

A Visibility eBook

Business Intelligence in Manufacturing

What BI Is, Why You Need It, and More!



What Is Business Intelligence



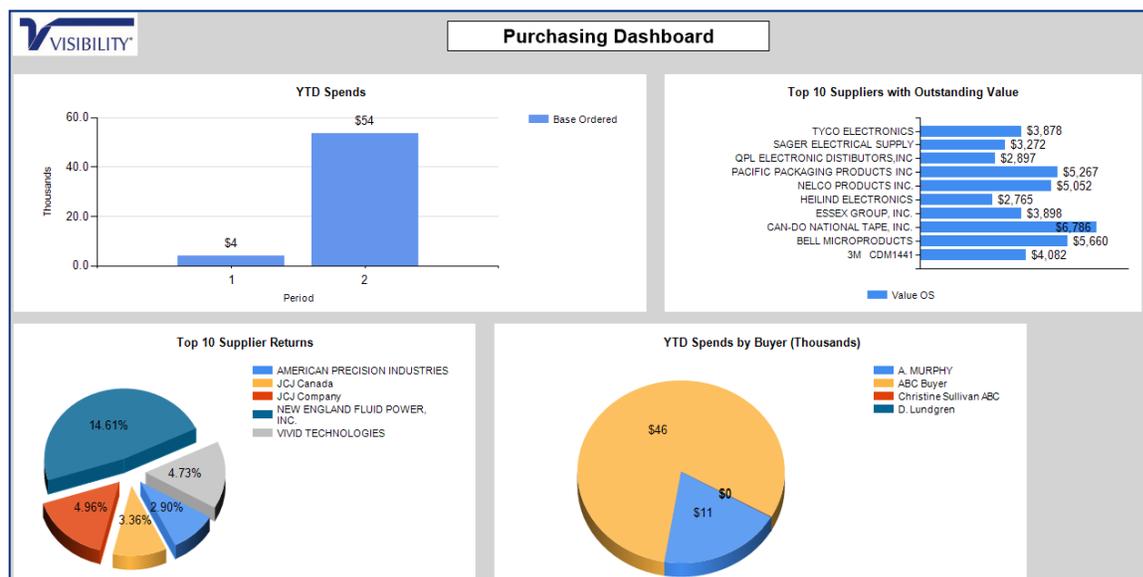
What is Business Intelligence (BI)? Well, it's a software application that is used to drive analytics from vast volumes of data. That data might reside in an ERP system, in a spreadsheet, or some other point solution. The goal of Business Intelligence is to turn raw data into actionable information that managers and executives can use to improve their business operations. In the following pages, we will discuss exactly how Business Intelligence achieves that goal.

10 Reasons You Cannot Afford To Wait another Moment to implement BI

1. Increase speed to access and analyze key business data to *make informed fact-based decisions faster*
2. Empower business users with tools to spot and explore trends
3. Improve quality information and facilitate data consolidations
4. Provide consistent data across the organization so users can *spend less time reconciling differences*
5. Replace home-grown or ineffective standard report writer products
6. Provide *powerful analysis* for intuitive assessment of business information
7. Utilize existing IT infrastructure
8. Reduce workload and impact on transactional systems
9. Users can perform ad-hoc analysis through a drag & drop functionality
10. Give your staff the power to *access, analyze, and collaborate*

Reason #1: Increase speed to access and analyze key business data to make informed fact-based decisions faster

Business Intelligence is the delivery of accurate and valuable information, to key decision makers, “on demand.” The purpose of which is not to answer the common questions, but instead to uncover new questions and find answers to questions you never thought you would ask.



Business Intelligence Solutions transform unrelated, detailed information from one or more disparate business applications into meaningful, business focused intelligence. These tools provide a pre-defined set of metrics which enable end users to analyze standardized business data, from any number of perspectives, using Microsoft Excel and Reporting Services.

Reason #2: Empower business users with tools to spot and explore trends

Business Intelligence provides you with the tool-set for tailored reporting and analytics, thereby allowing you to control the information you see and need precisely at that moment. Business Intelligence solutions are designed with a best practice architecture that facilitates speed to deploy and flexibility to accommodate unique measurements for your organization.

For a manufacturing company, the management of inventory is of the utmost importance.



