

Welcome to the first edition of **visualmetrics** News, our new quarterly newsletter.

The objectives of the newsletter are simple:-



- Firstly to provide our clients, partners and suppliers with an understandable practitioners overview of all aspects of the products and services that we provide.
- Secondly, to keep you up to date with all new developments and opportunities.
- Finally, so that we can keep you informed of **visualmetrics** projects and why we are leading the way in our sector!

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter, and find it beneficial.

**The Editor**

### DID YOU KNOW?

IT services projections call for the areas of business intelligence and data warehousing to grow from \$16.8 billion in 2001 to \$29 billion by 2006, an 11.6 percent growth.

## who are visualmetrics?

**visualmetrics** is a consultancy and software development practice, consisting of a team of specialists in Business Intelligence, who can give you the competitive edge in business.

**visualmetrics** was founded by Chris Coan and Ian Evans. Both Chris and Ian have extensive knowledge and experience of the I.T. industry, and they have used this to provide solutions that meet the needs of today's businesses. They do this by the identification and measurement of Key Performance Indicators, with which you can manage your enterprise. **visualmetrics** achieve this through the delivery of Business Intelligence (BI) Solutions, that are based upon your organisation's own information supply chain.



Our team of specialists all have strong academic and business backgrounds. They combine high level technical skills (in data warehouse design and build) with an extensive knowledge of business requirements in multiple industry sectors and business functions, methodology and models.



Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will read about clients who already benefit from **visualmetrics** business solutions. We have proved that by combining a clear achievable plan with the right services approach, skilled personnel, excellent support services and the best tools available, every project can be completed to its maximum potential.

## jargon jungle

- “REPORTING” - A broadly generic word which encapsulates BI, AAs, CPM and KPIs.
- “BI” - Business Intelligence.
- “AAs” - Analytical Applications.
- “CPM” - Corporate Performance Management.
- “KPI” - Key Performance Indicators.
- “The Data Pump” - The consolidation and restructuring of operational data in a packaged way, that can be interpreted (consumed) by the user.
- “The Information Supply Chain” - When all levels of Operations and Management reporting are connected, allowing business users in the organisational hierarchy to become more business effective.

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# Lets get back to basics

# Why Business Intelligence?

The French coined a phrase for it “plus ca change, plus c’est la meme chose” The more things change the more they remain the same. In many ways it is the same in the IT industry. While we innovate more rapidly and products and services become cleverer and faster one aspect never changes. The reasons organisations invest are always focused on improving performance.

Whether you are a private sector enterprise or public sector service you are constantly striving to achieve improved efficiency and effectiveness in order to meet business goals, however these are measured:

- profit per share
- return on capital employed
- customer retention
- best value conformance

The success of all investment can only be measured against the success in meeting these goals.

The IT industry is about bringing new techniques to market to add value in meeting these business goals. Of necessity we introduce new terminology to describe new capability. But we do ourselves no justice and our customers no service if we allow vendor technical jargon and new product “speak” to de-focus people from their key business concerns. It is too easy to be carried away in the technical hype of BI, AAs, and CPM, and de-focus from the “end game”.

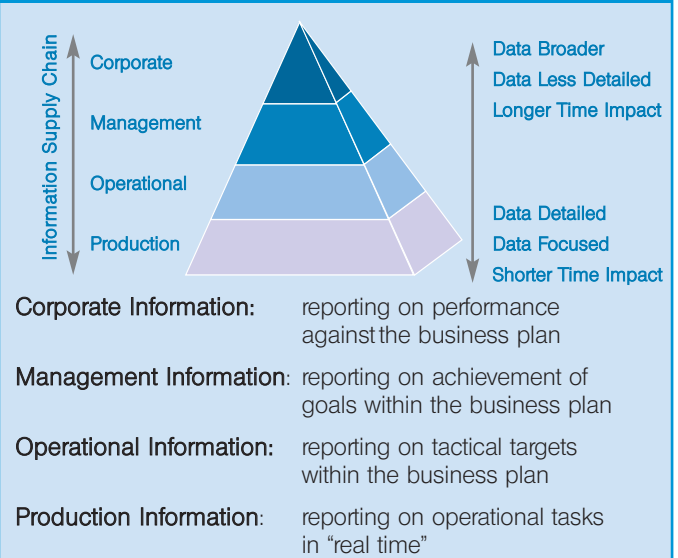
**visualmetrics**, as an integration business in the arena of BI, AA, and CPM projects, never loses sight of the primary principle of ensuring that business value is driven out of the application of technology.

