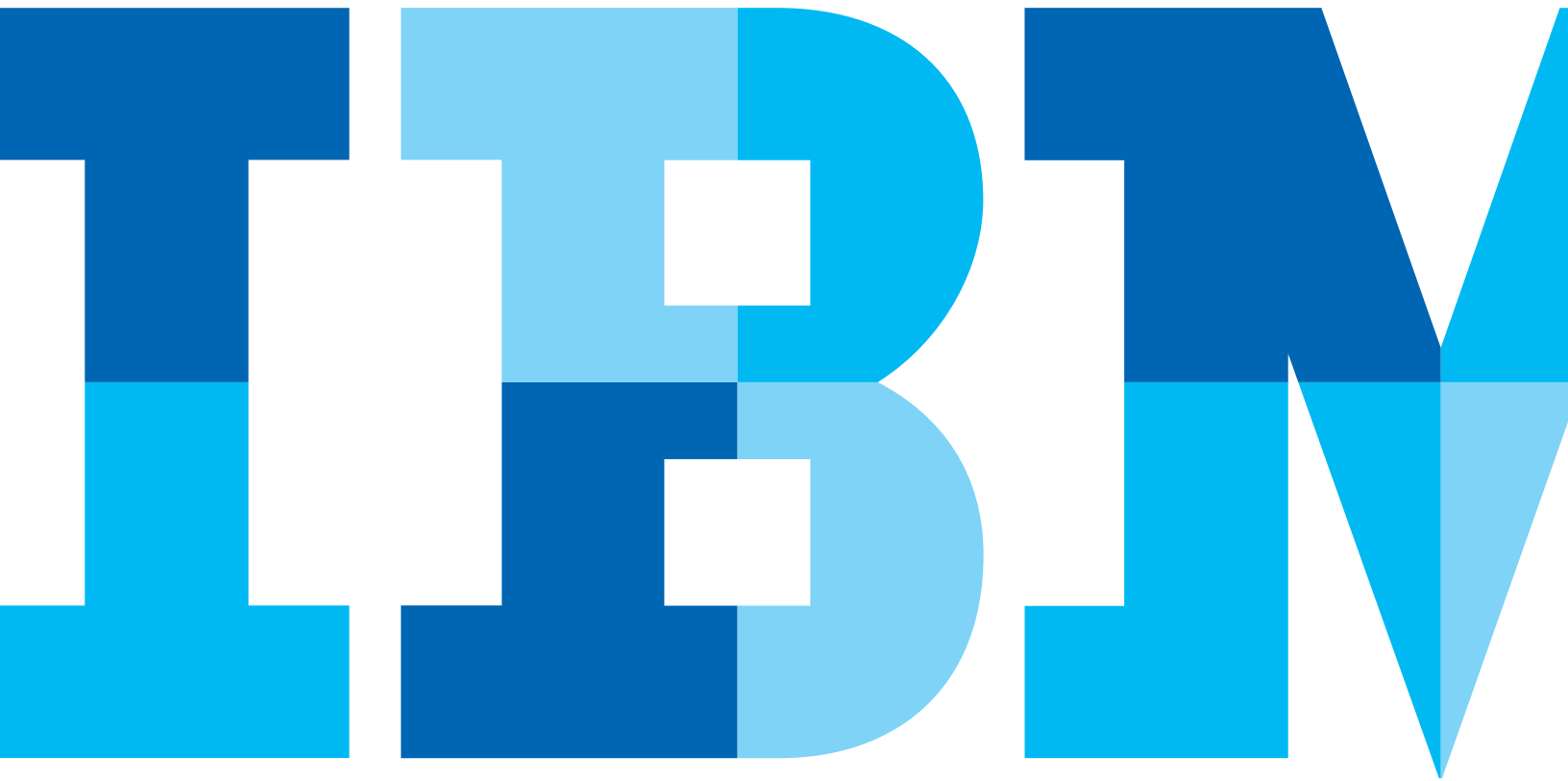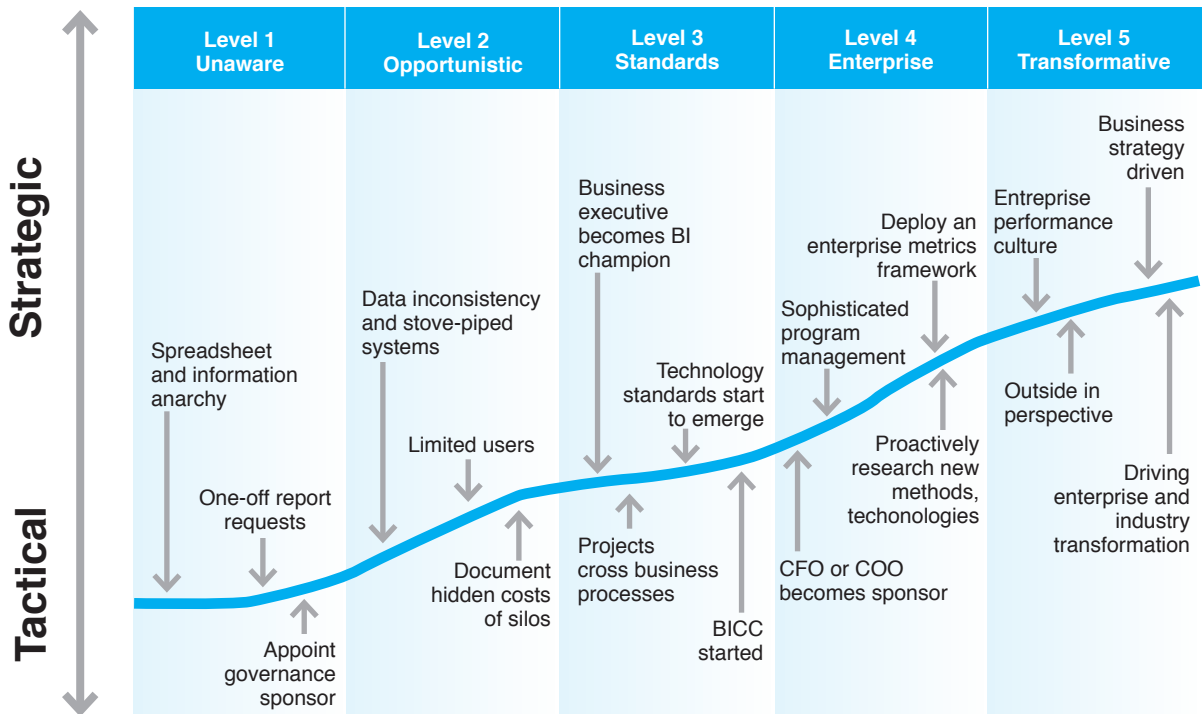# A Decided Difference: IBM Cognos 10

