

Triaton provides pioneer business intelligence service with IBM solution.

Overview

■ Challenge

Gather, evaluate, select, prepare and analyze business data reliably, eliminating costs and skills required by an in-house BI solution

■ Solution: Integrating Stage

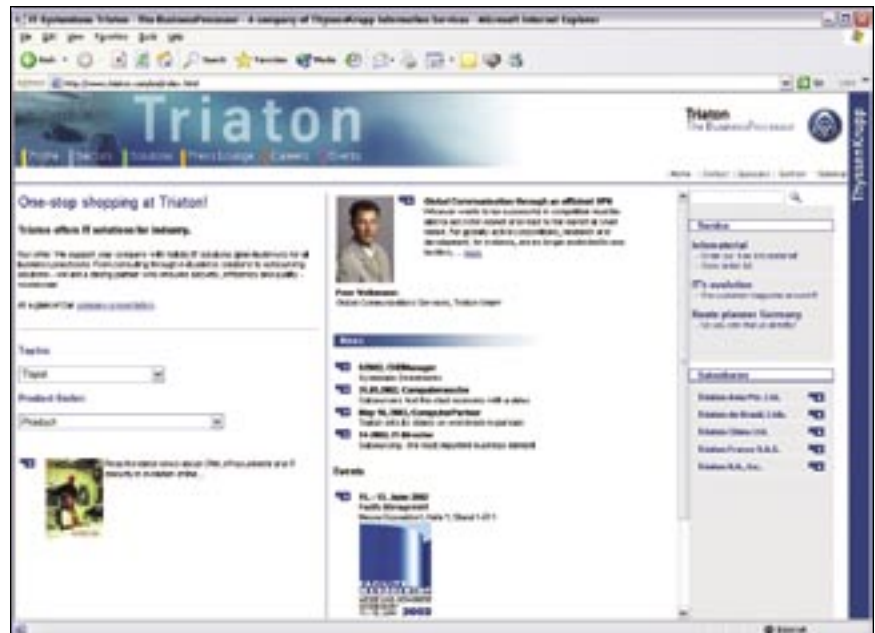
Integrated, Web-based, hosted BI solution

■ Why IBM

Long-standing relationship with IBM; ability to leverage existing DB2 skills cost-effectively; robustness, reliability and scalability of DB2; IBM's capability of meeting technological, business and support requirements

■ Key Business Benefits

For customers: Full payback typically achieved within 6-9 months; up to 30% reduction in total IT cost; full-service BI solution at moderate, predictable cost that requires no specialized skills
For Triaton: Ability to leverage existing DB2 competencies, avoiding cost of hiring or training additional staff; scalability to support future growth



Triaton is Germany's first IT systems house to bring a business intelligence service package to the market.

According to market analysts, business intelligence (BI) has become the most crucial and sought after realm of information technology for the enterprise. In today's economic climate, mid-size and large businesses can no longer survive without cost-effective and rapid access to business information for their key decision makers. Yet many businesses continue to encounter budgetary, staffing or other constraints that prevent them from introducing in-house BI systems.

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*—Wolfgang Schlippe-Thiede,
BISP Product Manager and
Operational Manager of Hosting
Center, Triaton*

Key Components

Software

- IBM DB2® Universal Database™ Enterprise-Extended Edition for Linux, Version 7.2
- IBM DB2 Connect™

Servers

- IBM @server xSeries™ 350
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Now multinational e-business consulting firm Triaton GmbH (Triaton) has developed a hosted e-business solution that allows its clients to pinpoint customer needs, improve customer relations, forecast market trends, streamline production planning and enhance their competitiveness. Leveraging BI and data management software from IBM, Triaton offers a comprehensive, customized, integrated and fully serviced BI solution—without the huge investment in hardware, software and staff that an enterprise BI infrastructure often requires. Known as Business Intelligence Service Providing (BISP), the hosted solution extracts product, customer, sales and marketing information from the client's enterprise, hosts it in a data warehouse on Triaton's own servers and performs the sophisticated analysis that is needed in order to glean knowledge from the data. BISP has enabled typical clients to achieve full payback within six to nine months of implementation and reduce the total cost of their IT operations by up to 30 percent.

Triaton, part of the worldwide ThyssenKrupp industrial conglomerate, is based in Krefeld, near Düsseldorf, Germany. With 2,400 employees and local offices and projects in some 40 cities worldwide (including 24 in Germany), Triaton delivers a broad spectrum of BI solutions to help analyze and optimize core business processes such as customer relationship management (CRM), data warehousing, document management, enterprise resource planning (ERP) and supply chain management (SCM).

