

ACCESS APPLICATION
INFORMATION -
IMPROVE BI CAPABILITY

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INTRODUCTION

InRule Process Automation offers a business intelligence capability that enables organizations to export data from the platform for reporting purposes.

This white paper introduces the key concepts and benefits of using business intelligence in process analysis. It offers a method for developing and continuously improving the reports, and how organizations can leverage InRule's expertise in the area. The article gives two examples of successful BI implementations, which illustrates the need and advantages of intelligent reports.

WHAT IS BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE?

Business intelligence (BI) is the concept of collecting and analyzing data to drive informed decision-making within an organization.

Business intelligence requires processes to gather, ameliorate and store data, which can be exported to a reporting tool. In the reporting tool, graphs and charts can be created to portray the information in a meaningful way. This can be used to support strategic and operational decision-making.

KEY CONCEPTS

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING BI enables organizations to make informed decisions based on data rather than relying on intuition or gut feelings. Structured data is key – techniques must be applied to gather information, for example through orchestrated processes. The data must be replicable, and there must be enough data to support decision-making.

With structured data, BI provides insights that help organizations make better decisions. This might be through a better understanding of their customers, markets or operations.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE BI allows organizations to understand inefficiencies and bottlenecks. It can pinpoint areas of improvement. Through understanding reports related to processes, organizations can identify areas where they can optimize their operations, reduce costs, and improve productivity.

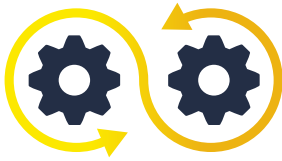
BI supports process orchestration as much as processes support BI – they live in symbiosis. The better the reports, the more input to process improvements, and the better the process, the more succinct the reports. In this way, business intelligence becomes an instrument for process improvements, assisting organizations in achieving operational excellence.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE BI provides organizations with a competitive edge by enabling them to gain insights into underlying reasons for bottlenecks and supply chain issues. This information helps organizations identify opportunities for improvements, and to make proactive changes. For example, by building reports focused on customer behaviors, organizations may gain a deeper understanding by analyzing data on customer preferences and feedback. This offers opportunities to tailor products and services. Organizations that better meet customer needs are helped in improving customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING Identifying and delivering on KPIs or SMART goals requires two sets of data – a baseline to align the KPI or understand the goal, and instrumental data to compare the KPI/goal against. The baseline is gathered before the KPI is set, whereas the instrumental data is gathered after the KPI is set.

One problem faced by many organizations however is that the baseline data does not exist. How is it possible to mine processes ahead of strategic planning and performance monitoring? Process reporting does just this – it enables organizations to structure data that already exists. A common approach is to ask the 10 most salient questions about an identified process, and based on the questions, create a BI report to showcase the answers.

WHAT IS END-TO-END REPORTING?



End-to-end reporting is the practice of gathering, analyzing, and presenting data throughout the lifecycle of a reporting or analytics initiative. It includes the steps involved in collecting data, generating meaningful insights, and the presentation of the findings to relevant stakeholders. However, it does not stop there. End-to-end reporting also takes into account setting up continuous reporting, or “report refresh”. Stakeholders rely on the reports, so the data needs to be kept up to date. This is critical for data-driven decision-making.

In addition to report refresh, end-to-end reporting also deals with improving BI reports over time. As the most salient questions are answered, new important questions appear, and the reports need to meet the demands of added stakeholders. End-to-end reporting is not completed with a set of deliverables but instead lives and evolves over time.

Typically, end-to-end reporting follows these stages:

1. Build processes to design and collect baseline data. By orchestrating processes, the data needs minimal preparation as it is already structured.
2. Export the data to a reporting tool. This may be PowerBI, Tableau, Sisense or even Excel.
3. Data analysis: After baseline data is prepared, it is used to answer the most salient questions. Data is visualized through dashboards, charts and graphs, and may include elements of AI or interpretation to draw attention to the most important points.
4. Visualizations may be tailored to suit different stakeholders, such as executives, managers, or operational teams, and may include KPIs or support of SMART goals. Different audiences will ask different questions, and dashboards start to diverge through categorization and improvement suggestions.
5. In most cases, the analysis loops back to step one, where more data is designed and collected to answer follow-up questions from the organization. The data is no longer baseline, having instead evolved to being instrumental. KPI's are measured against the data, and real insights are starting to surface.

End-to-end reporting provides a complete and seamless process for gathering, analyzing, and presenting data. It enables organizations to make data-driven decisions, whilst at the same time optimizing processes and monitoring performance. It also helps the organization to better communicate improvements.

HOW CAN INRULE'S BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE HELP DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS?