"Just do it!"

Lots of companies like to think they put that slogan into practice. In the spirit of entrepreneurialism, departmental managers are encouraged to make their own decisions, often with their own data and with their own business intelligence (BI) tools.

Although this ad hoc approach can help a company to move quickly when it is young, it isn't long before problems can arise. What happens when a manufacturing manager, seeing a low inventory, orders fresh parts, only to discover that the product is about to be discontinued? And how is it possible to set accurate targets for the sales force when opportunities in new markets are going undetected?

The fact is, companies large and small are facing a decision-making crisis. Either rely on inaccurate data and disconnected BI tools or decide on gut feel. Sooner or later, companies wake up to the fact that there must be a better way. But how to make better, fully informed decisions without instituting crippling rules and forming a calcified bureaucracy?

Companies seeking to answer this question are at different points in their BI journeys. According to Gartner, Inc., the spectrum of strategic use of BI technology is broad, ranging from rudimentary spreadsheets and reporting tools, to the highly strategic, transformative level, leveraging accurate and consistent data, user-designed dashboards and collaborative capabilities.

IT Score for a BI (aka Maturity Model)—An Overview

Level 1 Unaware	Level 2 Opportunistic	Level 3 Standards	Level 4 Enterprise	Level 5 Transformative

Strategic

Tactical

Business strategy driven

Entreprise performance culture

Deploy an enterprise metrics framework

Business executive becomes BI champion

Data inconsistency and stove-piped systems

Sophisticated program management

Spreadsheet and information anarchy

Technology standards start to emerge

Outside in perspective

Limited users

Proactively research new methods, techonologies

One-off report requests

Driving enterprise and industry transformation

Projects cross business processes

Document hidden costs of silos

CFO or COO becomes sponsor

Appoint governance sponsor

BICC started

BI-Business intelligence
BICC-BI Competency Center

Gartner.

Wherever companies are on this spectrum, they may be at risk of misusing BI. As organizations increase in sophistication, they may continue to form silos of information, leading to more decisions made in isolation. And where several managers should have a say in a decision, this is often impossible because they may be working from different data with different BI tools.

Better decision-making calls for tools that deliver not just business intelligence, but business insight. And this business insight must be tested and amplified by the collective knowledge of multiple decision-makers.

From Business Intelligence to Business Insight

There are two key characteristics of a business insight system: The ability to gather data from many sources, including real-time data, and the ability to integrate that data in a clear, easy-to-use interface that encourages action. IBM Cognos Business Insight is designed to address these needs.

