



BBBT Podcast Transcript



About the BBBT

The Boulder Business Intelligence Brain Trust, or BBBT, was founded in 2006 by Claudia Imhoff. Its mission is to leverage business intelligence for industry vendors, for its members, who are independent analysts and experts, and for its subscribers, who are practitioners. To accomplish this mission, the BBBT provides a variety of services, centered around vendor presentations.

For more, see: www.bbbt.us.

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Claudia Imhoff: Hello, and welcome to this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust, or the BBBT. We're a gathering of international consultants, analysts, and experts in business intelligence, who meet with interesting and innovative BI companies here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. We not only get briefed on the latest news and releases, but we share our ideas with the vendor on where the BI industry is going, and help them with their technological directions and marketing messages. I'm Claudia Imhoff and the BBBT podcasts are produced by my company, Intelligent Solutions.

I'm very pleased to introduce my guests today. They are Mani Gill and Ken Pierce. Mani is the Vice President and General Manager for Advanced Analytics, and Ken Pierce is the Global Senior Director for Information Management, both from SAP. Welcome to you both.

Mani Gill: Thanks, Claudia. It's a great pleasure to be here in snowy Colorado.

CI: It is snowy today. Sorry about that.

Ken Pierce: Thanks, Claudia. It's great to be here. I live here, so I welcome snowy Colorado.

CI: You bet. Mani, let's start with you then. You're the one responsible for all the advanced analytics. You had an interesting quote, I think. I'm not sure who it was from. You mention that by the year 2020, that 75 percent of a company's employees will require, must have, access to advanced analytics. Yet today, only 10 percent, or thereabouts, have, actually use, analytics on a day to day basis. How do you see organizations going from 10 percent to 75? That's a huge expansion.

MG: It's a good question. When I think about that, I think that the companies that do get there will be the companies that can compete in the marketplace.

CI: They will be the winners.

MG: They will. Being a vendor, it's obviously, "Hey, you need the latest technology." But it's also a cultural, organizational mandate. There are very innovative companies in the marketplace today that have a much larger percentage than the 10 percent.



It starts with culture and making decisions based on information, and then using the technologies. A lot of the technologies are starting to take consumer centric views. So that the end user is much, much more engaged, leveraging mobility, having the information available where you are. So that it's relevant and it's easily accessible. It's something you can find.

It's that combination of consumerization of technology, information being where you need it, to, also, organizations really taking this as a cultural shift.

CI: There are a number of movements. You mentioned one. Mobile BI is a huge accelerator for utilization of business intelligence and analytics.

Other ones, though self-service BI, which we really didn't talk about a whole lot, but that seems to be something else that's coming to the fore, as well as collaborative BI, being able to share the results and explain things to others. Would you agree that those are also important in this expansion?

MG: Yeah, absolutely. If you look at the three that you mentioned. The mobility really empowers the user with the information. In the context of where they are, where they need to get to. The collaboration, as well as the self service business intelligence, ends up being about empowering the person who needs to really go deep and create information, and not creating barriers. I see it as a value chain that can start to really enable each other.

CI: Let's turn to SAP a little bit. Let's talk about your analytics solution. What does it consist of? And if you don't mind, give me a brief overview of each piece, and how these all fit together.

MG: Sure. We've simplified this for our customers to three key areas. One is enterprise business intelligence, the second one being Agile visualizations, and self-service fits into that quite a bit. Then, the third one is advanced analytics. Let's look at each one of those briefly.

Enterprise business intelligence, at its core, is about getting information to people, like the example we talked about with mobility. Ensuring that the information is available, it's secure, and we can disseminate it to people, through different methods. That's number one. We tie back from a product perspective. This is our business objects suite of products.



On the Agile visualization front, we have come up with technologies like SAP Lumira. That enables this self-service with a rich visualization environment, so the business analyst can do their work, and not have to wait for IT, not have to wait for processes, but can answer questions at their own leisure.

The third area is advanced analytics and tying that advanced analytics into the rest of the portfolio. Essentially, bringing more people into creating predictive models, to be able to mine data, etc.

