



visualassurance | Business Continuity for Business Intelligence Solutions

About visualmetrics

visualmetrics is a Business Intelligence (BI) solutions provider that develops and delivers best of breed Analytical Applications, utilising BI tools, to its focus markets. Based in United Kingdom and founded in 1997, **visualmetrics** also offers consultancy services to construct custom applications tailored to a client's specific requirements.

visualmetrics has developed specialist project methodologies for the delivery of its solutions - **DRIVE** for custom Analytical Applications and an accelerated form, **@drive**, for standard applications. These services span the full application life cycle from functional specification to application support and enhancement, ensuring that project risk is managed and ROI is maximised.

visualmetrics maintains partnerships with leading product, application and service partners in the BI market. **visualmetrics** sees its value not only in assisting its customers to exploit data as information on which to base decisions, but as intelligence to promote insight into businesses performance.

Our clients include market leaders such as DHL, Unipart, Balfour Beatty Utilities, CIPD and Places for People.

visualmetrics has developed a suite of Analytical Applications, based on their length and breadth of industry and technical experience:

-  **visualrevenue** for finance
-  **visualavenue** for property management
-  **visualaffinity** for contact centres
-  **visuallogistics** for logistics
-  **visualintellect** for human resources
-  **visualperformance** for sales
-  **visualcontract** for contract service provision
-  **visualcontrol** for budgeting and planning
-  **visualintegrator** for data delivery automation

Executive Summary

visualassurance is all about keeping your Business Intelligence (BI) Solution operating effectively so that it continues to support your business. A suite of support and maintenance services, derived from our long-term industry experience and best-practice principles, that can be tailored to suit each customer's unique requirements as determined by the business criticality of your application. **visualassurance** not only maintains the application to work as originally designed, but adjusts the product and application components of the solution in concert with the changing business, operational and technical profile of your organisation. This business continuity service is the final phase of **DRIVE**, **visualmetrics'** project methodology for the deployment and support of BI solutions. It offers a guarantee of support from one of the leading BI solutions providers in the UK and eases the need to maintain specialised skills in house. It provides long term assurance for companies investing in BI solutions. As a "one stop shop," **visualassurance** offers investment protection, a continuous skills transfer on products and the chance to maximise ROI from your **visualmetrics** BI solutions. **visualassurance** optimises the business continuity for your BI solution.

Business and Operational Scenario

Following the effort of implementing the new Business Intelligence (BI) solution there is a risk of moving on to the next project, and of "taking the eye off the ball". Of course the benefit of the new solution is only realised through its ongoing utilisation; it goes without saying therefore that it must run problem free. Alongside the solution's uninterrupted operation, and equally as important if maximum return on the investment is to be assured, is its continuing evolution to support changing business methods. This raises a number of issues that cannot always be quantified, but are easily understood:

- **How business critical is the solution?**
- **What would be the financial impact of it not being available?**
- **Do resources with the necessary skills exist in house to fix a problem?**
- **How reliant are we on the response from multiple suppliers?**

This last point is of particular importance where there is a multi-vendor solution, problem identification and the point in the application where it originates is not always clear. Differences of opinion between suppliers on the source of a problem and its solution must be avoided. A lack of agility and speed of response can have a severe impact on the business. If the application is business critical with a high penalty for system down time, it is essential to have a support mechanism that ensures an optimal solution across all vendors.

This is often best delivered by the primary support arrangement being made with the supplier who understands the business process and the software development work. This is typically the application builder or systems integrator. Back to back service contracts between this party and other vendors enable escalation, if necessary, to authors of the software products. There is only one point of customer contact and one point of responsibility to the customer.

Effective post implementation support is critical to maximising the value of the investment. Recognising that each customer's BI solution, and in turn those process which it enables, often require a different set of services and timeframe for the delivery of those services, we have packaged our **visualassurance** support services into three distinct tiers – Gold, Silver & Bronze. Doing so enables our customers to not only ensure the fitness-of-purpose of their solution through the application life cycle and business changing conditions, but also allows them to make a measured and responsible investment into that future aligned to what can be afforded and what is imperative.