Integrating data from multiple sources counteracts the tendency to look at information in silos – information that can be dangerously isolated from the rest of the enterprise, including other decision-makers. At the transformative level, decision-makers have the ability to design their own reports and dashboards.

IBM Cognos Business Insight enables you to set up a personalized view of the information you regularly need, pulling together data from different sources in a single user interface. The IBM Cognos Business Insight interface lets you quickly integrate external spreadsheet data, third-party and departmental applications. What's more, it lets you merge this external data with dimensional and relational data sources using drag-and-drop tools.

IBM Cognos Business Insight: A unified workspace for business users to assemble, personalize and interact with content from all time horizons for smarter decisions.

The Business Insight interface enables you to examine trends, patterns and predictions using IBM Cognos Statistics, IBM SPSS Modeler and IBM Cognos TM1. In addition, the Business Insight interface is graduated, presenting you with advanced features only when you need them.
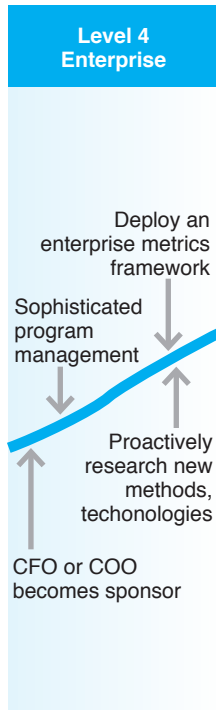
However, just presenting the information cogently is not enough. Managers need to make decisions. IBM Cognos Business Insight includes decision-making tools for planning, what-if scenarios, real-time monitoring, predictive analysis and permission-based keyword search.

Collaborative BI

Improving the decision-making capabilities of each manager is only half the battle. Enterprises need to draw on the expertise and point of view of all managers working together. For example, Canadian Blood Services is deploying Cognos 10 and is looking forward to benefiting from the software's collaborative BI capabilities.

"We have had several cases in the past where end users have been wanting to add context to what's included in a report, a cube, a dashboard or a scorecard. The annotation capabilities [of

Level 4: Enterprise

Level 4 Enterprise		
Deploy an enterprise metrics framework		
Sophisticated program management		
Proactively research new methods, techonologies		
CFO or COO becomes sponsor		

Scope	**Enterprise**
Performance measures	Enterprise performance metrics Framework
People	Executives, functional managers, analysts
Processes	Well defined and governed, adaptive, risk and opportunity
Applications & Tools	Consolidated, hub and spoke architecture
Metadata & Services	Enterprise information Management program
Program Management	BI Competency Center. Enterprise Architecture

Gartner.

Cognos 10] are going to be a big plus," says John Mazerall, data architect, manager of business intelligence and data solutions at Canadian Blood Services. "I'm very impressed by the ability for people to have a conversation …and be able to see the information, to share it and drill into something when you're having a chat with a colleague," Mazerall adds.

IBM Cognos 10 is designed to leverage the collective intelligence of your organization with:

- **Social networking** – the ability to establish decision networks by integrating access to blogs, wikis and message boards. Integration with Lotus Connections enables the ability to present the same pertinent information to a group of decision-makers and have them discuss it using familiar message-threading tools. Users may link directly from Cognos Business Insight to Lotus Connections. Conversely, team members collaborating on decisions can link directly from Lotus Connections to the relevant Business Insight dashboard. In addition, team members can use single sign-on for both IBM Cognos 10 and IBM Lotus Connections.
- **Annotations** – the ability to add comments so that a report or other piece of information becomes the basis for an in formed dialogue. Comments, which can be added at the cell level, are user-tagged and searchable.

- **My Inbox** – a tool to engage business users in controlling workflow.

The bottom line

There has never before been as much data as there is now, but too often, this plethora of data fails to yield actionable insight. Absent a coherent business insight strategy, companies risk throwing away their investment on a hodge-podge of disconnected tools that lead to isolated, incompletely informed decisions.

For an enterprise to be agile, to retain a "just-do-it" culture that's guided by knowledge and collaboration, the enterprise must invest in transformative BI capabilities that literally change the way a company does business. IBM Cognos 10, thanks to Business Insight features, presents a broad spectrum of information in a timely, cogent and understandable way so that managers can evaluate, decide and take action. And IBM Cognos 10 includes Collaborative BI, which brings together experts from all organizational levels so that their combined knowledge can contribute to better decisions — and better business results.

First graphic: Gartner, Inc., ITScore for BI and Performance Management, September 2010
Second graphic: Gartner, Inc., "BI Maturity Assessment," January 2011