

EXECUTIVE QUESTION AND ANSWER

Presented by Innoveer Solutions and CIMA

BS: How does CIMA use customer relationship management (CRM) and business intelligence (BI) tools and capabilities?

TB: Our organization defines CRM as more than just software; it is people, processes, and technology combined together to manage customer relationships. CIMA implemented its current CRM system in 2003, and after putting all of our operational processes into the system, we managed to achieve £3M in cost savings. Three years into the project, we realized the abundance of data that we had collected. Being a global organization — with 164,000 students and members in 161 countries — we knew that we could use the combination of this data and BI to increase membership throughout the world.

To effectively report metrics across financial and non-financial data using BI, we combined the information that we collected from our customers with data that we purchased. We wanted to identify what a good student is, how long it takes for a student to complete our syllabus before they become a management accountant, what type of entry qualifications they have, and from what industry sectors they originate. All of this information would give us the knowledge to recruit and retain good students, which in turn, would allow us to produce top quality management accountants.

BS: What business needs were the drivers of your BI initiatives?

TB: First, we wanted the ability to manage how effective our marketing efforts were. We needed to gather and understand the years of data that we had accumulated. We also had a pressing need for monthly, real-time reporting, as opposed to collating numerous spreadsheets and then taking information from one and putting it into another. We wanted to give the right information to the right people at the right time, and BI enables us to do that very successfully.



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BS: What is the ideal relationship between CRM and BI in your opinion?

TB: We are at the stage now where CRM and BI are becoming completely dependent on each other, and I believe that this is the ideal relationship. CRM can certainly exist on its own, but if you want to utilize the collected information, BI is indispensable. There is no other way to effectively exploit the goldmine of data that you gather, painstakingly train people on, and for which you standardize your processes. BI is how and when the data becomes information from which you can draw insight and make more better and quicker management decisions.

BS: How is implementing CRM and BI different today?

TB: It is certainly easier because there are so many rich dashboards that already exist. The data warehouse and the dashboards basically come out-of-the-box now, which means that development time can be spent with users rather than mapping millions of data fields.

BS: What are the major challenges when planning and implementing BI?

TB: One of the key challenges is user resistance. From my experience, it tends to be fear, either fear of the unknown or fear that BI is going to expose every detail of employees' work, as BI can act like the police and reveal what they do or do not do to the entire world. Employees want to be reassured that this new universe is going to benefit them rather than decrease their job security and stability. As a manager, you must be tuned into what people are feeling, as well as what they are saying. If they are resistant, try and ask open questions to find out why, and if they are still incredibly resistant, put them on the project team and bring them into the fold early in your process. This will open up communication, make them feel accountable and critical to the project, and slowly build buy-in.

It is also important to have a solid communication program to explain the benefits of adoption. This has to come from the top within an

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organization. The senior management team needs to communicate the message very clearly from the business perspective, including how this will bring new opportunities to users and increase their own personal success, as well as the company's.

BS: What key metrics are you looking to achieve with BI?

TB: We are looking at a range of factors. We want to improve our customer experience, while also decreasing the need and reasons for contacting us, as we do not have an unlimited budget at our disposal for handling thousands of incoming calls. BI enables us to analyze our service requests, understand why our customers, students and members are contacting us, and uncover what their issues are. Then, we can attack the root causes to not only reduce incoming calls, but also to improve the customer experience and allow them to return to what they should be focusing on which is either managing their business or studying for our qualifications. For us, as an organization, BI is about what you want to achieve both in the short-term and in the long-term.

BS: How do you monitor existing and new data in your system to ensure that your BI program will generate meaningful reports and information?

TB: To start, the business should own BI, not IT. It is not IT's fault if the data is bad because users put the data into the system. IT builds the house, but does not put the furniture in it. You need discipline and business rules, and for people to understand why they are entering specific data, as opposed to doing something simply because it is the rule.

We have a change request system for new data that will be stored in the system, and we require a mini – not too bureaucratic – business case to say, 'well, if you want to put this into the system, where are you going to source it from, how are you going to keep it clean, and what is it going to help you achieve?' There is a whole cycle associated with that one piece of data. IT does some of the data cleansing, but the information team also looks at aspects of the data that the IT team does not look at, and we run exceptional reports. In different types of businesses, you are going to have

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different types of data errors and unclean data, and you need to understand them and determine a strategy for handling them.

BS: What are your future goals for your BI program?

TB: I would like BI to be viewed as an indispensable part of our organization's toolkit. I would like it to be unthinkable to make a management decision without using our BI capabilities, and for BI to drive product development, not just sales and marketing.

ABOUT INNOVEER SOLUTIONS

INNOVEER SOLUTIONS, an award-winning customer strategy and solutions consultancy, provides advanced customer management services to high-technology, life sciences and insurance companies, among others, in the areas of planning and strategy, technology implementation, and optimization. The company's deep industry knowledge, broad technical skills, and Multishore methodology enable organizations to address their critical customer-facing issues and achieve an integrated view of all customer information. With an exclusive focus on customer management since 1998, Innoveer has worked with more than 300 organizations to increase their overall business growth, improve internal efficiency, and enhance the customer experience.

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ABOUT CIMA

CIMA (the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) is the only international accountancy body with a sole focus on business. It is a world leading professional institute that offers an internationally recognised qualification in management accountancy, focusing on accounting in business in both the private and public sectors. It is the voice of 164,000 students and members in 161 countries. CIMA is committed to upholding the highest ethical and professional standards of members and students, and to maintaining public confidence in management accountancy. For more information about CIMA, please visit www.cimaglobal.com.

CIMA is responsible for the education and training of management accountants who work in industry, commerce and not-for-profit and has more members in the public sector than any other UK based body. CIMA prides itself on the commercial relevance of its syllabus, which evolves continually to reflect the latest developments in global business. CIMA has been awarded superbrand status in the UK for a second year in a row this year and for the first time in Sri Lanka. According to independent research conducted by the University of Bath School of Management, CIMA's syllabus and examination structure are the most relevant to the needs of business of all the accountancy bodies assessed. See the CIMA Difference report for further information at www.cimaglobal.com/thecimadifference.



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