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Packaged Service Levels

Services	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Telephone, Email & Remote Access	✓	✓	✓
Protect Reactive Support	✓	✓	✓
Vendor Escalation & Vendor Knowledgebase	✓	✓	✓
Full Year Support Review	✓	✓	✓
Case Log Numbers	✓	✓	✓
Monthly Customer Service Reporting & Review Call	✓	✓	✓
Major Release Upgrades of Vendor Software	✓	✓	✓
Improvement & Optimisation Schedule	-	✓	✓
visualmetrics Knowledgebase	-	✓	✓
User Administration	-	✓	✓
Support Alerting	-	✓	✓
Out of Hours Cover	POA	POA	POA
Work Around	POA	POA	POA
Sustain Call-Off Consultancy Package	-	5 Days	10 Days
Online Call Logging	-	-	✓
Quarterly Account Support Review in Person	-	-	✓
Revise Yearly Application Audit	-	-	✓
Technical Audits	-	-	✓
Proactive Preventative Support	-	-	✓

Service Definitions

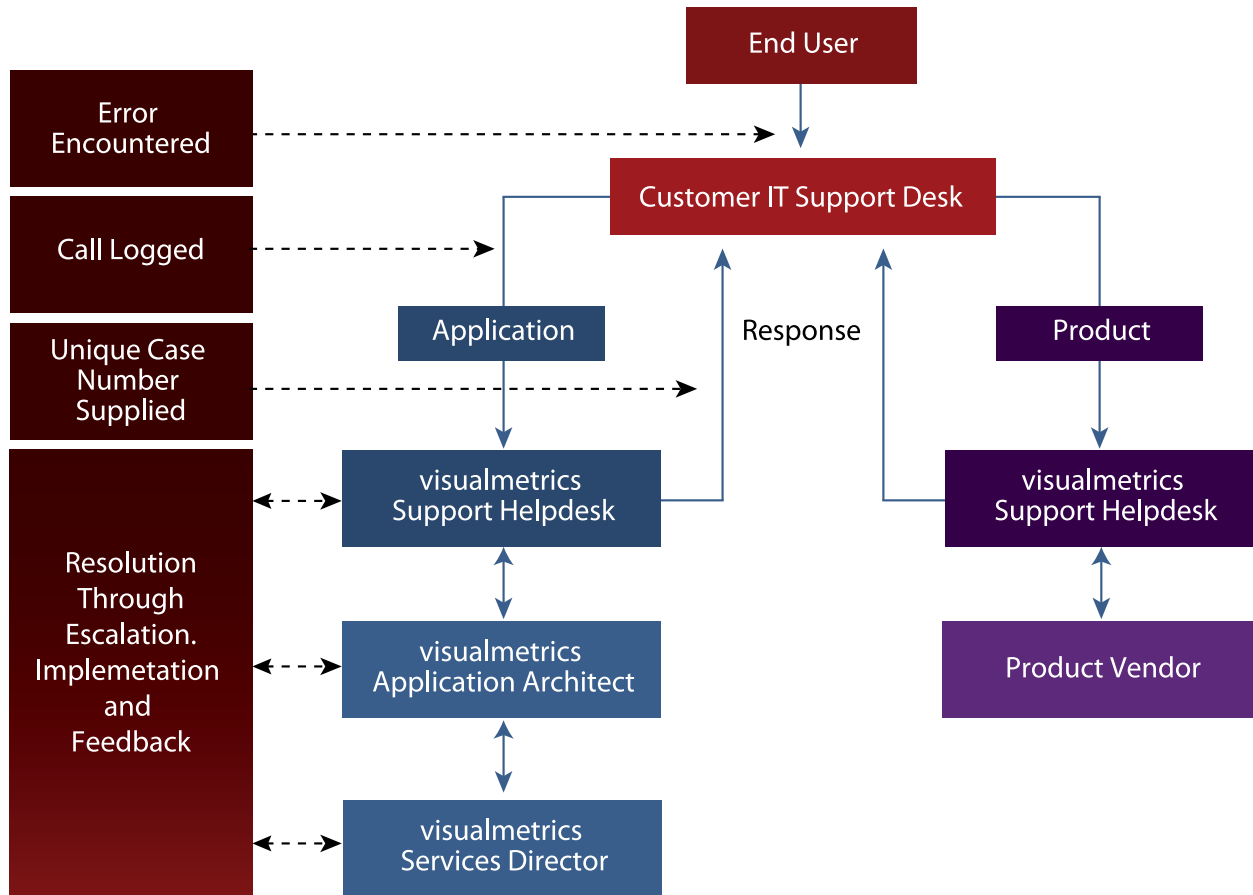
- Telephone & Email – Access to our dedicated support team during agreed working hours and applicable out of hours days
- Remote Access – Our ability to remotely access and maintain a customer’s application
- **Protect** Reactive Support – Traditionally known as ‘break-fix’, the **Protect** service concerns rectifying any application based errors within agreed SLAs
- Vendor Escalation & Vendor Knowledgebase – application error escalation to vendor for assistance, we also provide our customers with access to the vendor knowledgebase for their own education
- Full Year Support Review – A thorough yearly review of all successes and difficulties encountered throughout the year with the account manager
- Case Log Numbers – Unique numbers provided to the customer for every case logged
- Monthly Customer Service Reporting & Review Call – Detailed documentation and review appraising the month’s support services; delivers insight into performance and the opportunity to optimise service focus
- Major Release Upgrades of Vendor Software – Notification and delivery of relevant or beneficial vendor product upgrades (excludes installation and configuration)
- Improvement & Optimisation Schedule – These services maintain the application’s efficient operation where anticipated requirements enable us to schedule activities
- **visualassurance** Knowledge Base – Where frequently encountered problems and useful information can be found and discussed, enabling user education and self-service support
- User Administration – Tailored to a customer’s requirements, concerns the set-up and allocation of users and security settings
- Support Alerting – Tailored automated alerts sent to key users and administrators when an application error occurs – for **visualintegrator** based applications only
- Out of Hours Cover – Priced upon application, packages of support cover days can be purchased and called off in blocks of half-days where required and subject to terms and conditions
- Work Around – Priced upon application, **visualmetrics** offer a service that provides on-going reporting within defined timescales whilst a solution is being implemented or tested – available for Severity 1 errors only, and dependent on solution configuration
- **Sustain** Call-Off Consultancy Package – A package of consultancy days which can be drawn off against a number of potential requirements: remedying operational problems, application enhancement and configuration, report writing, data feed enhancement, database tuning and training
- Online Case Logging – Access to our on-demand CRM system which enables customers to directly log support cases
- Quarterly Account Support Review in Person – A quarterly review of services delivered and appraisal of successes and difficulties with the Account Manager
- **Revise** Yearly Application Audit – End of year review of the Solution’s fitness-of-purpose. Assesses whether it has met, and continues to meet, business changing conditions
- Technical Audits – An extension to **Revise** which evaluates and reports back upon the technical efficiency of the application; Platform configuration and CPU usage, security, user class logins etcetera
- Proactive Preventative Support – continual monitoring and optimisation of the application to ensure fitness-of-purpose and avoid anticipated problems as technology and the customers functional, technical and operational requirements evolve

