

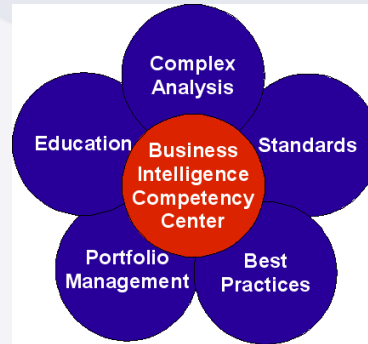
Selecting the members of a Business Intelligence Competency Center can be a challenge

Building a BICC

OVERVIEW

Many organizations struggle to make sense of the various Business Intelligence methodologies, strategies, and best practices. Between data integration, reporting, ad-hoc analysis, dashboards, data mining, etc., the list of potential solutions can be mind-numbing. As an organization matures with their incorporation of BI as a means to better decision making, it is often a challenge to balance short-term and long-term objectives.

Industry best practices recommend that a Business Intelligence Competency Center (BICC) form the foundation of an organization's BI strategy. The BICC should be tasked with



managing the solution portfolio, educating users on various offerings, providing standards to reduce costs and confusion across the enterprise, dispersing knowledge of best practices and lessons learned, and assisting power users with complex analysis.

With such a wide range of responsibilities, careful consideration must be paid to the implementation of a BICC. Who should be involved? What support is required? What does the BICC look like? How long will a BICC last? Who should lead the BICC?

THE FOUNDATION

From one organization to the next, it is expected that the Business Intelligence Competency Center will take on a very different form. In some cases, a centralized BICC will be best to provide consistency across the organization and to streamline processes from one department to the next. In other organizations, the BICC may be dispersed across the enterprise with a loose affiliation to reduce costs and improve business unit efficiencies. The form of one versus the other will require differing amounts of support and control. In either case, the BICC should operate under a consistent BI Framework in accordance to the strategic initiatives of the enterprise.

The Business Intelligence Competency Center should be viewed as a process rather than a project. The BICC is a continuously evolving business function that requires executive sponsorship along with a close interdependency to the daily operations of each business unit. Along with the relationship to the business, it is paramount that the BICC form a trusting relationship with IT. This cross-

functional team needs to blend strategic business operations with the ever increasing demands on technologies in order to ensure an optimal implementation. Leveraging this mutual trust, the BICC should be empowered to make the necessary recommendations and decisions to provide the technologies and solutions to efficiently support the various needs spanning an organization. Whether the BICC is real or virtual in structure, it is critical that the team possess the necessary skills to maximize its abilities. A combination of business, technical, and analytical skills are important to ensure that the team is equipped to help the organization:

- Map business strategies to operational initiatives
- Engineer efficient business processes
- Monitor results for continuous improvements
- Create standard data stewardship practices to maximize information consumption
- Provide expertise in the areas of data transformation/integration, complex analytics, information delivery, and education
- Manage vendor relationships

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Selecting the members of the Business Intelligence Competency Center can be a challenge. You will want to have the right balance of skills (business, analytical, and technical) to provide the right support to the business while managing a sound relationship with IT that works hand-in-hand with the Executive Team to align strategic initiatives.

It is not uncommon that the same employees that provide the backbone to each department is the very person that should join the BICC. If the BICC is the framework of how to implement BI across the enterprise, the inclusion of such resources will compliment rather than detract from the effectiveness of its members. The ideal BICC will be made up of a combination of power users, IT personnel looking to get into the business, information evangelists to promote the available possibilities, and customer facing analysts to improve client relationships. Potentially, it may even be appropriate to seek the inclusion of outside experts that can assist with the one or more of these functions.

Together, the Business Intelligence Competency Center should have the responsibility to ensure the depth and breadth of the solutions, deliver ongoing value through continuous improvement initiatives, and maintain a clear vision with identified and monitored performance metrics. The BICC should be a voice promoting strategic

ABOUT STRATEGIS

Founded in 2006, Strategis Consulting is a boutique technology consulting firm specializing in building strategic information solutions. Our range of services include advanced analytics, business process management, data warehousing, portals, reporting, workflows, mobile apps, integration, custom solutions, and training.