IBM

IBM Cognos 8 Performance Management Solutions for use with SAP® NetWeaver

Unlocking Hidden Value from Investments in SAP NetWeaver® Business Warehouse

Cognos® software

Contents

Preface

The architecture, capabilities, and value of IBM Cognos 8 for SAP customers is centered on embracing existing skills, knowledge, work and investments, enhancing existing SAP® investments while reducing IT backlogs, and, extending the capabilities and value of SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. IBM Cognos 8 refers to IBM Cognos Business Intelligence and IBM Cognos Planning software capabilities.

Customers choose IBM Cognos 8 to enhance investments in SAP software based on the tight integration and interoperability with SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse and the SAP NetWeaver technology platform. IBM Cognos 8 delivers an industry leading performance management platform based on a consistent and modern architecture, innovative patent pending optimization of MDX, and, unique performance management knowledge and expertise.

Organizations that have made strategic investments in SAP technology do so with expectations of tangible returns. In the case of SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse, it is typical for investments to be made in technology (software and hardware), skills, knowledge, expertise and training, data migration, as well as process, governance and administration. Using IBM Cognos 8 to unlock greater value from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse can be realized in the form of:

1. Improved utilization of data

2. Broader user reach and frequency of access

3. Reduction in stranded spreadsheets and ad-hoc data marts

4. Fact-based decision making using trusted data from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse

5. Extending existing SAP software skills, knowledge and expertise while reducing IT backlogs

IBM Cognos 8 provides a comprehensive approach to performance management. By extending the SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse with IBM Cognos 8, you can avoid stranded data, expand business access, reduce the need for unmanaged spreadsheets, and prevent excessive focus on gathering data and arguing over numbers. In addition, IBM Cognos 8 enables you to focus your SAP IT talent on high-value tasks, and avoid bogging them down with low-value work such as creation of rudimentary reports and other performance management content.

The purpose of this paper is to outline how IBM Cognos 8 Performance Management software and solutions are best suited to drive maximum value from investments in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. This topic is of interest to business and IT executives as well as SAP Solution Managers and project managers who are seeking guidance on the value of IBM Cognos 8.

Pitfalls to Avoid When Managing Data in SAP Systems

SAP customers face common interests in generating maximum value from their investment in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. Often, they are looking to sidestep issues such as these:

1. Accessing their data requires the intervention of specialized IT resources, and is generally a time intensive activity; contrary to the need for prompt business access to information. As such, business decision making and general responsiveness is a function of available IT bandwidth and relative priorities; not the urgency of the business need at hand.

2. To serve growing needs of the business for performance management content, scarce IT talent is frequently misaligned to lower value activities such as remodeling data, creating, updating and managing reports and custom 'one off' dashboards or planning applications. Duplication, re-work and force fit of existing content to address changing business needs is also a common reality. The impact of these two realities is additional, and often unplanned, time and

money, in terms of both real measures and lost opportunity costs. As a result, other projects are delayed and addressing the need for performance management content becomes a complex function of resource bandwidth and relative priorities.

3. Creation of comprehensive performance management content (for example: integrated reports, dashboards, scorecards, analysis and plans) is a complex and inefficient exercise. This is usually the cause of disjointed products that lack seamless integration and interoperability, have inconsistent interfaces, varying capabilities, the need for specialized IT skills and limited to no breadth of business self-service. In this situation it is common for costs such as custom development, numerous work-arounds, duplication of data, longer implementation cycles, user frustration and poor adoption to be common results.

4. Without a holistic approach to performance management, companies may not be prepared to utilize data from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse with other SAP or non-SAP data sources. Issues that commonly come up are:

a. Navigating through the inherent limitations of multiple disparate and disjointed reporting, dash boarding, planning and other tools. For example, inconsistencies for support of various corporate data sources can necessitate extraction / migration of data and/or other workarounds.

b. Availability of specialized IT resources to model, migrate and manage SAP and non-SAP data into a common format that works with existing tools.

c. The dynamic nature of changing business needs which demands agility, flexibility and consistent access to timely, accurate information even under changing business conditions.

5. The ability to broadly scale access to, and use of, data may be a challenge to companies, that do not have consistent and comprehensive self-service access models for content creation, modification and access. This can constrain the ability of an organization to extend access to a growing user population.

