Influential – Business Intelligence – headline positioning

1. High-level proposition – What do Influential Business Intelligence Services offer?

Leveraging the power of the industry-leading BI/analytics tools from SAP and IBM, Influential offers design, implementation, industry best practice, testing and training services to deliver rapid business results and reporting capabilities at a tactical departmental level, right the way through to implementing an enterprise wide strategic BI strategy. Influential provides these services across many sectors, including Financial Services, Public Sector, Publishing/Media, Insurance, Oil & Gas, Health and more.

BI/Analytics solutions help organisations to make faster and more accurate business decisions through the use of Reporting (operational and interactive), Query and Analytics, and Performance Management (KPI reporting, dashboards and scorecards). This helps them to react to or predict changing market conditions, respond to users needs for accurate, relevant and timely data and to share information with customers, suppliers and partners. This in turn leads to improved products, pricing and competitiveness, improved customer satisfaction and retention, decreased costs, improved efficiency and ultimately profitable revenue growth.

Influential helps organisations to avoid the traditional pitfalls of deploying BI solutions and can help to reduce the time taken to produce meaningful results from over 12 months to as little as 12 weeks by:

- A vendor independent approach which allows Influential to recommend the right tools for the job
- Business Intelligence expertise gained, via 200+ clients
- Broad product experience ranging from Data Warehouse design to reporting and analytics
- BI and industry best practice

Influential is uniquely positioned to help any organisation deliver rapid business results and reporting capabilities at a tactical departmental level, right the way through to implementing an enterprise wide strategic BI strategy.


Figure 1 – Influential's BI Maturity Model

2. Influential's Agile Approach to BI

Influential has developed a unique approach to helping organisations not only deliver successful BI projects, but also to build a level of internal competency that gives them the confidence to initiate and succeed with further BI projects. This approach builds on 4 cornerstones for successful BI projects:

1. Working with the business, they form a deep understanding of the key business questions that need to be answered using BI reporting
2. Working with IT they piece together the various elements of corporate data that relate to these questions (assuming they exist) and establishing how they are linked together
3. Work out how to transform the data to help answer the questions that have been defined
4. Managing the knowledge transfer, training and internal competency that is required to build confidence in initiating further projects and ensuring the use of BI becomes pervasive.

Rather than allowing this approach to become all encompassing, it focuses on bite size chunks that deliver specific answers to business questions and an iterative approach that continually tests the relevance of these answers.
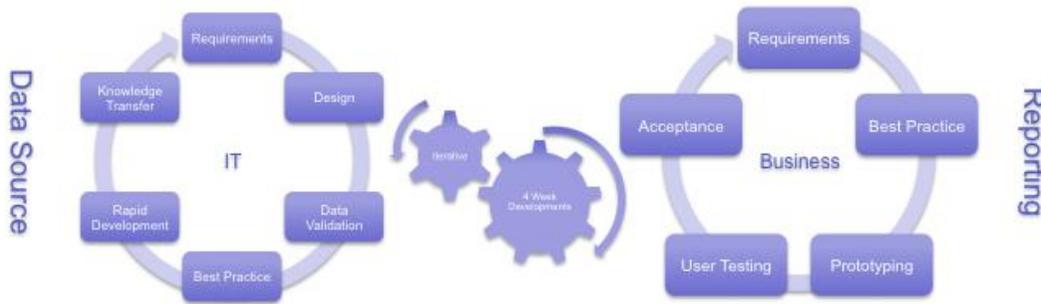
Asking the Right Questions

Influential works with the various stakeholders within an organisation to fully understand the questions (*requirements*) the business wants to answer through the implementation of a BI strategy. Influential can help the business to frame these questions and bring *best practice* from other successful implementations.

By working with the IT organisation, Influential develops answers to the questions in 4 week *sprints* allowing the business to quickly see the results. This can then be fine tuned through *user testing* to ensure they really are getting what the business wanted.

Many times the business is not aware that some data even exists, leading to an iterative process of modifying and fine-tuning user requirements until each project is *accepted*.

Finding and Transforming the Data

In parallel to working with the business users, Influential also works with the IT department to help translate the business questions into a clear *requirements* definitions that will form the basis for data definitions and the rapid prototyping development.

