



Self-Service Tools Help Businesses Help Themselves

Introduction

Richard King,* the Sales Head of a retail giant, had a review in two hours and his report was nowhere complete. The reason: His team's increasing dependence on the IT department for data and report generation, which was delaying the process. For a while now, Richard was looking to compare the organization's delivery cycle to industry standards by defining and monitoring Key Performance Indicator (KPI). He had sought the IT team's assistance to help him do the comparison. However, it was over two weeks and he was still waiting.

Richard was rushing to get things expedited when his ex-colleague, David Knol,* who was now with a rival company, happened to drop by to close some pending formalities. A flustered Richard spoke to his old colleague about how his work was getting stymied. David couldn't agree more – this was one of the reasons he had quit the organization.

Even today, most organizations are heavily dependent on IT to drive and fuel business innovation and growth. The reason being it is IT that provides all the tools and information for businesses to monitor, measure and

accelerate themselves. However, as much as it wants to, there are demands which it will fail to meet because of its limited resources, the requirements being complex, the cost implications therein or simply due to lack of required skillsets.

In Richard's case, the requirement was neither complex nor costly, but it suffered due to lack of proper prioritization by the IT department. A self-service tool would have come in handy here that would have not just expedited Richard's decision making but also freed up the IT team's bandwidth for other core tasks.

Today, every organization aims to endow business users with technology that is simple enough to use and can help address their IT needs by themselves, i.e., as Self Service. Access to data and analytics empowers employees to do things on their own. Moving to self-service technology can help enterprises not just control IT costs, but also do more with the same budget.

David helped Richard by walking him through the self-service technology that his current organization was using. He introduced him to self-analytics tool called **Smart Business KPI Framework** (KPI Modeler) with "HANA Live" at the backend. He explained how it provided an easy way for anyone to explore data on their own.

Richard asked David to explain things a bit more.

The infinite processing speed of the self-analytics tools and the shift towards open framework facilitate easier and quicker access to information. These tools help organizations optimize on deliverables. As an example, David explained it was something like an airline or a bank kiosk, or employee benefits intranet or an online support website where users could find their own solutions to queries or problems.

In such a model, data is an important aspect. This is covered by deploying **HANA Live**, which ensures that all business information that is stored in the backend is made accessible to the business users. It brings along the vast pre-defined content in the form of Virtual Data Models across all major functionalities such as in Finance, Controlling, Material Management, Sales & Distribution, Customer Relationship Management, Global Trade

Services, Governance Risk and Compliance and even across few industries, such as utilities, insurance, etc.

Now with this new and easier form of backend data provisioning, business users such as Richard can gain access to it with the help of SAP's Smart Business Framework. A Smart Business Framework gives access to the backend data which is exposed to the application layers by what is called "views" and helps visualize it without any programming skills. Using easy navigation, business users can create real-time **Key Performance Indicators such as Days Sales Outstanding** to measure such critical success factors for their enterprises. It can go to great lengths in giving business users the ability to create personalized reports and analytical queries. With these technologies in place, faster, smarter and simpler way of doing business is soon becoming a reality.

* All characters appearing in this article are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

About the Author

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IND/BRD/FEB 2016 – APR 2017