In the Business Intelligence sector **visualmetrics** seeks to help its customers achieve overall business goals in five broad areas:

- ✓ Improved Operational Efficiency
- ✓ Reduced time to Information Delivery
- ✓ Organised information, presented in a meaningful business context
- ✓ Enables better informed and factual decision-making
- ✓ Enhanced competitive edge

We often look at **information** needs in terms of a simplified model. In the Pyramid there are four levels of **information** which all businesses demand:

The Pyramid displays four layers of Business Intelligence for reporting purposes:



The further up the Pyramid the more aggregated, broader and less detailed the information becomes. This aligns the granularity of information to the business tasks and responsibilities further up the Pyramid.

Too often “point” technical solutions are applied to meet these reporting needs at these different information levels, with scant attention being paid to the flow of data up the Pyramid.

Many organisations still operate in a highly manual and data inaccurate world of isolated Excel spreadsheets and Access databases This is an inefficient mechanism of data delivery, as reporting at higher Pyramid levels is substantially based on aggregated, distilled and re-organised data from lower down the Pyramid.

## The Technical Principles

There is little point in organisations selecting a CPM or KPI Dashboard solution at the Corporate level, when they have not built the underlying Operational and Management information infrastructure. The true value is realised when all levels of reporting are connected, allowing business users in the organisational hierarchy to become more operationally efficient by having access to the same basic stream of company data.

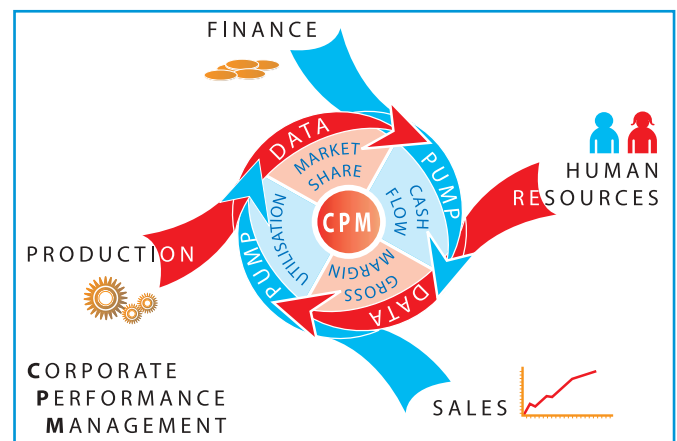
With this architecture, Information now:

- reaches the correct users faster
- is concise
- is immediately actionable
- is more accurate

**visualmetrics** calls this concept “The Information Supply Chain”. **visualmetrics**’ value lies in delivering it.

In the background, what makes this information delivery process work is a mechanism for consolidating and restructuring operational data in a packaged way that has business meaning to the user. **visualmetrics** call this the **Data Pump**.

To provide greatest efficiency, this is an automated process, just like operational applications. While the applications at the base of the Pyramid provide the production reporting and operational process control, the **Data Pump** feeds the information for **Business**



**Intelligence** within the **Information Supply Chain**.

Today, most organisations have a fractured view of their business metrics because they do not have an integrated **Information Supply Chain** architecture. **visualmetrics** can cut through the technology myths and address the true business drivers and requirements, and then can assess the best use of technology to deliver against the **Business Intelligence** demands.

We have the practical experience in delivering such solutions. We know we can help. Look no further than **visualmetrics** for your partner in **Business Intelligence**.

# what are businesses doing today, and how to do it better: de-risk your project

Most businesses today have some level of **reporting** from which critical business decisions are taken. However, the appreciation of the “data holes” which exist between what information is provided, and the data which is not complete within their **reports** is the “**Information Shortfall**”. It is key to link the information relevant to the tasks and responsibilities of an individual with the strategic goals of the business. This is where CPM and KPI-based applications are most relevant.



Additionally, **reporting** is used purely as a “rear-view” mirror perspective on the business, monitoring only how the business is performing against targets, in a reactive way. To succeed in business today, one has to use information to establish how a business is going to meet targets, in a proactive way. Using the historical information to assist with the planning and direction, to effect positive change.

## how to plan for “success first time”: the project check-off list

To help with the assessment of realistic success when entering into a Business Intelligence project, there are levels of business assessment, aside from the key one of Cost and ROI, which will positively (or negatively) influence the success of the project. These are set out in several levels, below:

Board Level	End User	Technical	Operational	Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has data ownership been agreed.</li> <li>• Should we run a pilot or go straight into a production level project.</li> <li>• Does the project have Board sponsorship.</li> <li>• What are the business measures of success which are part of the project approval and sign-off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills transfer into the business for self-service.</li> <li>• Ensure the business scope is well defined and validated.</li> <li>• Does it address an area of business plan, with a community of users who want to embrace new methods of managing the business.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it cleanse the data through the processing of data.</li> <li>• Skills transfer to help with IT resource management.</li> <li>• Assess it fits with the IT standards that already exist within the business.</li> <li>• Will the application scale with the user adoption.</li> <li>• What about the development effort involved in application modification work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it automate a currently manual or semi-manual process.</li> <li>• Does it reduce the “time to delivery” of reports to users.</li> <li>• Have we defined a single consistent and agreed Data Model (data definition).</li> <li>• Have triggers and alerts been built into the application to allow proactive decision making.</li> <li>• What about hand-holding for the users through the initial period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will this application affect the Business and IT processes.</li> <li>• How is the business going to manage the change in working practices.</li> </ul>

## New Business Wins! Hazlewood Sandwiches (HS) is the world's largest sandwich manufacturer and part of Greencore Group plc.