The key is that these three areas are integrated, so that we can get this collective insight.

CI: In the advanced analytics, just to bring in some timely news, a lot of that is going to reside in the KXEN technology that you just acquired, right?

MG: KXEN becomes a key enabler.

CI: Component, I guess.

MG: With SAP, we have invested in the in-memory platform to bring predictive, and leverage things like open source R, right into the platform. On top of that, we've extended our SAP Lumira to do predictive analytics. KXEN fits really nicely into that architecture. More importantly, by abstracting the concepts of predictive, KXEN allows us to bring predictive to more users. That becomes a key driver for advanced analytics.

CI: Can you give me just an example of a customer who's using... You don't have to name the customer. How do they float from one environment to the other to the other? Is there a flow to this? Do they start with a certain problem and then they eventually bring in the other technologies?

MG: Every organization's different. In the BI industry, we talk about this BI maturity curve or analytics maturity curve. The reality is you don't have to go linearly up the maturity curve. Companies will bounce around.

We've got customers that will actually use advanced analytics for even augmenting enterprise information management. It's a great way, when you have big data, to understand that big data. What's that profile of data that I have, and how do I actually organize it and make sense of it?



It can be in different stages. For customers who are looking at it to augment their BI processes, we see customers starting with analytics.

I'll give you a simple example. A customer is looking at sales and analyzing those from a rear view mirror perspective. The next natural question that they ask is "How am I going to do next quarter?" Every sales VP...

CI: Everybody wants to...

MG: ...asks that question. "How are we going to do this quarter?" The reality is you have the sales data for years. You have it for last quarter.

CI: You can project it forward.

MG: If you had the tools and technologies available to you, you could create your forecast based on that. There's a natural progression there.

CI: Let's talk about SAP's vision for advanced analytics. I thought that was a very interesting one. I'll just turn it over to you. Tell me about it.

MG: It's very customer centric for us, this advanced analytics marketplace. Our customers had a huge need, as they're getting more sophisticated and need to compete in the marketplace. Then, they have this thing called "Big Data" that's hitting them, and it's an opportunity that they look at. Advanced analytics is something that provides a natural extension to Big Data.

You've got lots of data. You need to mine that data. It's really difficult to just visualize it. When we looked at this, we concentrated on four areas. The first one being taking advanced analytics and operationalizing it. Bring it in the context of the user. "I'm looking at my inventory. Tell me what I'm going to be out of." Applying it at that level.

Secondly, we take the advanced analytics, and we bring it to more users. We talked about that previously, but that becomes a key driver. There's a huge shortage of professionals, as it relates to business intelligence. That goes up exponentially when we talk about advanced analytics. We have a job to do to bring advanced analytics to more users. That's the second area.



The third area of focus is to bring predictive analytics. You could call it "real time," or you could call it "in time." We want to recognize the customer that we want to target within the window that we have. Otherwise, we miss our opportunity. Bringing "real time" or "in time" to predictive analytics.

Last, but not least, is providing an open platform. Our customers, if you look at the recent survey from Rexer, are using R more and more in the marketplace. It's the most used programming language for advanced analytics. We've embraced R. We can support all of the R algorithms. We support Hadoop, but having that open platform becomes key.

CI: Excellent. All right, let me turn to you, Ken. Let's talk about the second half of the talk, which was all about enterprise information management. Just briefly, if you don't mind, you started off by saying that accurate and relevant data is critical to knowledge workers. I agree with you 100 percent. But why don't you explain what you meant by that?

Ken: Today, knowledge workers are struggling with determining, what is the relevant data that they need to use to do their job? When you look at the amount of data that is out there, when you look at big data, whether it's the volume in data, the variety of data, even what's the value of the data to them?

The key challenge, that a knowledge worker is faced with, is what do I use when? Is this data trusted? Is it fit for use? Is it designed for what I need it for? Not only is it designed for what I need it for, but is the data component of that information accurate to me? By accurate, I mean, is it trustworthy? Is it complete? If I am an oil and gas company, and I'm trying to do asset management on wellhead management, having data from an MRO system might be nice, but it's not really fit for use there. It's more fit for use, more accurate, coming from the asset management system.