These individual services represent industry best-practice processes, and mechanisms for support service delivery, based on our long term industry experience developing, delivering and supporting Business Intelligence applications. The exact balance of the services will be tailored to suit each customer’s specific requirements.

Reactive Response

Whilst pro-active services such as application optimisation, upgrades and user administration deliver significant and tangible business benefits, and ensure continued ROI from the application, the reactive response time of our support staff in firstly responding to, and then resolving, a support case will always remain the most fundamental part of our **visualassurance** service. It will also remain the most significant measure of support success.

Whenever a call is logged with the **visualmetrics** support desk, be it by phone, email or the support portal, it enters our support CRM system and a structured process flow designed to deliver the fastest time to call resolution. A series of strict process rules and on-going monitoring ensures every call is in a constant state of action until it is resolved.



Aligned to the three tiers of **visualassurance**, and underpinning the process rules which govern a call's resolution, are five severities and five tiers of SLA (service level agreement) with corresponding best endeavour call response and case solution times:

Severity Levels	Bronze		Silver		Gold		
	Response Time	Resolution Time	Response Time	Resolution Time	Response Time	Resolution Time	Work Around
Severity 1	< 2 hours	< 12 hours	< 1 hour	< 6 hours	< 20 mins	< 4 hours	< 4 hours
Severity 2	< 2 hours	< 24 hours	< 1 hour	< 12 hours	< 20 mins	< 8 hours	N/A
Severity 3	< 2 hours	< 48 hours	< 1 hour	< 18 hours	< 20 mins	< 12 hours	N/A
Severity 4	< 2 hours	< 96 hours	< 1 hour	< 36 hours	< 20 mins	< 18 hours	N/A
Severity 5	< 2 hours	< 120 hours	< 1 hour	< 72 hours	< 20 mins	< 48 hours	N/A

These SLAs represent our base levels for response, resolution and work-around times for each tier of the solution; each can be customised as necessary to meet customer requirements as SLA definitions are established. This enables our customers to not only weigh the investment they intend to make into the on-going fitness-of-purpose of their application against the support services they require, but also against how critical the application and processes it enables are to the businesses' continued operation.

As part of our monthly and yearly review we provide all our customers with feedback on how our support team has performed against these measures.