Wolfgang Schlippe-Thiede, product manager for BISP and operational manager of the hosting center at Triaton, says BISP was born of a growing frustration on the part of many Triaton customers: "We found that many mid-size and large enterprises were hesitant to introduce BI solutions because they lacked the necessary in-house expertise or could not estimate the associated cost. The hardware, software, maintenance and operation required by such systems often amounts to more than 50 percent of companies' IT budgets, and many of our customers were simply unable to afford the expense."

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– Wolfgang Schlippe-Thiede

Scalable database, scalable skills

Seeking a data management platform that could power its e-business solution, Triaton evaluated DB2 Universal Database Enterprise-Extended Edition against NCR Teradata, and chose DB2 Universal Database. Schlippes-Thiede explains why. "From the standpoint of cost performance, we found DB2 to be far superior to Teradata. We didn't even consider any major relational database vendors other than IBM for the BISP project, because no other products offer the scalability and robust parallel processing that DB2 Universal Database Enterprise-Extended Edition does. Its flexibility enables us to reap maximum benefit from the core DB2 competencies of our IT staff and avoid the cost of hiring or training specialists in other systems."

Data integration for immediate intelligence

BISP accesses and integrates data from various sources at the customer's enterprise, including ERP, CRM and e-procurement systems, XML sources, relational databases as well as mainframe and other legacy systems. The information is extracted and transferred over the Internet or leased lines to Triaton's data center. At the data center, the data is transformed into the form and structure required by the data warehouse, according to mapping rules stored in DB2 Universal Database Enterprise-Extended Edition, and is then loaded into the data warehouse, providing the foundation for data analysis.

BISP's data analysis process utilizes various knowledge management tools from leading vendors including IBM Business Partners Business Objects, SAP and Hyperion. These tools typically include a Web-based front-end which accesses the BISP Web server through a Java™-enabled Web browser. Complementing the BISP platform are business and management consulting services provided by Triaton and its management consulting partner, Mummert + Partner.

Triaton's three-tier solution is based on IBM @server xSeries servers running IBM DB2 Enterprise-Extended Edition, Version 7.2 on SuSE Linux. "DB2 for Linux lets us maximize our benefit from the economies and performance of the Linux operating system, providing a powerful, cost-efficient data management foundation for our BI cluster," Schlippes-Thiede notes. "xSeries 350 running Linux has consistently given us exceptional performance, availability and performance, in a sleek, 4U rack design that saves on floorspace."

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IBM DB2 Universal Database enables Triaton customers to store, retrieve and manipulate mission-critical business intelligence content.

The middle tier contains an application server cluster, running the customer's choice of front-end business intelligence solutions (such as Hyperion, Business Objects or Cognos) on the same xSeries servers as the backend. The BI solution connects to the DB2 database using IBM DB2 Connect. Customers access the reports defined and generated in the mid-tier through the front-end portal servers—two xSeries 350 systems packaged in a sleek 4U configuration with two CPUs each.

Schlippes-Thiede says Triaton could not possibly have created the BISP solution without IBM as its main technology provider; no other vendor could satisfy the broad range of technical, business and service requirements involved. "We have used DB2 for over 12 years, but our long-standing relationship with IBM goes much deeper," he says. "IBM developed our entire BISP hardware and software solution and continues to provide ongoing support that is second to none. IBM has consistently shown the kind of dedication and collective commitment that we could not get from a vendor specializing only in databases."

Power for knowledge, potential for growth

IBM is unique, Schlippes-Thiede adds, in its ability to provide Triaton's customers with such seamless integration between their own systems and the Triaton data center. "Our integrated e-business solution's entire value proposition is founded on our ability to cost-effectively provide exact knowledge of an enterprise's key data, up-to-the-minute and at the click of a button. No other company offers the level of data integration that BISP provides—and we could not have done it without IBM e-business technology."

Thanks to the reliability and scalability that IBM technology gives to the BISP solution, Schlippes-Thiede says, its future potential seems almost limitless. The company plans to roll out its solution to ten major customers over the next year. It also plans to establish BISP as the leading overall hosted BI solution for large industrial concerns, utilities and telecommunications providers worldwide. "DB2 technology has furnished us with a platform powerful enough to give our customers the immediate knowledge they require, flexible enough to provide full, direct integration, and scalable enough to accommodate the growth that Triaton foresees," Schlippes-Thiede remarks. "I cannot imagine a better blueprint for the future."

For more information

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