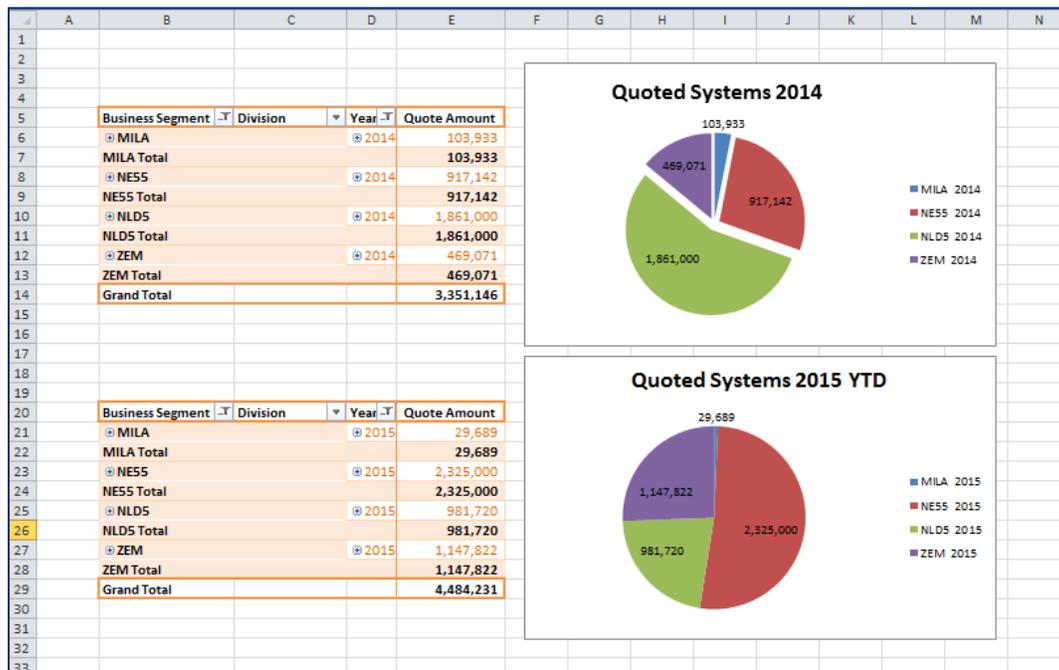
Effectively managing inventory and keeping and driving costs down are crucial to gaining a competitive advantage. When materials managers gain access to the right information on a timely basis, they have the opportunity to find new insights about usage, costs, customers, obsolescence and materials operations and can take action to improve business performance.

The integrated nature of most Inventory applications and associated databases with ERP and other business applications typically generates high volumes of important data. Retrieval and presentation of this data has historically been in the form of reports. Although they contain a lot of information, the structure does not lend itself to analysis, interpretation, and action.

The Solution Is Often Business Intelligence...

Business Intelligence helps you analyze what's driving your business with information presented in a way that makes sense including; bar charts, line graphs, pie charts, spreadsheets and dashboards. It is organized to enable you to quickly yet comprehensively explore your information by viewing it with and from multiple dimensions. Navigation is easy and the ability to slice the data into additional views and increasing detail is all a part of the solution.

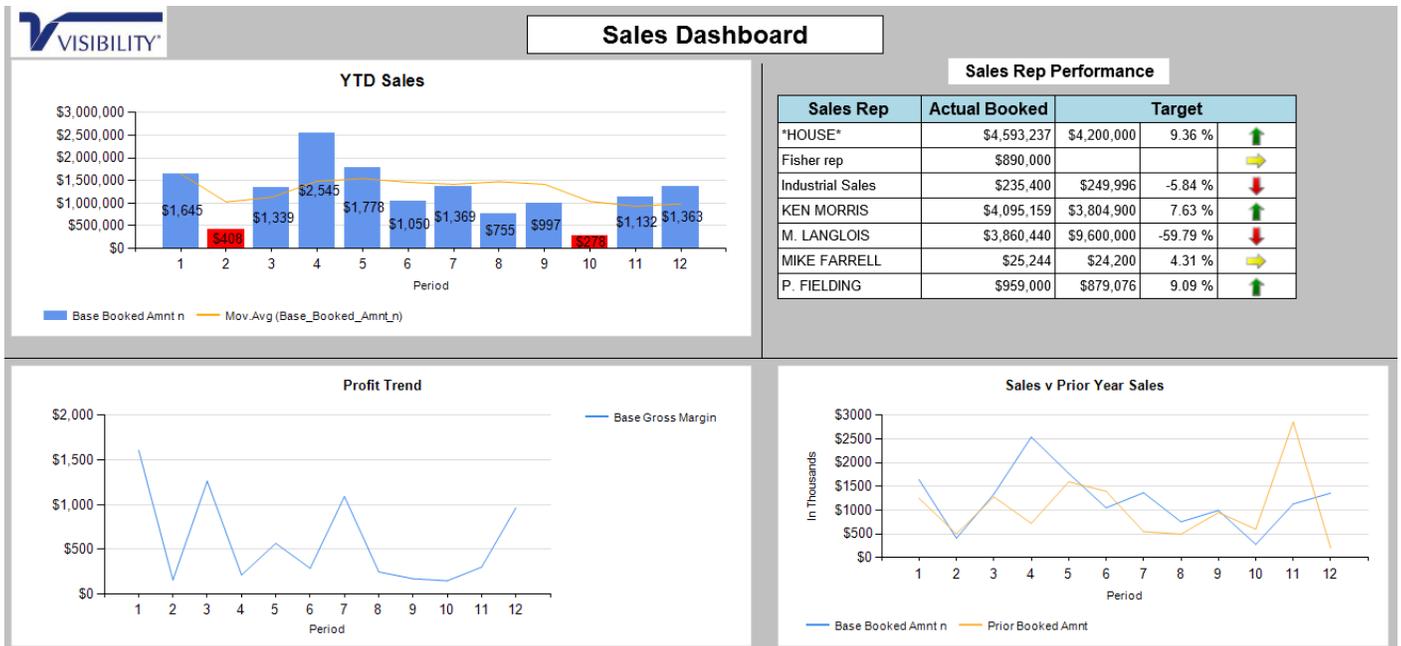
Users can readily generate drill -down reports and graphs, to identify trends that cannot usually be seen through standard reporting solutions that may have come with your Inventory application.



