it might be a lower strategic priority within today's organizations. They believe executive sponsorship would help address data governance issues, educate the organization about analytics standards, and define a universal BI and analytics strategy. This type of leader would be responsible for bridging the gaps among the teams creating BI reports and the various departments using them.

A Data-First Culture

The practice of driving decisions with data often demands changes in an organization's behavior and culture. These types of changes require guidance from executive sponsors who understand the BI field and can support efforts around the data governance that's needed for a single source of truth across an organization.

Figure 1: Business Intelligence (BI) and Analytics Need More Support



50%
of organizations split up
BI/analytics professionals
across departments



21%
have executives
supporting the
organization's BI health

Source: ASUG research, April 2019

Trends



Taking advantage of
self-serve tools



Innovating with
emerging technologies



Providing access to
on-demand analytics

Pressures



Data management and quality



The right portfolio of
analytics tools



The transition to
digital business

Key Technology Topics

Taking Advantage of Self-Serve Tools

SAP customers want tools that are user-friendly, self-service, and fast. Having technically sound tools is important, but it's not enough. They want to be told what data is important and why it's important.

This is especially critical because these tools need to help business users understand analytics and their implications through visualizations and dashboards. And they need to be flexible enough for use across different departments. As one respondent wrote, "Nontechnical managers need easy and intuitive ways to find and understand this data." Another noted that "helping our users be more self-sufficient is a key driver for us."

Innovating with Emerging Technologies

BI and analytics teams, like many others, are being asked to do more with less. Meanwhile, business users are turning to these teams more frequently to get them the information they need, when they need it, to become more agile. Emerging technology is expected to help fill that need. This is driving BI teams to consider automation, artificial intelligence (AI), easier extraction of data from the Internet of Things (IoT), and machine learning to help them put data into context more quickly.

Using more-advanced technology better satisfies the business. As one respondent noted, "When we shifted the stored procedures from Microsoft SQL into SAP HANA, the business users noticed the difference. What used to take us a day to refresh reports with millions of rows of data at month-end close now takes less than an hour. So, they're happy." Moving to the cloud is another way participants are adding advanced functionality. One participant observed that, "to use the latest and greatest features, you must go to the cloud platforms."

Providing Access to On-Demand Analytics

This trend reinforces the demand for agility and flexibility from business teams. It encompasses both mobile options and accessibility via the cloud in order to prepare teams with real-time tools to present findings regularly to company leadership.

On average, only 23% of users of BI tools view the data via a mobile device (e.g., smartphone, tablet). As one respondent wrote, "We use iPads for our executive team to view our dashboards because they didn't want to use their laptops. Our CEO doesn't even use his iPad. He uses his phone because he has it everywhere." Some companies may require change management to encourage their employees to use mobile devices to interact with data, while others may find that adoption of analytics programs depends on making them mobile friendly.



36%

of BI customers believe that AI will have a significant impact on their business in the next two years



24%

believe that IoT will have a significant impact

Major Pressures

Data Management and Quality

The biggest pain point for SAP customers is data governance (e.g., quality, security, and consolidation). SAP customers recognize that it's a prerequisite to increased efficiencies and innovation, but most struggle to get it right. "We now have a data dictionary of 47 ways to spell Tennessee," one respondent observed about the effects of dirty data.

Companies also struggle with the amount of data they have and how to understand which numbers are accurate. It is not uncommon for two executives to bring different statistics to a meeting, even though they're from the same data source.

The Right Portfolio of Analytics Tools

With the number of BI tools available, it's tough to balance agility and speed with the integration needs of major workloads. SAP customers ask themselves: Do I use SAP tools because they better integrate with my back-end systems, or do I choose something that may work better and faster for my business, and then face challenges connecting the output to the data?

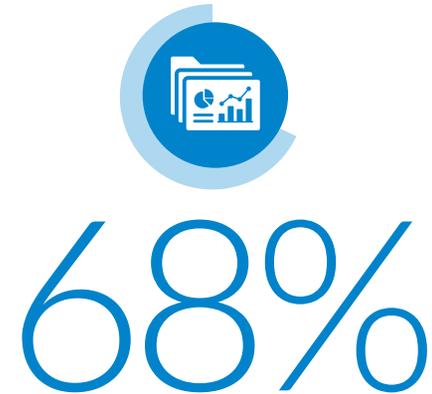
Because many plan to increase their investments in BI, it's important for companies to prioritize the benefits and key performance indicators (KPIs) they want from their analytics reports to help them select the right tools. This is one example of where a clear BI strategy, executed from the top down, would make a difference for organizations.

"Our BI team sits in the business, but we also maintain the technology stack for the BI platform and data universes. That is difficult for a small team to manage."

SAP BI and analytics customer

The Transition to Digital Business

Even as emerging technologies make it easier to deliver BI and analytics to the business, SAP customers still face the challenge of transitioning to a digital business overall. As one respondent wrote, it's difficult to "keep up with technology and meet client needs when they can't articulate what they want but are attracted to the latest shiny object."



of respondents expect their BI portfolios to increase, which could compound existing challenges

The Secrets Behind Satisfaction

Critical Factors for Satisfaction

We asked about the factors that are important to BI and analytics customers and evaluated how strongly they correlate with satisfaction with SAP information that's available. Respondents told us the critical factors are: master data management/governance/data integrity, simplifying data visualizations/dashboards, and a single version of truth for data and dashboards.