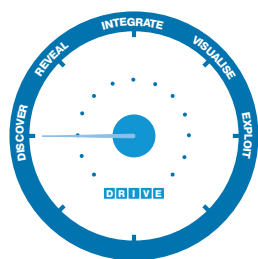
visualassurance Benefits

The **visualassurance** support services deliver a wide range of operational, technical and functional benefits across the application life-cycle and across all lines of customer's business. Assessing the full range and reach of benefits can only be truly achieved on an individual basis, but all customers will see the key benefits of:

- A single point of contact for all support requirements
- Reduced load on the customer's IT department and thereby cost and asset reduction
- Assured system operability
- Minimised down time
- Minimised opportunity cost
- User advice – on-going skills and knowledge transfer
- Access to domain experts with in-depth product and application knowledge
- Budgeted costs for application maintenance
- Assured on-going application fitness-of-purpose
- Return on Investment protection

DRIVE Implementation Methodology

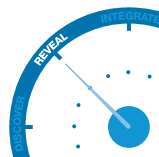
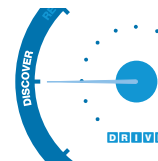
A customer chooses a standard application because it brings the benefit of a tried and tested solution, reduced project risk, and a lower product and implementation cost. This results in faster exploitation of value and stronger ROI to the business.



While a standard Analytical Application removes the traditional need for highly detailed functional analysis, it does not take away the key need of ensuring that the solution is implemented in such a way that it properly supports the business process. As the standard Analytical Application may not exactly fit the detailed needs of the customer, there may be a need to modify functionality to meet individual businesses' operational needs.

With this in mind **visualmetrics** developed an accelerated form of its **DRIVE** project methodology to implement standard Analytical Applications. We call this **@DRIVE** (Discover Reveal Integrate Visualise Exploit).

The objective of the **Discover** phase is to uncover the changes needed to achieve a full alignment of the Analytical Application with the customer's Methods. This includes any organisational and process changes the customer needs to consider as well as functional and technical modifications needed to the standard Analytical Application. The analysis will include functions across the business which contribute to, or benefit from the solution.



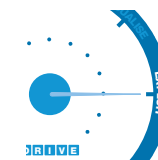
In the **Reveal** phase, documented functional and technical modifications are fed back to the customer. Through this, an optimum solution is identified, and a list of organisational, functional and technical application changes are defined and agreed. Responsibilities, sponsorship and commitments are understood, and the project is launched from feasibility into execution.

Having understood fully how the organisation can make best use of the technology investment, the next task is to **Integrate** the Analytical Application with the existing operational applications and configure it for best use. This work, which includes engineering any programming modifications, is delivered almost exclusively by **visualmetrics**. Through this we automate the delivery of information into the Analytical Application from the operational applications.



Training and roll-out of the Analytical Application to the users takes place during the **Visualise** phase. It is now that the information delivered by the solution becomes visible to the broad base of users for the first time.

Exploit is the post implementation phase where benefit and value is driven out of the solution. It is a process primarily run by the customer's project team as it seeks to ensure that the targets which have been set are achieved and ROI realised.



To derive benefit from the investment, the focus of the implementation must be on ensuring full alignment of the application to the improved business process. **DRIVE** is first and foremost about business process improvement. It is more than solely a technical implementation. While the scope of **DRIVE** is focused on fast and cost effective support from project initiation to implementation, at **visualmetrics** we recognise that Methods inevitably change over time as market conditions and internal procedures change. As new methods diverge from the initial configuration of the application, degradation of benefits takes place. We therefore complement the **DRIVE** service with the **visualassurance** service which maintains the maximum business benefit over the lifetime of the application.

visualmetrics Glossary

Analytical Application: an application using a BI toolset and based upon a domain of data, which allows an organisation to track, monitor and effect business performance through analysis of its Metrics.

Business Intelligence (BI): software tools from companies such as Cognos and Business Objects which are employed in the overall delivery of CPM based solutions and Analytical Applications.

Corporate Performance Management (CPM): the process of understanding and effecting the quality of an organisation's performance, based upon the interplay of BI, Metrics and Methods (also otherwise known as BPM: Business Performance Management or EPM: Enterprise Performance Management).

Data Warehouse: an off line database, which retains all the aggregated and restructured data that delivers the CPM solution through an Analytical Application.

Information Supply Chain: a suite of software programmes which automates the time based and selective extraction, transformation and loading of relevant data for reporting purposes, into the Data Warehouse.

Methods: the process that an organisation employs to fulfill its operational activity. When qualified by Metrics and reported via a BI tool set the results are used to meet CPM objectives.

Metrics: business measures which are quantifiable, including their associated business rules, (also otherwise known as KPIs: Key Performance Indicators).

Reporting: a broadly generic term which includes Business Intelligence, Analytical Applications, Business Performance Management and Key Performance Indicators.

Balanced Scorecard: a management system that enables organisations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. It provides feedback around both the internal business processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results. It retains traditional financial measures to assist in creating future value through investment in customers, suppliers, employees, processes, technology, and innovation.