

INSIGHT

Microsoft Dynamics AX

Empower Your People with Self-Service Business Intelligence

White Paper

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Introduction

In any business or organization, access to information can be critical to meeting personal goals, accomplishing team objectives, and achieving overall business success. Yet across the organizational spectrum, from the individual worker to executives steering overall strategy, people today often feel engulfed by information—too much of it, stored in too many places, with no efficient process for pulling it together, extracting what’s needed, and making sense of the results. Empowering people to quickly find and understand the data they need is the role of business intelligence (BI) and performance management solutions.

This white paper reviews current trends and challenges and explores the advantages of an appropriate and effective BI solution in an ERP environment. It also discusses how Microsoft Dynamics® AX, along with other Microsoft technologies and integrated programs—such as Microsoft® Office PerformancePoint™ Server and Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server—can help organizations harness the potential of information, use it to empower everyone in the organization and supply chain, and turn the resulting insight into competitive advantage.

Business Intelligence Challenges and Trends

There’s little question that a functioning business intelligence system can help your people understand performance, identify trends, and make strategic decisions to drive the organization forward. The reality, however, has often failed to live up to the potential for many reasons, including:

- **Unfriendly interfaces.** Many BI solutions are unintuitive and difficult to navigate. The average worker frequently does not have the skills—or the time—to find, extract, and analyze information without assistance. That means many systems require time-consuming intervention by constrained IT resources. In many cases, employees simply make decisions without the critical information they need because it’s locked up in an unfriendly analytics system and therefore difficult to access.
- **Disconnected information.** Critical information is often isolated in disparate spreadsheets, account records, or piecemeal systems that are incongruous with regular management, planning, and transactional activities, so extracted information may be incomplete and difficult to correlate. It can also be challenging to consolidate information from multiple sources, locations, or corporate entities quickly and confidently. The larger and more dispersed an organization and its information, the more analytics support it generally needs.
- **Complexity.** Often, BI solutions provide only canned reports that contain the least useful type of analytics data. However, more sophisticated BI tools are often too complicated for anyone but specialists to use or maintain, so only pockets of the organization can use them.
- **Inflexible information delivery.** The limitations of rigid systems range from strategic concerns—such as inadequate alignment of business rules or metrics with corporate goals—to practical problems such as the inability to readily share intelligence beyond a few individuals or groups. Because BI systems often have limited interfaces shared with other desktop productivity tools, it can be difficult to share or work collaboratively on data with others. This is true within the organization and throughout the entire supply chain as organizations increasingly involve trade partners in key decisions that affect the whole network.
- **Cost and scalability.** Because many organizations feel forced to build custom BI solutions, cost becomes a significant issue, as does solution scalability and adaptability over time as the organization grows and its technologies evolve.

Personal BI, Team BI, and Organizational BI

Organizations need solutions that improve business decision-making and performance management by providing a comprehensive, real-time view of business information, powerful data analysis capabilities, and broad accessibility. Specifically, most organizations seek to satisfy three distinct types of informational needs along the BI continuum, including:

- Personal BI, which individuals use solely to accomplish tasks, enhance productivity, and make decisions specific to their particular roles. Personal BI can range from a Microsoft Office Outlook® task list to production reports, a Microsoft Office Excel® spreadsheet, or a multi-dimensional relational matrix. Within an ERP environment, personal BI emphasizes access to operational information not only from the area of individual responsibility, but from across the enterprise.
- Team BI, which individuals use to work together toward common, predominantly tactical goals that align with overall organizational objectives, which may require information that is broader than personal BI and can be accessed and analyzed collaboratively.
- Organizational BI, on which executives can base strategic decisions, the coordination of teams and individuals, and overall performance management. Organizational BI is more likely to roll up data across sources and require the involvement of IT specialists.

To truly satisfy the needs of a competitive organization, a BI solution must address the components of personal BI, team BI, and organizational BI.

How the Right BI Solution Can Help

There's plenty of incentive for overcoming today's business information challenges. Although it can be difficult to put financial values on faster, smarter decisions, the ability to make them is still widely recognized as critical to success in the highly competitive global marketplace. Moreover, it's not hard to identify organizational dissatisfaction with the relevance, availability, and accuracy of the information people currently *do* have at their disposal.

Fortunately, new solutions are emerging to help solve these problems. Today, the right BI solution can:

- Provide self-service convenience for the average user, with immediate, out-of-the-box analysis capabilities, while still helping to maintain a secure environment and offer the depth and power necessary for sophisticated analysis.
- Improve business agility with a range of flexible options for generating, viewing, analyzing, and distributing BI.
- Integrate and connect disparate legacy systems and business applications, information sources, departments, and locations to provide comprehensive, one-stop BI for the entire organization that's optimized for the capabilities of the ERP system.
- Expand in reach and capabilities as the organization grows and its BI demand increases. Ideally, this growth can take place as an integral component of a scalable enterprise-wide solution that also adapts and extends readily as needed.
- Offer a quick return on investment through initial cost efficiency, long-term scalability, and a low total cost of ownership.

The following steps provide a guideline for incorporating BI into your organization. By following these steps, you can identify key business considerations prior to deploying a new BI solution.