Two customer use cases help illustrate how BI can help organizations drive improvements

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Scandinavian Retailer Uses Business Intelligence to Reclaim Millions in Lost Returns and Refunds

Before starting their journey with InRule Process Automation, a retailer with several stores across Scandinavia would simply refund customers and dispose of faulty goods. There were no processes surrounding tracking returns and refunds, and therefore no data existed. But the organization was not oblivious to the cost of returns and refunds. The organization was painfully aware. There was just no data to back up what everyone already knew – that faulty goods cost the organizations millions every year.

BUILDING THE PROCESS

With the help of InRule Process Automation, the retailer was able to build a process for handling customer returns and refunds. The retailer approached the project iteratively.

The baseline data collected focused on goods that needed to be disposed of and the correlated supplier. The retailer was interested in understanding why goods were disposed of rather than repaired and resold, and wanted to know if any suppliers that stood out.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

With structured data, building dashboards was a trivial exercise. BI reports proved what everyone already knew but couldn't prove – faulty goods had a significant impact on profitability and efficiency, costing the retailer around SEK 200 million per year.

The outcomes of the reports clearly showed that the majority of refunds were due to goods that had expired best before dates. Customers would purchase goods in-store, arrive home and realize that the goods' best-before date had already passed, and go back to the store for a refund.

The first decision made by the retailer was to go back to the suppliers and demand that contracts were renegotiated. The retailer insisted that the suppliers discount items with short best-before dates to compensate for the cost of returns. A structure was implemented where the retailer would get a monthly rebate from suppliers based on the number of returned goods. This increased profitability immediately.

The second decision made by the retailer was to introduce customer satisfaction measures. Customers had previously needed to return the goods to the store to get their rebate. The retailer introduced an online process for requesting a refund, saving the customer a second journey to the store.

Finally, the retailer could now make informed decisions about KPIs and SMART goals. Improvements were made to collect more data. Previously, faulty electrical goods had also been discarded, but now the retailer could implement a process for repairing the goods. This uncovered information about hiring needs. Since electrical goods were more popular in the summer, there was a surge in the need for repair workers during that season. Strategic planning came into play as the retailer had the idea of recruiting engineering students during the summer to deal with the surge in repairs, which was more cost-effective than hiring year-round engineers.

In summary, end-to-end reporting enabled the retailer to both remedy immediate issues, as well as uncovering profit pools that were previously unknown.

Understanding Bias in Hiring Decisions Wins Manufacturer Equality Award

A global manufacturing company was managing the hiring process manually. Each contract was handwritten and sent out via post, and recruitment could take up to 90 days to complete. The manufacturer suspected that besides losing talent, there were a lot of human errors in the process, for example, incorrect employment terms or salary amounts.

Using InRule Process Automation, the manufacturer orchestrated a case management system to cut down lead times and standardize processes. This also gave HR an opportunity to initiate a data collection project, as they worried that some hiring decisions were biased based on gender and ethnicity.

GATHERING AND AMELIORATING DATA

The HR department looked at information gathered at different points in the established process and added vital statistical data at appropriate times in the process flow. Questions were directed both to the new employee, as well as hiring managers, to uncover correlations between hiring practices and racial and gender bias.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MONITORING

Over time, patterns occurred that enabled HR to evaluate how and where they sourced talent. This enabled the manufacturer to implement small but significant changes in the sourcing of talent. Some of the changes included:

- Implementing a code of conduct with clear hiring policies. The code of conduct was signed by every hiring manager and employee
- A method was developed and deployed for including inclusive language in each job listing to encourage a wide range of applicants
- A new strategy was implemented for posting job listings, targeting a larger audience

With their previous baseline data, together with the instrumental data over time, HR had evidence that hiring bias was reduced. The real reward, however, came as a surprise – the HR director won an equality award for the new strategy.

CONCLUSION

Business intelligence can drive improvements in many ways. This white paper gives examples of some of the key concepts and two use cases for incorporating business intelligence in process automation.

BI offers organizations access to relevant data, which can be used to support data-driven decision-making. By using data related to customers, trends, or operational performance, organizations are helped to identify areas where they can improve operational excellence. By optimizing operations, organizations can improve workflows, reduce costs, or better understand the environment in which they operate. An end-to-end approach enables organizations to be better equipped to make informed decisions about business strategies and operations. Using baseline and instrumental data, organizations can track progress toward goals and identify KPIs, leading to improved outcomes.

It is proven that BI facilitates communication and collaboration within an organization. Insights that can be shared across departments and teams help validate information that is often known, but hard to confirm. This helps break down silos, align efforts towards common goals and drive improvements across the organization.

To see first-hand how InRule Process Automation pairs perfectly with Business Intelligence, request a demo [here](#). We'll be happy to show you the many benefits of InRule.

InRule's customers include many of the largest lenders in the world. In fact, more than half of the loans processed by the top eight originators in the U.S. and more than one-third of the mortgages processed by the top five lenders in the U.K. are powered by the InRule Decision Platform. We offer end-to-end guidance and technology to solve lending problems. We'd love to connect with you. Contact us at info@inrule.com to learn more.



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