To help organisations realise their Business Intelligence goals, Influential practitioners add a wealth of industry standard *best practices* to either complement an existing delivery team or to deliver specific project goals that include:

- Data warehouse design and governance
- Universe Design
- Requirement collection, project definition and project management
- Report Design
- Rapid Prototyping
- Auditing and version control
- Testing and quality management

A key advantage of this approach is the ability to make both organisations self-sufficient wherever possible and promote the creation of internal BI competence. It also helps to balance the need to develop a strategic BI data management strategy with the need to deliver rapid results against business and regulatory needs for changes to reporting requirements. As each prototype is delivered and accepted or modified, another 4-week process starts until each of the business requirements are realised.

The result of this approach is rapid and assured project delivery, customer self-sufficiency and compliance with current and future BI best practice that ultimately gives the business the confidence to initiate and deploy further BI projects.

Each tactical deployment takes the organisation one step closer to the strategic goals defined within Influential's **BI Optimisation Programme Maturity Model.**

Why not use a large SI or Vendor-specific consulting organisation?

The SIs and vendors each have a vested interest in either promoting their own products or enlarging the scope of their engagement, which may not be in the interests of the customer

Characteristics of traditional SI or Vendor Consulting:	Characteristics of Influential:
Too expensive and lengthy engagement with little flexibility	Influential can bring significant savings of 25% or more in day rates alone. Combined with an agile and flexible approach based on business needs and available data, Influential can also significantly shorten the engagement.
Interested in making the engagement as long a possible	Interested in helping the customer to build an internal BI centre of competence through knowledge transfer and extensive training. This gives the business the confidence to initiate and deploy further BI projects. The real benefits of BI are only realised through broad deployment.
Vested interest in specific products	Influential is vendor independent and can either work with the customer's BI tool of choice, or recommend the right tools for the right job.
Separate processes for sales and implementation	Influential works with both the Business and IT (as well as other stakeholders) to ensure the partnership developed between these organisations (with Influential's help) leads to BI projects being linked to corporate strategy and business process.
Best practice	Influential's best practice has been built up over a period of 20 years working with over 200 customers to deploy successful BI implementations that use the right BI tool to deliver the right business results. Influential does not favour any particular tool, but applies industry best practice and experience gained from other successful implementations.
Difficult to implement successfully – takes over 12 months to realise results	Rapid deployment using Influential's agile development methodology helps reduce risk and ensures faster time to payback through 4-week rapid development cycles. This could deliver real results in as little as 12 weeks.
Systems are complex to manage and reports proliferate	Influential can help organisations to give users the ability to create their own reports without the need to rely on IT. Users get what they what, when they want them, eliminating the backlog of reports and allowing IT to focus on more valuable activities. This self service approach also minimises the number of reports.
Danger of over engineering the data warehouse and having too much data governance	Using Influential's BI maturity model, Influential helps organisations to get the right balance between data management and delivering timely business results. This helps organisations to prioritise their BI project based on potential business benefits, organisational readiness and the technical complexity of each project.

3. Influential – delivering best practice Business Intelligence solutions

With an extensive skill set across multiple database and data warehouse technologies, ETL tools and BI reporting tools, coupled with industry best practice skills (detailed above), Influential is uniquely positioned to help organisations achieve their enterprise data governance goals.

Through a unique approach of engaging with both the business and IT organisations to focus on business needs, rapid prototyping and ongoing knowledge transfer and user training, Influential helps to deliver rapid business results and increased stakeholder and user confidence.

Influential has been helping to deliver best practice business intelligence solutions for over 20 years, and has built one of the largest dedicated BI consulting practices in that time. As an independent business partner, Influential can either work with your BI tools of choice or recommend the right tools from its extensive portfolio to help you achieve your business intelligence requirements.

Different engagement models to address different situations:
- Solution Delivery – Full end-to-end delivery of a BI solution, including analysis, design, delivery and support.
- Activation Program – For customers that are unclear how to develop a BI strategy, the Activation Program will carry out an assessment of their current state, understand their requirements, and devise a roadmap or journey plan for their BI strategy
- Tactical solutions – For customers with immediate requirements or skill shortfalls, we can provide expert assistance with small engagements or "body shop" requirements

All of these services are "productised" and can be offered with full pre-sales and delivery support from the Influential BI team.