Additionally, Business Intelligence allows users to define their own queries or metrics and share it over the web for review by other users. By providing users with the ability to analyze inventory performance in real-time using metrics tailored to their unique environments, the Inventory Analyzer provides real-time business intelligence. The result is an unprecedented level of access to critical data so inventory and materials managers can best serve the business.

Reason #3: Improve quality information and facilitate data consolidations

Business Intelligence delivers high quality information from disparate systems. BI can pull from legacy ERP solutions, point solutions, and other sources. All of this data can be transformed into a consolidated single view. A good example is Cash Flow Reporting. While the data for such an analysis report might reside in AP, AR, Sales, and Purchasing, Business Intelligence can gather, transform and consolidate that rich financial data into a highly useful management report.



Reason #4: Provide consistent data across the organization so users can spend less time reconciling differences

One of the more relevant features of a Business Intelligence platform is the standardization of information and the reduction in time spent on solving discrepancies. Since BI is a common standard from which all reports can start, users have great confidence that their information is consistent across all departmental areas.



In a manufacturing company, often times, it's left to the finance department to find and analyze discrepancies, thus leading to inefficiencies.

The warehouse for financial information in most organizations today is their business system database(s) such as ERP, CRM, SCM, Financial Management or other packages that support daily operations. Despite a database's core competency, being able to store large volumes of data in an organized manner, it is not optimized for easy access. Therefore the data becomes virtually invisible to the user who requires access to it. As a result, at month end, many business entities will sift, siphon, and manually re-enter the financial data into spreadsheets to measure financial performance. This is a time-consuming, error prone process without the benefit of analysis capabilities.

The Solution Is Often Business Intelligence...

In addition, financial users may be splintered across the organization in multiple entities or divisions each with different information requirements. Standard reports provided with the financial software package are generally lacking and unable to generate effective and immediate analysis. Finding data may require making requests of IT to define, create, and execute desired reports which is untenable.

Finally, when key users cannot independently source data, they will apply pressure on IT to support their ever-changing information needs, regardless of whether IT has the resources or tools to respond.

Business Intelligence opens up the ability to consolidate information from multiple data sources, including operational databases and even Excel. Coupled with the data marts inherent functionality that allows the viewing of financial measurements from a very high level, it offers the ability to easily dig down into transaction level detail, while dramatically reducing the time and effort required to produce monthly-consolidated financial statements. Month-end close cycles can be reduced from days to hours and the data accuracy increases exponentially.



Spends By Period

Period: 2

Supplier	Name	PO No.	Line	Rel	Part	Date Promised	Date Received	Qty On Order	Qty Received	Order Value	Received Value
0056	SALMON FALLS/MERGE W/METALWORK	sk022007po1	5	1	1429247-2	2/20/2007	11/11/2014	192.00	96.00	\$19,200.00	\$9,600.00
0056	SALMON FALLS/MERGE W/METALWORK	sk022007po1	7	1	1429247-0	2/20/2007	11/11/2014	192.00	96.00	\$1,920.00	\$960.00
100	PARAMOUNT PUBLISHING, INC.	032807po2	7	1	1429247-0	3/28/2007	11/11/2014	12.00	12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00

Reason #5: Replace home-grown or ineffective standard report writer products

What if your user community could use a Microsoft Excel PivotTable to do their reporting? Do you think that would be welcomed and would offer a high degree of adoption? We think so! Why remain attached to legacy reporting tools when you can have your users use a tool that they already know? That is the beauty of BI; the

delivery of the information via a vehicle that the users already know and utilize on a daily basis. That is not to say that PivotTables are the only solution. Users could use other leading reporting tools or the native Microsoft Reporting Services as well.



