pivotlink
Intelligence on demand

From Data To Assets

Unleash the power of your information with On-Demand BA

"Running your business effectively requires transparency into all aspects of the organization. It starts with the ability to ask – and answer – questions at the speed of business"

David Vonk,
SVP Sales & Operations, PivotLink

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cash, Customers, Sales, Products and People - every company needs to analyze information from these five data sources to grow and thrive. Understanding the interdependencies and then harnessing these assets for timely, actionable insight is still a challenge for most organizations. The exponential growth of information, legacy information management systems, resource and budget constraints are common challenges that limit the exposure of these five vital data sources to the business.

Can traditional business intelligence solutions – which take months or years to deploy, and weeks to change – be relevant for business users today? Companies need to focus on high impact, high value projects – those that can make a difference now to find cost savings, seize new market opportunities, make employees as effective as possible and create competitive advantage. Business users need new tools to help achieve these goals.

On-demand business analytic (BA) solutions are that new tool. They free information trapped in corporate systems and transfer it to the people who have a clear understanding of the inter-relationships and and are best equipped to make decisions now, to serve the issue at hand. With on-demand BA solutions, IT staff are no longer a bottleneck for report generation, while people in the field are armed with more timely information that will enable them to focus on the business issues that matter most.

On-demand BA provides information the way you want to see it – in dashboards, charts, and reports – with access to pertinent information in a few clicks. With business conditions shifting daily, even hourly, agility is a critical factor for success in today's economy.

THE CHALLENGE OF LEVERAGING INFORMATION ASSETS

Companies often overlook existing assets - such as the information they have about customers, sales, operations, products and people - as an obvious place to unearth new ideas for products, services, process improvement and strategy. Leveraging these assets to gain actionable insight is an efficient and proven way to create a sustainable competitive advantage. After all, no two companies have the same combination of costs, customers, product and market.

The proliferation of information is one of the most demanding issues facing IT managers today.

Most organizations have a handful of department-specific applications in place to run their business – a CRM system to manage sales and pipeline, an ERP system to manage the supply chain, order management software to manage purchasing, finance software to manage bookings and billings, and an HCM system to manage human capital. These applications handle complex transactions but getting analysis out in a meaningful way can be time consuming, challenging and costly.

Business users need to get beyond reports that provide statistics and raw data from departmental transactional systems. They need analysis tools that provide meaningful business intelligence in order to support decision making and strategy. On-demand BA tools put rich, analytic power into the hands of business users to help them understand complex relationships and make decisions quickly and cost effectively. The ability for business users to see across the enterprise and to choose the best option for hundreds of daily decisions will transform the way companies compete.

For example, if a report shows sales are trending lower than expected, business users need to be able to uncover the underlying issue easily by getting answers to questions such as:

- Is the problem with one product line, or certain regions?
- What is different between underperforming products or regions versus other combinations that are performing well?
- Is there a related problem with sales headcount, marketing campaigns, or something else?

It seems fairly straightforward to enable business users with the ability to aggregate disparate data sources to conduct analysis relative to their roles in the organization. Because of the systems that IT has in place to manage departmental information, too many companies force their employees to rely on generic IT reports or manual cut and paste integration in spreadsheets to go about their daily work.

