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Integration:
Secrets for a Successful BI Solution

OVERVIEW

Enterprise computing, with its mélange of applications, tools and systems, has created silos of content and data across the organization. Today's CIO is challenged to integrate these distinct technologies to serve critical business imperatives. Ventana Research advises IT organizations to address this challenge directly by building programs and processes for managing integration across the enterprise.

VIEW

To meet the challenge of integrating their existing enterprise software portfolios, organizations will need new strategies and programs. Successfully creating them can help to reduce costs and deploy content and data to address tangible business needs. Yet our research and client surveys have revealed a lack of understanding about how to choose and deploy integration technology.

Included in this area of information technology are tools to address applications, data, events, information, messages and processes. However, many executives have educational gaps in understanding the appropriate frequency and types of integration interchange. This exchange can occur in real time through applications or events, in batches for data integration or on demand through information integration. For example, you may need to establish interoperation between ERP and CRM applications and with enterprise databases on a nightly basis. This could be done through application and data integration, but for an environment that moves high volumes of data, it would be accomplished best through data integration.

Various approaches to adopting integration technologies have developed, but these are only beginning to be rationalized and simplified as vendors consolidate and develop new technology. Each of the four major providers of integration technologies takes a different strategic approach. IBM intends to deliver a full integration suite with application, message-event, data and information technologies. Tibco Software focuses on event and process integration with applications. Informatica Corp. will support all forms of data integration, including consolidation, migration, replication and synchronization. Composite Software targets information integration to meet on-demand requests for information from end users. These varying focuses have implications that organizations must consider in deciding what type of integration they need.

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ASSESSMENT

Integration technologies deliver value by helping enterprises apply their existing IT investments to ongoing business needs. In order for an organization to identify the most appropriate integration technologies, it needs a program and a set of internal processes that can be applied in a repeatable process across the IT organization. To begin down the path toward a complete integration architecture, Ventana Research recommends developing a strategic planning process to ensure that your integration technology will deliver business benefits. This process should begin in the executive suite and be designed to deliver quality and provide repeatability.

ABOUT VENTANA RESEARCH

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