These critical factors directly correlate with data quality (identified as a pressure) and delivering self-serve analytics (identified as a trend). Executive leadership and education about how to create a single source of truth across all BI activities could help organizations address some of these factors.

Hidden Motivators Driving Satisfaction

Respondents didn't initially indicate these factors as critical, but they associated them with high satisfaction. They identified these as hidden motivators: predictive analytics/maintenance, implications of an SAP S/4HANA migration, Agile methodology as a project management tool for analytics, and standardized criteria for defining KPIs for the business.

While none of these hidden motivators surfaced as trends or pressures, they could help organizations manage both. Most are tactical tools that organizations can use to add discipline to their BI strategies.

Bare-Minimum Expectations

SAP customers in the BI and analytics space also have these minimum expectations for their investments: data transparency/making data available to more users and/or customers and effectively communicating with line-of-business users.

Because of the pressures that may arise from BI teams sitting across departments, these factors surfaced as basic items that BI professionals need to accomplish their goals. Communication skills are key as BI professionals and line-of-business users require a shared language they both can understand.

Critical Factors



Importance



Satisfaction

Master data management/
governance/data integrity

Simplifying data
visualizations/dashboards

A single version of truth for
data and dashboards

Hidden Motivators



Importance



Satisfaction

Predictive analytics/maintenance

Implications of an
SAP S/4HANA migration

Agile methodology as a project
management tool for analytics

Standardized criteria for defining
key performance indicators (KPIs)
for the business

Products of Interest

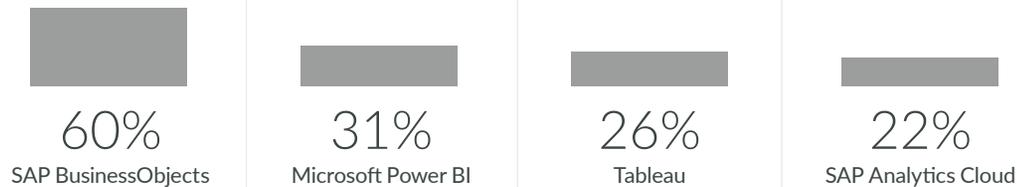
The SAP customers who participated in this research use a range of analytics tools: no single cloud-based tool dominates this market. Microsoft Power BI, Tableau, and SAP Analytics Cloud are all close in market share.

This speaks to the lack of strong leadership in assembling the best BI tools for the business. Particularly for SAP customers, the potential benefits of using SAP Analytics Cloud will require a stronger voice in the room to make the case for it.

Slow to Change

Adopting new tools might be a slow process. As one respondent explained: “We are trying to pull users toward using SAP Analytics Cloud and they are not ready to step out of the comfort zone at all.” Another respondent said, “the primary go-to tool is still our SAP BusinessObjects universe to connect to all kinds of databases from the cloud or on-premise.”

Figure 2: Key Products Used by SAP BI and Analytics Customers



Source: ASUG research, April 2019

Connections to the Digital Core

While many respondents are still running SAP ECC (44%), analytics teams are starting to take advantage of some of the speed SAP HANA offers. Almost a quarter of the market is using SAP BW/4HANA (26%) or SAP S/4HANA (21%).

Only 6% of respondents currently use Qualtrics as part of their BI package. This number could increase as more teams begin to track experience management (XM) data.



37%

of BI customers are currently considering purchasing new products

Getting the Most from SAP Solutions in BI and Analytics

Based on our research, SAP customers want to implement self-service tools, innovate with emerging technologies, and provide access to analytics across their organizations. They are challenged by the availability and quality of data, choosing the right portfolio of analytics tools, and the transition to digital business. These customers want to optimize current technologies and explore new ones but need executive support to define a universal BI strategy.

Figure 3: BI/Analytics Tools Need to Be Versatile



Source: ASUG research, April 2019

We'll address these industry trends through real-life customer case studies, interactive discussion sessions, demos, and SAP expert presentations. At the BI+Analytics Conference, our sessions have covered topics that include the future of business intelligence, communication between IT and finance, how to bring model output to life in presentations, increasing automation and visibility with self-service tools, and successfully releasing BI output using Agile and Scrum. Past customer company speakers have represented companies such as Benjamin Moore, Kimberly-Clark, Crocs Inc., the City of Toronto, Ferrara Candy Company, and Callaway Golf.

The BI+Analytics Conference is co-located with the SAP-Centric Financials conference. You'll have the chance to attend relevant sessions and interact with other professionals who depend on accurate data and advanced analytics. We connect you with your peers who have the answers you're looking for.



Join Us in Spring 2020

March 9-11, 2020
Atlanta

The trends that surfaced from this study will inform the agenda for the 2020 BI+Analytics Conference, where thought leaders and industry experts will share their insights and experiences to help you get the most out of your SAP investments. Join Eventful Conferences, ASUG, and SAP March 9-11, 2020, at the Atlanta Evergreen Marriott to connect with your peers and take new ideas back to your business.

Visit the BI+Analytics Conference website to find updates on speakers, keynotes, training sessions, sponsorship opportunities, and more.

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About ASUG Research

ASUG research captures a unique view of what SAP customers are doing, thinking, and planning for the future. We apply traditional quantitative and qualitative methodologies and research best practices to deliver insights on relevant technology topics. The information in this report came from both a qualitative study and a quantitative survey of SAP customers in the BI and analytics functions conducted in March and April 2019.