All consultants within Influential are certified in the suite of SAP and IBM analytics tools.

This experience is also reflected in levels of accreditation that Influential enjoys with its partners:

Specifically these skills encompass:

Database / Data Warehouse	ETL	BI Tools
• Oracle 11g	• BO Data Integrator	• IBM Cognos, TM1, SPSS
• MS SQL Server	• Oracle Data Integrator	• SAP Business Objects
• PostGres	• MS SSIS	• MS SharePoint, SSAS

In addition, Influential can also provide Data Base Administrator (DBA), database performance and tuning capabilities and PL/SQL services.

4. Addressing today's key business issues:

Today's key business challenges	Techniques to help address these challenges	How Influential can make a difference
Adjusting to the unprecedented changes brought about by today's economic climate	Having a flexible and agile infrastructure in place that ensures rapid access to relevant business data that can be easily accessed and acted on by staff across your business	By deploying BI broadly throughout an organisation, users are given the ability to turn vast amounts of data into information that employees use to make informed business decisions. The most successful BI applications allow users to do this with an easy-to-understand, non-technical, graphical user interface.
Improving the bottom line	Through cost savings, generating cash faster, reducing IT costs, improved returns on investment	In enterprise performance management (EPM), organisations must understand and have constant visibility into their key performance indicators and metrics that span across their organisations. By doing this, organisations ensure their strategy is aligned from top to bottom and across the organisation from marketing to sales to manufacturing to human resources. Providing this enterprise insight is a key strength of BI.
Increasing competitive advantage	Taking advantage of market opportunities created by weakened competitors	Uncertain times highlight the importance for companies to make data based decisions. Knowing who the best and most profitable customers are becomes that much more crucial; understanding changes in business trends and what is driving them becomes essential for survival. Companies leveraging BI as a competitive differentiator will be able to focus their resources where ROI is highest. They can also introduce web-based services to differentiate their products and services and increase customer satisfaction.
Positioning your business to exit the recession in a leaner and more agile condition	Ready to accelerate ahead of the competition as the market returns to growth	A complete intelligence platform delivers consistent, accurate, and relevant information that will drive better business decisions and deliver competitive advantage. At the same time, customers can provide specific intelligence to every line-of-business decision maker and knowledge worker to help them make timely, well-informed decisions.
Ensuring your business is compliant with evolving regulatory pressures	Turning compliance adherence into a competitive advantage	Improve business-user efficiency and deliver on compliance requirements through better data governance. Proactively address compliance regulations by analyzing textual information that includes compliance risk–related issues hidden in documents, records, and contracts and better comply with corporate and data governance policies through automated reporting and processes based on accurate data.
To meet the reporting requirements of the business	Up-to-date information allows businesses to plan and react quickly.	By providing timely and accurate information to users broadly throughout an organisation and linking this information to business strategy and business process and measured through Key Performance Indicators, not only can users make better and faster business decisions, but they can also see the impact of these decisions on the business.

Appendix A – Market Backgrounder

Introduction

The business intelligence market is mature and dominated by 4 mega vendors (SAP, IBM, Oracle and Microsoft) and serviced by consulting organisations that range from the big four, through the software vendors themselves and all the way down to single consultant companies.

Despite this, according to Computerworld up to 60% of BI projects fail and as many as 78% fail to produce meaningful results within 12 months. (Source: Computerworld UK, 20.10.2009)

The market is also rapidly evolving with the emergence of many new players into the market (Birst, Board, Indicee, PivotLink, Proferi, Qliktech, Tableau, Vertica, Xactly as well as open source vendors such as Jaspersoft and Pentaho) as they try to offer cheaper, faster to implement products, SaaS and hosted offerings and take advantage of Cloud Computing.