Employing more than 3000 people HS provides products to Food Service Providers, Manufacturers, Airlines, Petrol Forecourts and the majority of the UK Retailers.

The business challenge facing Hazelwood Sandwiches was the timely and accurate reporting of:

- ✓ Sale Revenues
- ✓ Product Range management
- ✓ Customers
- ✓ Costs

for sales performance management

The frustration was that all the base data required by decision makers was sitting in operational systems but could not easily be made available without the costly involvement of accounts and IT staff in the reworking of data. HS chose visualmetrics to develop a Business Intelligence (BI) solution due to their recognised expertise and experience in delivering BI solutions against ERP systems.

HS use JBA System 21 (S.21) as their ERP system. Using their Information Supply Chain architecture, visualmetrics deployed a customised BI application, which collates, consolidates and aggregates the data from S21.

By adopting the BI application deployed by visualmetrics, HS have substantially decreased the time and effort to produce their on-going Sales Performance figures. The BI application also stores extensive historical information that can be used to monitor trends and is the basis for informed decision making.

# our business partners

**visualmetrics** enjoys strong partnerships with a number of key product, application and service alliances.



## Product

To succeed in our mission of bringing maximum benefit to our customers we make use of the leading BI software tools. These are the building blocks on which we deploy Business Intelligence solutions.

We therefore enjoy close relationships with major authors of Business Intelligence (BI) and performance planning software. This allows us to choose the optimum software tools for your applications or where appropriate to adhere to any product policy that may exist in the organisation.

Our partners include the three major BI tool vendors - with combined annual sales of US\$1.3 billion - who dominate the leading quadrant in Gartner's Enterprise BI Suites/Reporting Magic Quadrant:

- ✓ Business Objects
- ✓ Crystal Decisions
- ✓ Cognos.

This marriage of best of breed BI software tools with **visualmetrics'** expertise in deploying BI solutions in a business context ensures best value to our customers.

## Application

**visualmetrics** also maintains relationships with leading application authors in the UK in several different industry sectors. Following a principle of "concentrate on what you know best and do it better than any else" our application partners turn to **visualmetrics** as their preferred partner when they have need of BI expertise in their customer base.

### Our partners include

- Aspect Communications, the world's largest company focused exclusively on contact centre solutions.

- Cincom, a blue chip provider of integration software, automation and communication and business solutions.
- FWL Technologies, acknowledged leaders in providing Supply Chain logistics software
- SSA Global, leading providers of Enterprise Resource Planning solutions to tier 1 enterprises

## Service Partners

We also maintain partnerships with consultancies operating in our markets who maintain complimentary specialisations to our own. Working in co-operation where appropriate enhances the quality of solution to our clients.

**visualmetrics** has developed specific applications and consultancy capability in the contact centre field. To maximise the value proposition to our customers we entered an alliance with **contactcentres.com**. **contactcentres.com** is a contact centre consultancy whose expertise lies in advising clients on best policy and practice in setting up and operating contact centres.

Xynomix is a consultancy that specialises in Oracle technologies. With its team of highly experienced Oracle practitioners its value to its customer base lies in ensuring the optimisation of the design, build and operation of Oracle based applications.

Baker Tilly is the UK's 7th largest firm of chartered accountants and business advisers who provide services covering audit, personal and corporate taxation, consultancy, corporate finance, financial services and business recovery. **visualmetrics** is the preferred provider of BI solutions to their client base.

### Product Partners



### Application Partners



### Service Partners



The Meadows Church Road Dodleston Chester CH4 9NG

T: +44 (0) 870 7606467 F: +44 (0) 870 7606468

[www.visualmetrics.co.uk](http://www.visualmetrics.co.uk) [sales@visualmetrics.co.uk](mailto:sales@visualmetrics.co.uk)

the next edition...

In the next edition of the **visualmetrics** Newsletter, we intend to devote more space to Client related case studies, that demonstrate how **visualmetrics** can provide "exceptional answers to critical questions" in a range of business sectors.

We'll also bring you spotlights on some of our Partners and how we work in conjunction with them to benefit our customers.

If you have any comments relating to the Newsletter, please address them to the Editor at: [newsletter@visualmetrics.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@visualmetrics.co.uk)