6. In some companies, employees may not have the flexibility to consume performance management content, using SAP and non-SAP data sources. It is important to provide content in a format and manner users are comfortable with while enabling innovative use of technologies such as mobile devices and allow them to search without the need for specialized IT resources to re-author or re-work data or content.

7. Creation and execution of a deliverable vision for comprehensive enterprise performance management is constrained by a lack of integration across solutions.

8. There may be false perceptions of misalignment between the needs of the business for prompt access to relevant information and the ability of IT to deliver ongoing value. The inability to dispel misperceptions, given all the challenges listed above, which result in stalled projects, poor adoption and less than successful performance management initiatives.

Although not an exhaustive list, these items all can impact the value of data in your SAP and non-SAP systems. The remainder of the paper will outline how this hidden value can be captured using IBM Cognos 8 to embrace, enhance and extend your investment in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse.

Enhance the Returns from Your Investment in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse

Data residing within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse is clearly of high business value. However, some organizations do not have a predictable and efficient access path to this data that clearly aligns with business needs. In short, superior investment returns can be generated from data residing in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse through initiatives which:

(a) Improve the efficiency for accessing data, and

(b) Improve the overall effectiveness of the data

Enhancing your investment in the SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse with IBM Cognos 8 can improve the efficiency of your organization's access to, and use of, data based on:

1. **A common user experience** for all performance management capabilities. Provision of access to all business intelligence, planning and performance management capabilities through a single unified performance management platform. A unified platform reduces the need for excessive end-user training, provides predictable and scalable growth to address the needs of enterprise wide initiatives, enhances the distribution and dissemination of timely and relevant content, reduces duplication of data modeling as well as administration and management costs, and simplifies and incents user adoption.

2. **Minimized involvement of specialized IT skills** while leveraging existing Business Warehouse practices, processes and investments. IBM Cognos 8 provides a SAP-certified interface with SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. Our next generation patent pending capability to optimize MDX (multi dimensional expression language), provides unique capabilities and performance advantages when used with the Business Warehouse. Customers are able to extend existing InfoQueries, business rules, security, hierarchies and variables as well as access all InfoProviders and other structures consistently across performance management capabilities

3. **Self-service content creation**, as well as on-the-fly and ad hoc content customization across all performance management capabilities, made possible through a common view of content, plans and report specifications. Business users are provided the unique flexibility to quickly change content and context without redevelopment effort and pleading for IT assistance. The results are that IBM Cognos 8 reduces IT backlogs and speeds decision making, all the while increasing user appetite and use of data from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse.

Capabilities that are unique to IBM Cognos 8 also drive greater effectiveness from data residing within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. The all-too-common challenge of ensuring information is complete, reliable, timely and trusted is enabled with IBM Cognos 8 by ensuring:

1. All relevant sources and context can be used as data inputs

2. Data is factual, error free and not subject to "spreadsheet customization" or multiple interpretations

3. Information is readily available and not impacted by access delays

4. The data comes from a reliable source based on IT governance and security practices

IBM Cognos 8 is unique in the ability to readily combine SAP and non-SAP data and then utilize all data consistently across all performance management capabilities. This capability ensures complete information, decision context, and reliability for business users. The solution can combine heterogeneous data; transactional, warehoused, relational and OLAP as well as modern and ad-hoc sources through a single semantic layer, specifically a single, trusted semantic layer that enables data to be modeled once yet used everywhere.

This capability avoids the need for migrating, transforming or modifying source data to 'fit' with the tool or use case at hand and therefore reduces the need for ongoing IT involvement and enhances decision effectiveness for business users.

Specifically, as business context and demands are frequently changing, IBM Cognos 8 enables access and use of all forms of information by readily blending data with SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. This capability delivers correct content, thoroughness and prompt time to decision for everything from report creation to analysis, planning and dashboards. The value of data residing within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse is enhanced through context aware decision making, planning and analysis. Further, with IBM Cognos 8 ongoing IT burden and growing request backlog is avoided. Content and data rework as well as duplication of effort associated with point products becomes unnecessary.