Reason #6: Provide powerful analysis for intuitive assessment of business information

For this bullet point on BI, let's talk about a specific area; sales!

The integrated nature of BI and its underlying database enable the storage of volumes of data from daily operations. Retrieval and presentation of this data has historically been in the form of reports. Although reports contain a lot of information, the structure does not lend itself well to analysis, interpretation, and action.



Territory Details

WEST - Western USA Territory

Division	Curr	Sales Order	Booked Amnt	Base Booked Amnt
31 - United States West	US\$	731569	(\$100.00)	(\$100.00)
31 - United States West	US\$	731618	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731917	\$159,800.00	\$159,800.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731691	(\$25,254.00)	(\$25,254.00)
31 - United States West	US\$	731692	\$25,254.00	\$25,254.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731693	(\$10.00)	(\$10.00)
31 - United States West	US\$	731694	\$10.00	\$10.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731709	\$100.00	\$100.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731714	\$252,440.00	\$252,440.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731719	\$75,732.00	\$75,732.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731726	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731743	\$201,092.00	\$201,092.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731744	\$2,962.91	\$2,962.91
31 - United States West	US\$	731917	\$128,450.00	\$128,450.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731917	\$105,000.00	\$105,000.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731923	\$650,000.00	\$650,000.00
31 - United States West	US\$	731917	\$37,680.00	\$37,680.00
Total:			\$1,627,156.91	\$1,627,156.91

Business Intelligence, specifically sales reporting, delivers comprehensive sales analysis capabilities with minimal implementation time and effort. Proven reporting functions allow users to analyze key indicators such as order details by territory, division, or sales representative. Increasing the efficiency of your sales force, improving sales-related decision-making, enhancing the ability to react to late customer payments, and boosting the overall health of your business with more profitable sales and stronger customer relationships is simplified through the Business Intelligence.

Reason #7: Utilize existing IT infrastructure

Reporting and analytic analyzers unlock critical business information and transform data into knowledge. These solutions are easily deployed

to work with your current business systems and existing IT infrastructure.

Reason #8: Reduce workload and impact on transactional systems

By eliminating process intensive report writing queries, a Business Intelligence solution improves overall system performance.

One area that is highly transactional in nature and benefits greatly from an integrated Business Intelligence solution is purchasing.

Supply Chain efficiency is focused in part on improving and optimizing the procurement process. Procurement management needs access to numerous pieces of business data to arrive at effective decision making. Information about parts, pricing, availability, quality and suppliers is crucial.

Business Intelligence and its underlying database enable the storage of volumes of data from daily operations. Retrieval and presentation of this data has historically been in the form of reports. Although reports contain a lot of information, the structure in many systems does not lend itself well to analysis, interpretation, and action.

Business Intelligence offers some great solutions for the purchasing manager.