I think that our knowledge workers today are really struggling with where is this data coming from? Can I trust this data? I have so much data to work with, what can I do? They're at a loss.

CI: Let's jump into, "What can they do with it?" Obviously, you've mentioned that some of the benefits are maximizing operational efficiencies, we want to make sure things are working the way they should be. Better decision



making is also huge. You mentioned reducing risk as well. How does SAP help in those environments? What are the technologies that you offer to help companies with their information management?

KP: SAP offers a complete set of information management technologies. All the way from architect, to integrate, to cleanse and monitor your data, to associate content, to manage your master data, as well as archive your data.

Bringing it from in a total solution integrated package, or an integrated solution, where we have the ability to go to our customers now and say, "Look. By having trusted information, from being able to create that information, design that information, architect that information into your business processes, all the way through your archiving of that data after it is no longer fit for use, I can ensure that the data that I'm using is trusted. I can increase my data quality. I know that when I say I have an order, I have an order. I'm not using an invoice for an order. I can say that my HR processes for hire to retire. I have accurate employee information, I know everything about their family, I know their education, I know their background, I know their training plans, because I'm relying on data that is trusted."

CI: You have the whole lifecycle of technologies to support that, as you said, from the inception of the data to the point when we archive it and say that it's no longer needed, or even delete it, it's really lived its full lifecycle.

Who, in the organization then, would be using these different... For example, corporations have programmers that do ETL processing. They have database administrators that have their certain functions. Many of them are now bringing in data stewards from the business side to help define the data and determine the quality of the data and so forth. Do you support each of those individual roles or is this more of just an IT play?

KP: This is definitely an IT and business play, as well as, depending on where you are in the business, an LOB type of solution along with architects.

For the enterprise architect we have PowerDesigner, which is an enterprise architecture tool. It allows them to model the data as it lines up with the



business process, as well as the metadata, and associate the source systems and the target systems, where that data needs to reside.

Additionally, for your ETL developers and people who are responsible for data quality in the IT organization, we have data services which is a platform for integration, takes data processing, data profiling, and data quality management.

For the business users, for your data stewards, we have a set of tools around information steward. Which is really designed for the business user, for the business need, and understanding of that information. Thus, data in context to the business process.

For the LOB users, as well, they can leverage information steward because they understand the information as it relates to the business process.

Then, obviously, we circle all the way back around to IT where you're doing more content management and managing the content. But, as well as the business, with content management and taking things like invoice, and integrating that invoice into a business process. Then, finally all the way back to IT and the business working together to determine what data is no longer fit for use or that we no longer need, in a very collaborative environment. We manage the entire lifecycle.

CI: Excellent. We've got about a minute, unfortunately, but it would be reckless to not mention HANA, since that's a big part of SAP's message these days. How does HANA support what you just talked about?

KP: Information management supports HANA is a way to think about it, and HANA supports information management.

CI: That's a good way to look at it.

KP: It's a duality. We have the ability to use our information management tools outside of HANA, to populate HANA, and govern and manage information outside of HANA. Our direction is to bring more of those information management services and software inside of HANA, and that's where we're going today. That's part of our future direction.



By bringing ETL to ELT into HANA, that allows us to take advantage of the HANA engine, and to be able...

CI: That certainly speeds up the process.

KP: ...to do things a lot faster. But not only a lot faster, but then loading the data, by helping analytics with real time analytics.

CI: All right, well, unfortunately, we're out of time. We could talk about this for hours, I'm sure. But that's it for this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust podcast. Again, I'm Claudia Imhoff. It's been a great pleasure to speak with both Mani Gill and Ken Pierce of SAP today. Thank you both.

MG: Thanks Claudia, it's been a pleasure.

KP: Thanks again.

CI: I hope you enjoyed today's podcast. You'll find more podcasts from other vendors at our web site. That's www.boulderbibraintrust.org. If you want to learn more about today's session, please search for our hash tag on Twitter. That's #BBBT. And please join me again for another interview. Good bye and good business!