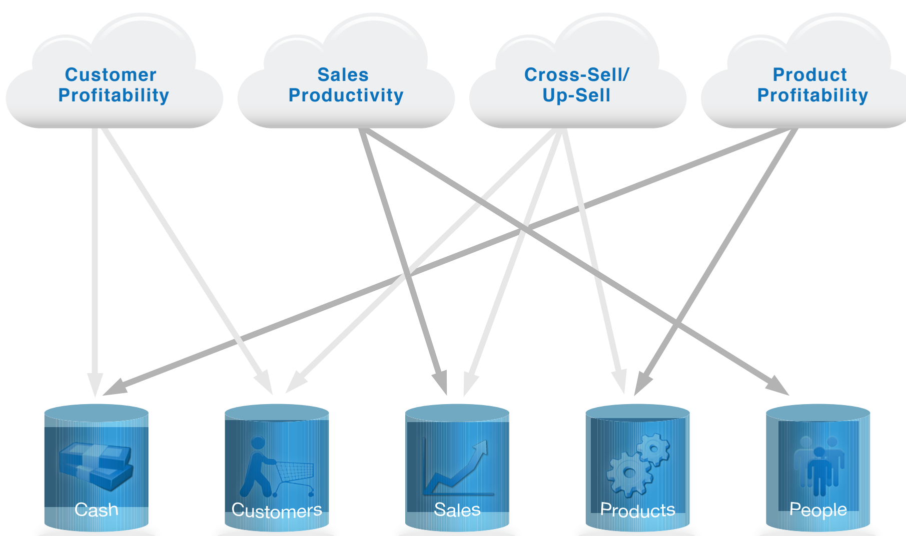
ASKING RELEVANT, TIMELY QUESTIONS LEADS TO IMPROVED BUSINESS OUTCOMES

On-demand BA goes beyond simply reporting on data from transactional systems. It is designed to be more in line with the way people really work and supports a business user's need to aggregate and combine multiple sources of data on the fly. It also enables users to develop analysis that is relevant to the business situation at hand—all via self-service. This is important since business questions often change and users don't want to wait days or weeks for IT to establish a new query or generate a new report.

Business users should be able to ask any question about data and share the analysis securely inside and outside the company. On-demand BA reveals interdependencies among siloed data for richer, relevant analysis. It also:

- Allows users to focus on analysis rather than pulling data from multiple sources and incompatible systems
- Identifies not what happened, but why it happened and what will happen if it continues
- Empowers quick response to changes in financial condition, customer preferences and supply chain operations
- Reduces guesswork and enables proactive decision-making
- Encourages interdepartmental communication and collaboration

On-demand BA reveals interdependencies among siloed data.



ON-DEMAND BA FILLS THE "ANALYTICS GAP"

Two fundamental trends are causing a gap between a business user's need for timely and relevant information and IT's ability to service those needs. First, there is an overwhelming amount of data being captured, stemming from the buildup of sales, marketing, finance, inventory and other transactional systems. With each new piece of data collected, traditional BI technologies become exponentially burdened with the analysis of that data due to the lack of flexibility in their underlying structure - the explosion of web-based data has only exasperated the situation.

There is a huge gap between the way businesses actually work and the systems IT deploys to support information analysis and sharing.

Second, more and more businesses require not only reports that summarize data but also the ability to analyze and collaborate with that data in a way that generates actionable insight. Unfortunately, traditional database technologies – found in on-premise BI solutions - are extremely inefficient at supporting analytical questions. This "analytics gap" has created a situation where a business user's need for timely and relevant analysis are underserved.

The inefficient process of going back to technically-sophisticated analysts or IT, every time a new question arises, does not allow for the rapid decision-making required in today's business environment. Business users need to aggregate their data, conduct analysis and explore results to gain actionable insight in a time frame that keeps pace with the dynamics of today's world. Combining data from multiple sources to get relevant business insight also requires a solution that can scale securely across the enterprise. The following capabilities are considered crucial in such efforts.

Capability	Benefit
• Security of data across roles, groups, departments and even outside partners and suppliers	• Provide self-service access to a wider audience in the company while still complying with SOX and other security policies.
• Enterprise grade authentication systems using standard protocols like SAML 2.0	• Enable faster access and better security when employees move departments or leave the company.
• SAS 70 Type II certification	• Compliance with Sarbanes Oxley (SOX), HIPAA and other regulations
• Combining information from multiple sources while maintaining analytic correctnesss	• Effectively leverage Cash, Customers, Sales, Product and People to create competitive advantage
• Self-service data access and report generation	• Empower the business user with insight while reducing dependency on IT

The technical innovations behind on-demand BA - like cloud computing, in-memory processing, columnar data storage, and enhanced UI design - provide companies with a quicker, more efficient way to aggregate, analyze and distribute the information contained within the enterprise. Business users can view and analyze timely, accurate data about core business activities and use the insight to improve decision-making and outcomes. They can do so with minimal training and without relying on IT for data access and report production. Row level security ensures that only authorized users gain access to confidential business data based on their role within the organization. Secure systems can be deployed across the entire organization with zero replication of data.

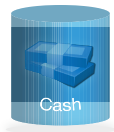
Because of on-demand BA, expectations of how quick, easy and useful BI is to the business have changed.