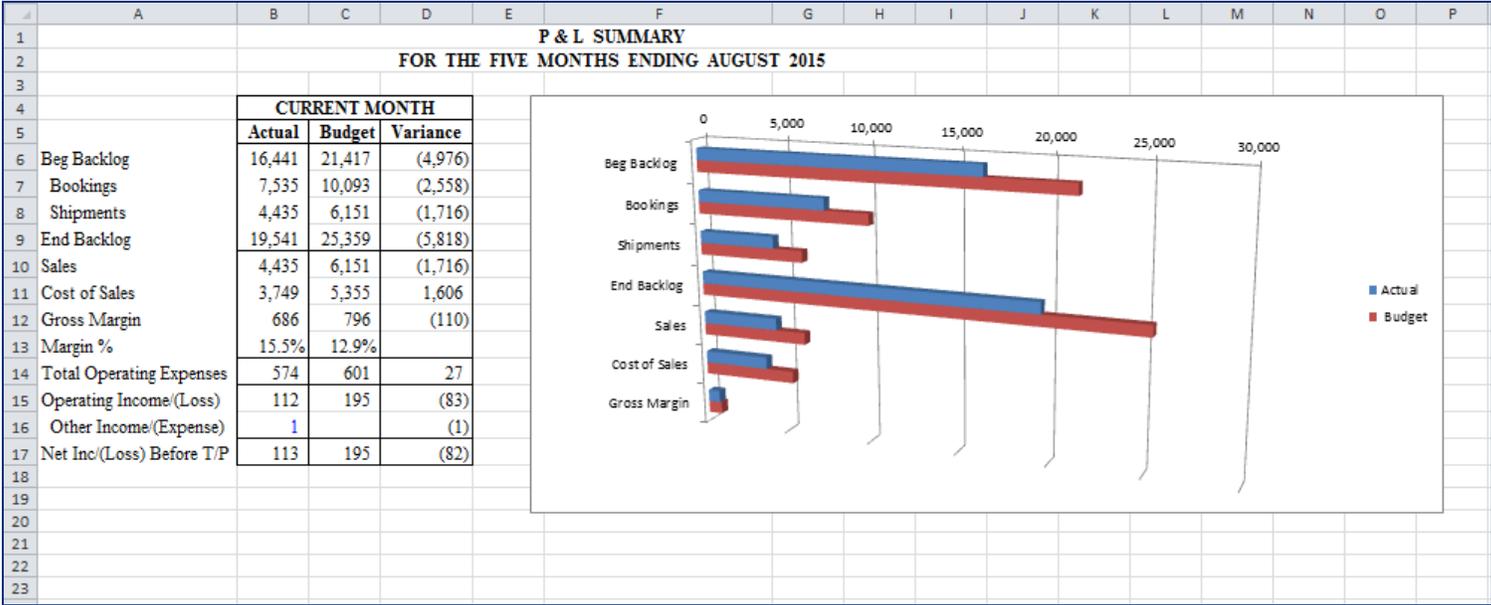
BI helps you maximize your purchasing control through cross tabs, pie charts, line graphs or bar charts. The cubes let you explore multidimensional information by navigating through increasing levels of detail, then simply slice and dice to view different dimensions of the selected data. If you wish to see the actual transactions that created the cube, then “drill thru”.



Reason #9: Users can perform ad-hoc analysis through a drag and drop functionality

Whatever the vehicle for delivering rich BI data, end users need no technical skills for performing reporting as they are able perform drag and drop functions to easily create new reports.

One area that can benefit greatly from these simple, drag and drop tools is in labor management.



Business Intelligence offers great insight into your workforce, operational efficiencies, and employee utilization...

Business is all about selling goods and services. When managers gain access to the right information on a timely basis, they have the opportunity to find new insights about customers, products and business operations and can take the appropriate actions to improve business performance. BI and its underlying database enable the storage of volumes of data from daily operations. Retrieval and presentation of this data has historically been in the form of reports. Although the reports contain a lot of information, the structure does not lend itself well to analysis, interpretation, and action.

Business Intelligence offers great insight into your workforce, operational efficiencies and employee utilization.

BI helps you analyze what's driving your business through the use of cross tabs, pie charts, line graphs or bar charts. The cubes give you the flexibility to view information at varying levels of detail to optimize the way you view and present data - from the high level pie chart that consolidates all of the data down to the individual transactions that went into creating that chart.



Reason #10: Give your team the power to access, analyze, and collaborate

Furthermore it is possible to publish and share your reports over the internet through reporting services packages. It is easy for decision-makers to access the analyzed real-time information and reports at any global location through a shared, security protected, network facility.

For many manufacturing companies, project management and analysis is vital. Business Intelligence can often offer some tangible, ROI producing benefits in this area. Projects require close management to insure timely delivery and an on-time, on-budget outcome. Project manufacturers require speed and fiscal timeliness of their project managers and financial managers to ensure no delays or financial obstacles. There are many critical aspects to each project which managers must be on top of. Such as project, customer, status, time and costs. Using these dimensions several measures need to be viewed to include actual and estimated hours and costs along with other data.

Business Intelligence offers the solution.

Business Intelligence offers plug and play Business Intelligence portals into your business application databases. BI allows you to view and analyze key data collected within the project accounting portion of systems. Analyze what's driving your business with information presented the way managers view their organization.



Thank you for taking the time to learn a little bit more about Business Intelligence for manufacturing and how it can optimize the way you do business.

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“BI is a great tool that helps us to quickly access and analyze our Visibility data. Our future plans include writing BI financial reports and tracking metrics for our ISO Management Review reporting.”

- Dave Sackett, ULVAC Technologies

SIGN UP FOR A FREE DEMO TODAY

Want to experience the power of Visibility Business Intelligence? Click on the button below to request a BI demo and see how BI can transform your business.



SIGN UP