In summary, IBM Cognos 8 can enhance the value of data residing within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse by adding the perspective and context needed to create information synergies from all data sources. Customers find greater insights and superior fact-based decision-making given:

a. The ability to readily utilize both SAP and non-SAP data sources

b. The use of a single semantic layer across all performance management capabilities to simplify data for both IT and business users

c. Agnostic user-access to heterogeneous data sources through a unified performance management platform

Increase Accessibility to Data

Where business users are consistently unable to access reliable and timely information, a predictable path of least resistance evolves. Disparate and unmanaged "spread sheet marts" and special "one off'" reports lacking context and/or perspectives on information become the norm. Although the intent of generating data to drive decisions is noble, the common result is a decentralized and ungoverned data reporting and analysis approach. In addition, the value of data is degraded, excessive amounts of time is spent reconciling and rationalizing multiple data points, view points and perspectives.

As overlapping and uncontrolled reports, spreadsheets and custom applications are developed to fill a perceived information gap, over a period of time employees develop a lack of trust in information. Often unknowingly, incorrect information is relied upon; decision-cycle times are elongated as more time is invested in arguing the numbers instead of agreeing on facts and executing decisions. It's clear that simply rolling out data to more users is not enough.

Using IBM Cognos 8, SAP customers are able to generate a net gain in value from investments in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse through increased data access and by driving decisions and actions based on consistent fact and reliable information:

1. **Extending time and effort invested in IT best practices** involving security (authorization and authentication), data governance (centralized change management), and business rules (filters, hierarchies and variables). This is accomplished by embracing the capabilities of all structures and InfoQueries that reside within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse as well as extending the use of security and authorizations within the Business Warehouse.

A consistent semantic layer enables scalable enterprise access, avoids extraction of Business Warehouse data into spreadsheets or custom datamarts and leverages existing SAP IT skills with a model once, use for all performance management capabilities approach. The results are reductions in IT backlogs and business users focused on decision making rather than data gathering; all with the use of centralized and governed data that is both secure and trusted.

2. **By enabling scalable enterprise access**, all through a consistent user interface supported by a single semantic layer, to data residing within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse or elsewhere. IBM Cognos 8 uses a modern, open, and unified, performance management platform which enables business users to access the information they need through a web browser, Microsoft Office, search engines such as Google or IBM Omnifind and mobile devices. As a result, specialized IT skills are no longer drained, and responsiveness is increased as business users directly interact with accessible, trusted, reusable, and easily customized business intelligence and performance management content.

3. **Consistent, proven and seamless integration and interoperability across all performance management capabilities.** Using IBM Cognos 8 delivers value to SAP IT teams by avoiding data source dependencies and custom development associated with disparate point products. Business users are provided with a consistent browser-based interface, and the ability to seamlessly transition between performance management capabilities without having to manage around data source limitations and a lack of true interoperability between reporting, dashboarding, scorecarding, analysis, planning and forecasting capabilities.

Improve Information Delivery and Usability

As organizations initiate broader access to data residing within SAP applications, a common challenge is how to deal with the inevitable challenge of a growing library of performance management information. Specifically the ability to:

1. Provide on demand access to the right information as it is needed.

2. Enable business users to subscribe to and customize the push of information.

3. Digest information in a format business users are comfortable with.

With IBM Cognos 8 business users are able to save content in pre or custom defined folders. Information and content can be readily organized into summary dashboards that contain reports, scorecards, event notifications, plans and other performance management content. More than just a collection of images on a web page, business users have complete flexibility to customize the content they need, all through a web browser and with seamless interoperability across all performance management capabilities.

In addition, IBM Cognos 8 can push subscribed content via email broadcast and provide automated alerts based on user-defined business changes (ex: "if daily sales in region x drop by 5% then let me know"). Business users are able to create, manage and update their own alerts and receive change notifications via email or through a content dashboard, or have an alert output automatically published to a supported mobile device.

By seamlessly delivering trusted content to the Microsoft Office® environment, without the need for re-authoring, IBM Cognos 8 enables business users to readily include charts, reports, dashboards, scorecards and other pre-built content within Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents. Content created in IBM Cognos 8 and data from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse, such as financial reports, sales dashboards, call center scorecards and other content, is quickly imported and is based on security settings as defined within SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. Within minutes quarterly sales figures or any content driven by data from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse can be updated without the need for tasking specialized SAP IT resources.

**Extend Existing Skills, Knowledge
and Expertise**

For most customers, the implementation of SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse reached beyond purchasing software. Time and money has been invested in training (IT and end user), creation of intellectual property such as Business Explorer (BEx) InfoQueries, custom information structures, security, business rules and filters, system administration and more. Many customers express concern over these investments being stranded, prematurely shelved and/or unsupported over time, detracting from the promise of future value of their data.