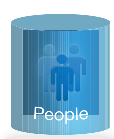
MAXIMIZING THE VALUE OF YOUR DATA WITH ON-DEMAND BA

In today's economy, companies strive to make better use of their information assets. Across the enterprise and inside departments – in companies large and small – people are looking at where to focus, where to reduce costs and where to invest. Scattered throughout an organization are databases and individuals who have information and insights that are key to solving critical business issues. Isolated from each other they may have little value, but combined and put into context, information and insight become the foundation for creating a competitive advantage.

For organizations whose success or failure depends upon accurate and timely decisions, On-demand BA tools can make all the difference. In the business intelligence and analytics market where expensive and hard to use solutions are frustrating managers and business analysts alike, SaaS solutions offer low risk, high return alternatives. On-demand BA solutions are emerging as a strong alternative for companies of any size that aim at analytics-driven decision-making. PivotLink's On-demand BA solution combines innovative technology with cloud-computing, enabling a fundamentally new approach to delivering business analytics at scale. PivotLink makes it easy for organizations to maximize the value of their key information assets and create sustainable competitive advantage.

APPENDIX





Finance	Benefit/Outcomes
• Calculate daily payment and collection status • Improve purchasing by analyzing expenditures by supplier across locations • Audit spending and key cost ratios by region, department, and employee	• Coordinated planning of resources and expenses • Better and timely understanding of risk exposure in the company • Fact based strategic decisions
Customers	**Benefit/Outcomes**
• Be alerted to customer service levels below goal • Analyze customer service by segment and customer satisfaction • Analyze business operations like Shipping (on-time delivery, return rates), Utilization of tangible resources like Trucks, Rooms, Hospital Beds, People etc.	• Better alignment of conflicting departmental goals like cost to serve a customers vs. customer satisfaction • Customer growth in appropriate segments • Improved customer experience
Sales	**Benefit/Outcomes**
• Combine pipeline from agents, distributors, and direct sales into a single forecast • Compare performance between new and seasoned sales reps • Analyze on-hand inventory, sale by product, margin by product, discounts by demographics	• Improved sales efficiency • Improved sales effectiveness leads to reduced discounts, better customer satisfaction • Improved visibility enables reliable forecasts and more confident expense decision making
Supply Chain	**Benefit/Outcomes**
• Highlight out-of-stock situations with exception reporting • Gain control of transportation costs by carrier, product and region • Align production schedules with demand forecasts	• Efficient parts sourcing - lowering cost without impacting quality or timeliness • Delivering on customer commitments • Reduced inventory costs
Human Capital	**Benefit/Outcomes**
• Analyze trends in staffing levels and turnover rates • Analyze cost and budget variances by department, level, and region • Track trends in health-care, overhead, on-boarding, and training costs	• Ensure compliance with benefits, medical leave acts, and labor laws • Lower employee turnover • Improve productivity by ensuring pay for performance

LEARN MORE

Learn how PivotLink's on-demand business analytics service can improve productivity for your business by visiting our website at pivotlink.com.

ABOUT PIVOTLINK

PivotLink was founded on the simple, powerful principle that it should be easy for business users to securely analyze any data, any way they want and share their insights with colleagues and partners, wherever they are.

On-premise BI solutions are wrought with cost, risk and usability challenges. Our approach is to put affordable, secure and easy-to-use analytic tools into the hands of the line of business user and empower them to make better, timelier decisions – without burdening IT.

Value

PivotLink's On-demand BA platform delivers significant value:

- Reduce the cost and complexity of BI deployments
- Unburden IT from the onerous aspects of BI and shift IT's focus to data quality, SLAs and innovation
- Extend more data to more users in a self-service model
- Enable secure collaboration within and outside the organization

Background

PivotLink was founded in Seattle, WA in 1998. We are headquartered in San Francisco, CA near the heart of Silicon Valley. Backed by leading venture firms Emergence Captial Partners, Trident Capital, and StarVest Partners. PivotLink was built from the ground up by SaaS and BI industry visionaries and veterans. Our world-class management team brings a wealth of start-up and mature company experience from Postini (now Google), Hyperion (now Oracle), OutlookSoft (now SAP) and Cambridge Technology Partners.

PivotLink Corp. | One Post St., Suite 900 | San Francisco, CA 94104
Phone: 1.866.625.9884 | Fax: 415.544.5295 | pivotlink.com