Source: Gartner (January 2010)

There are many perceived reasons as to why BI projects fail, but a good place to start in articulating the Influential proposition is with the top 5 put forward by Gartner at their recent BI Summit:

- No IT-Business Partnership
- No Link to Corporate Strategy
- No Connection to the Business Process
- No Governance or Too Much
- No Skills

This could be further summarised as the business not knowing what they wanted or at least how to ask for it and IT failing because they "throw products at the problem" and do not invest in training or acquire business support. A survey by Kognitio concluded that "88% of enterprises admitted that business departments did not properly define what they want to achieve from an implementation, the assumption being that the project scope would be defined by the IT department". (Source: Kognitio, 20.10.2009)

Gartner also commented in its 2010 CIO survey that "the technologies that CIOs are prioritizing in 2010 are technologies that can be implemented quickly and without significant upfront expense, instead of investing millions of dollars to get millions in benefits, with these technologies, up front investments are measured in thousands of dollars to get those same benefits". (Source: Gartner EXP, January 2010)

Integrating ever-increasing volumes of data

One of the major business intelligence challenges faced by organisations is how to integrate ever-increasing volumes of data from differing departmental systems into a central repository of accurate and up-to-date information. As they fight to deliver timely information to meet ever shortening deadlines, many have found that the complexity of their IT environment and the multiple data sources for individual lines of business has led to costly and lengthy efforts to reconcile this data.

Organisations can reduce costs and increase the quality of their data by combining a data management strategy with business intelligence software resulting in faster business and regulatory reporting. They can create a "single version of the truth" and a "single view of the customer" for information management that addresses the business and operational challenges they face today.

Meeting strategic Business Intelligence challenges

Another challenge with the implementation of a strategic BI solution is the time and investment required to deliver it. Many organisations need to be able to produce Management Information and Reporting now, in a flexible and adaptive solution whilst avoiding the traditional long wait, often in excess of 12 months as highlighted above, while a BI strategy is fully realised.

The conventional solution to this would be the implementation of a BI strategy that consolidates the reporting platform, establishes a governance model, and delivers a centralised and trusted data source usually in the form of a Data Warehouse. To help deliver such a solution, Influential has developed a unique and iterative process that not only helps to deliver results for strategic BI solutions, but also helps to deliver rapid business reporting results even where an enterprise data warehouse is not yet in place.

Appendix B – Self-Service Business Intelligence

Empowering the business through self-service Business Intelligence

According to a recent survey conducted by Unisphere for the Oracle Applications User Group (OUAG), there are considerable demands from enterprises for reports, dashboards, scorecards or planning models, but decision makers often end up waiting months for new reports. The survey found that 47% of respondents say that fewer than 10% of their employees have access to BI reporting tools on a regular basis. Due to the need to submit new report requests to IT, the majority reported that the waiting time for a new report varied from 3 days to more than a month! (Source: OUAG, September 2009)