Further, most SAP customers are seeking a consistent and ongoing flow of value from the SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. Meaning, issues such as requisite product limitations, a lack of consistent support for all data structures, and an inability to seamlessly transition from a report to a dashboard to a plan and back put undue pressure on specialized and scarce SAP IT resources to come up with workarounds. Inevitably functionality compromises result, and the true value of an investment in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse is squandered.

In lieu of risking your investments in capital, knowledge, expertise and work, IBM Cognos 8 provides a mature, next-generation, patent pending and proven integration with SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. Investment in Business Explorer InfoQueries, business rules, filters, multiple currencies and languages as well as all data structures and investments in training and administration are embraced and extended across all performance management capabilities.

**Reduce Ongoing Reliance on Specialized
SAP Resources**

At a high level, investments in SAP ERP applications are typically characterized by a model of defining business process, modeling the process, instantiating the process within the SAP system and deploying the requisite software / user interface into production. In short, automating the vast majority of business processes in SAP applications is the result of static process predictability. Through external expertise, building an internal competency, or through a blend of both, specialized SAP IT professionals are a pre-requisite for success.

The fact is, given the success of SAP in the ERP market, and scope of the projects within your organization, the demand for SAP talent is not always balanced with supply. Many customers view the effective alignment of SAP resources as a strategic imperative to:

(a) ensure immediacy of value in their ERP investment

(b) to maintain a level of predictability in IT budgets

(c) to effectively address business needs

Although the implementation and maintenance of SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse does require the time and attention of SAP professionals, customers that use IBM Cognos 8 find they are able to defend their SAP IT talent pool from being drained even as they realize greater value from their investment.

As the result of a single, proven performance management platform that delivers all capabilities through a consistent interface, IBM Cognos 8 customers are able to embrace a level of business user self-service that yields the following value:

1. Business users can access all data across multiple instances and versions of SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse

2. All performance management capabilities are available to the business user

3. Access to the data with SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse can be defined using existing security parameters

4. SAP IT professionals are not an ongoing prerequisite to create, administer and update reports, dashboards, planning models and other content.

5. Business users are able to customize content on the fly without IT intervention

IBM Cognos 8: Tangible SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse ROI

This paper has outlined five initiatives your organization can undertake with IBM Cognos 8 to generate higher return from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse. Specifically:

1. Enhance the inherent value of data

2. Increase user accessibility to the data

3. Improve information delivery and usability

4. Extend existing IT skills, knowledge and expertise

5. Reduce reliance on specialized IT resources

Although specific measures will vary by customer, general observation of the value of IBM Cognos 8 to SAP customers include:

- **Lower costs and faster decision cycles** as business executives and everyday users access, create and customize BI and planning content without ongoing reliance on specialized IT resources.

- **Flexibility** to utilize all corporate information without dependencies on underlying data, applications and infrastructure.

- **Decision making agility a**s custom coding and application development is replaced with 'on the fly' creation, modification, and changes to reports, plans, financial models and data sources

- **Proven capabilities** and predictable results from Cognos performance management focus, customer success and solution expertise.

- **Comprehensive solution** as all performance management capabilities are unified within a single SOA platform. IBM Cognos 8 enables reliable, consistent content as well as lower administration and training costs.

In addition, IBM Cognos 8 reduces the likelihood of professional misdemeanors resulting from investments in IT skills, infrastructure and expertise being squandered. Failed or misaligned projects are a probable output where business requirements are subordinated to the necessity of waiting on a solution roadmap. Instead, it is important to focus not only on where your vendor's solution is headed but its lineage, current capabilities, alignment with current needs, as well as the relative priority of current needs in the context of business demands. It is in this broad context that an effective investment decision can be made, and one where personal professional risk is minimized.

About IBM Cognos BI and Performance Management

IBM Cognos business intelligence (BI) and performance management solutions deliver world-leading enterprise planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. IBM Cognos solutions bring together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers an open, adaptive and complete performance solution. Over 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries around the world choose IBM Cognos solutions.

For additional information on how IBM Cognos 8 can help you embrace, enhance and extend your investment in SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse please visit www.ibm.com/cognos/sap or contact your IBM Account Executive.

Request a call

To request a call or to ask a question, go to www.ibm.com/cognos/contactus. An IBM Cognos representative will respond to your enquiry within two business days.