"One of the issues is the difficulty of use and longer-than-expected training periods for BI tools", Dan Kearnan, director of BI solution marketing at SAP says. "As a result, many users turn to higher cost, non-self-service channels-such as IT or business analysts to get their business questions answered. This reliance on IT is taking its toll. Users are frustrated by time delays, while IT is overburdened and under resourced. This results in underperforming and non-competitive organisations in which IT typically takes the brunt of complaints for poor access to information." (Source: dbta)
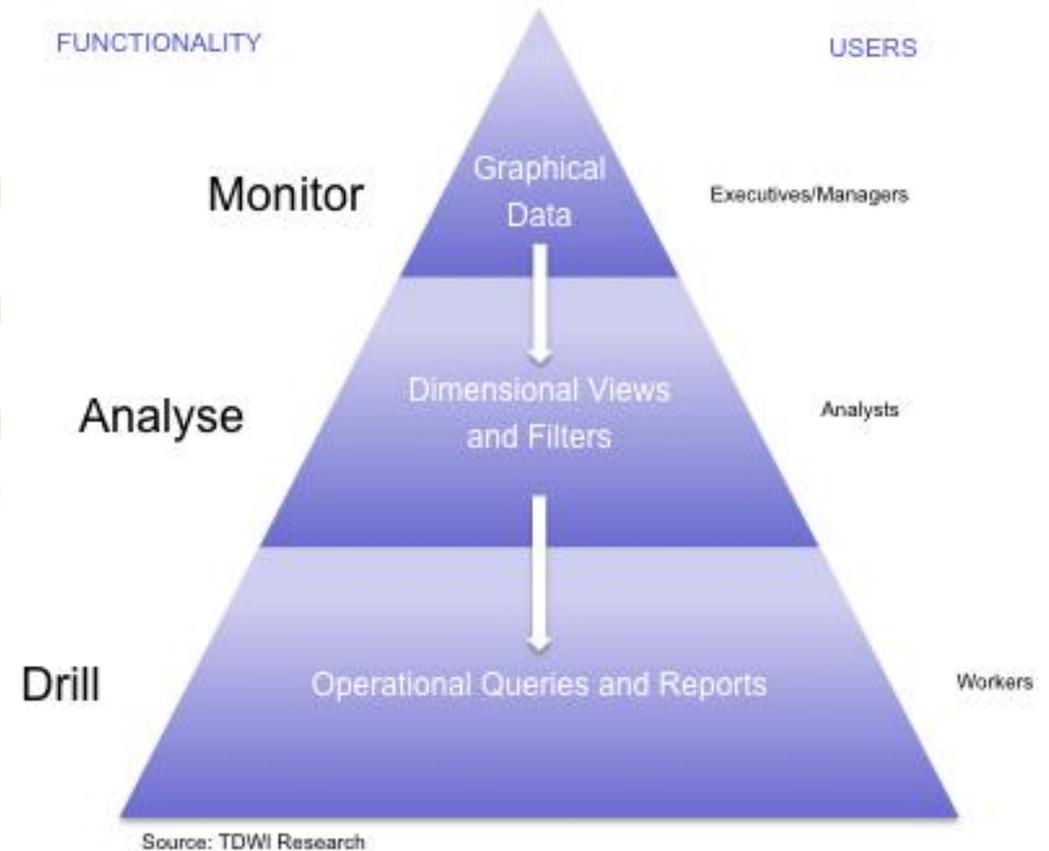
The OAUG survey found that 71% respondents overwhelmingly agree that "self-service" empowering the end user to build their own customized interfaces will go a long way to encouraging greater adoption of BI tools and practices.

Influential can help organisations to give users the ability to create their own reports without the need to rely on IT. Users get what they what, when they want them, eliminating the backlog of reports and allowing IT to focus on more valuable activities.

By building the right BI framework Influential can tailor information by role, department and security privileges, enabling users to subscribe to personalised views of the data that best meet their needs.

Influential can also help you to build a BI self-service capability for the two distinct types of BI user, power users and casual users. Power users are comfortable accessing, analysing and publishing data on a regular basis and need to be

empowered to create reports on an ad-hoc basis. Casual users are executives, managers and staff who need to examine reports and are willing to select parameters, respond to prompts or drill down on predefined navigation paths in a dashboard or a parameterised report.

Source: TDWI Research

Appendix C - Case Studies

	Project	Description		Project	Description
BARCLAYS WEALTH	Data Quality Dashboard and KPI reporting	Project to measure data quality within the data warehouse, analyse the effect of data source on data quality and determine the accuracy of the data	**Legal & General**	Funds under management reporting	Helped to develop strategic BI roadmap, advise on data warehouse design and document BI best practices and methodologies
Lloyds TSB	High Value Customer Dashboard	Reporting on the exposure and risk represented by their customers. Implemented Agile approach within the bank and helped them to develop a standardisation strategy for their BI the help them rapidly deliver on a range on BI projects.	**National Australia Bank**	Executive performance dashboards and KPI reporting	Helped to define and deliver product performance dashboards, product and operational KPI reporting and slice and dice analytics for mortgages, savings lending and other products.
LOTUS F1 TEAM	BI/Reporting	Data warehouse and reporting using SAP Business Objects	**centrica**	BI/Reporting	Data warehouse and reporting using SAP Business Objects
PREMIER	Claims/Policy OLAP analysis	Using IBM Cognos Powerplay to provide OLAP slice/dice analysis across 100+m row insurance claims/policy databases over SQL Server	**currencies direct** money without frontiers	BI/Reporting	Data warehouse and reporting using SAP Business Objects
Taylor & Francis Taylor & Francis Group	Full 24/7, 1000 user data warehouse solution	160 feeds, 24/7 access, 100% up-time, 1,000 user SAP Business Objects solution over Oracle	**AON**	eTrading Dashboard	Developed a dashboard to report on the volume and performance of their transactions with drill down capability. Web based and hosted by Influential.