Step 1: Replace complex user interfaces with intuitive, convenient self-service

Ease of access is a primary consideration. An inquiry, analysis, or reporting solution that is too complicated may be powerful but sit mostly unused. On the other hand, a solution that's too simple may not be robust enough to serve the business decision-makers who need it most. But when the BI solution is easy to use right out of the box and users can access information via familiar interfaces, applications, and tools, everyone in the organization can achieve greater insight without relying on costly IT resources to generate reports or run time-consuming analyses. The ideal solution works the way your people want to work.

A self-service-focused user interface also minimizes training costs and startup times and enables team members to work with information in a collaborative environment. At the same time, managers can control information access based on functional roles or individual authorization to help protect sensitive information and prevent inappropriate or unintended modifications.

Step 2: Expand options for analysis, transportability, and dissemination

To turn information into actionable business intelligence, people must be able to extract and analyze the specific information they need, in the order they need it, and with the detail that addresses their interests. Tailored functionality is critical, both for customizing the solution to industry and organizational needs and for adapting operationally to the interests of diverse functional roles. Finally, the right solution can make it easier to share, present, and distribute the results of analysis, not only within the organization but also with trade partners. Therefore, solutions that incorporate Web services, portal compatibility, or other measures to ease communication across platforms provide a definite advantage.

Step 3: Integrate disconnected information and systems into the knowledge base

A strong BI system must be able to incorporate information from across the enterprise while also connecting with line-of-business applications, including document repositories, and the desktop productivity tools employees use every day. The ability to access and consolidate information from multiple production management and manufacturing control systems, warehouses, distribution channels, and companies or subsidiaries is also valuable for providing managers with comprehensive, enterprise-wide insight.

Step 4: Scale to fit changing business models and needs

A BI system is only good while it fits. Given the rate of change in today's business environment, it's imperative to find and implement a solution flexible enough to adapt to business growth, whether that growth comes through acquisitions, vertical integration, international expansion, or shifts into entirely new lines of business. To continue supporting personal, team, and organizational BI needs, solutions must be extensible to new users and locations as the company grows. Such scalable solutions, when they also accommodate add-on or tailored functionality, offer strong cost efficiency, consistency, service, and fit over time.

Step 5: Deploy cost-efficiently and with long-term adaptability for a low TCO

For a business solution to be implemented at all, it must be cost-efficient to license, deploy, and maintain, while remaining accessible across the organization. Ideal solutions give all people responsible for strategic, tactical, and operational decisions access to the information they need at a low total cost of ownership (TCO). An effective BI solution can quickly provide a strong return on investment while retaining the

flexibility and scalability for future growth to provide long-term performance that maximizes your investment.

Solve BI Challenges with Microsoft Dynamics AX

Microsoft Dynamics AX is an end-to-end business management solution for enterprise and mid-market organizations, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, service organizations, and firms with diverse or vertically integrated operations across the global supply chain. An ERP system with an intuitive user interface, robust analytics, and flexible, familiar information delivery capabilities, Microsoft Dynamics AX serves a wide range of business intelligence needs right out of the box. And because it builds on the Microsoft technology stack, including Microsoft SQL Server® and SharePoint technologies, and is tightly integrated with Microsoft Office and other Microsoft desktop productivity solutions, it is uniquely positioned to help you solve today's most pressing BI and performance management challenges.

Microsoft Dynamics AX can help everyone in an organization access, understand, and use the individual, team, and company information that affects business performance. Microsoft Dynamics AX can help organizations solve critical BI problems by:

- Streamlining BI access and use for individual workers by delivering self-service information through personalized Role Centers and familiar analysis, reporting, and presentation tools. Instead of providing only transactions and input, Microsoft Dynamics AX is designed to make it easy for users to collect the critical information they need.
- Expanding options for BI delivery—including customized key performance indicators (KPIs) and scorecards—to individuals, managers, and collaborative teams.
- Connecting diverse information sources and familiar productivity tools, including Microsoft Office.
- Enabling solution expansion and scalability with more sophisticated performance management solutions and management dashboards.
- Providing a flexible, long-term BI solution with a low total cost of ownership.

"I love the way that BI and reporting are becoming an even more integrated part of the ERP solution. Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 makes BI easier for end users, and I think that we will start to see adoption of BI capabilities in phase one of implementations as opposed to later on in the process."

– Claus Andersen, Columbus IT

Three-Tiered Structure: Integration, Analysis, Delivery

Microsoft Dynamics AX meets the spectrum of BI needs by delivering a flexible and adaptable business management solution with integrated analysis, communication, and collaboration capabilities that don't require costly add-ins or a separate analytics program. The three-tiered solution is built on a proven infrastructure with Microsoft SQL Server and its affiliated services, including:

- SQL Server Reporting Services, which supports robust inquiry, reporting, and correlation.
- SQL Server Analysis Services, which enables sophisticated analysis of inquiry results.

Together, these provide a platform and the data foundation for both ERP functionality and business intelligence. The solution can bring together data from across your organization, including corporate ERP

systems, familiar office productivity tools such as Microsoft Office, and even Web services information originating with supply chain partners. It also enables you to incorporate information from diverse operations, locations, sister companies, or subsidiaries.

Two tiers in the structure provide power and flexibility in BI access, analysis, and dissemination. Specifically, the second tier—tools and applications—enables your people to export information to familiar productivity tools, such as Excel, for manipulation. This tier also provides direct access to business intelligence through the lists, reports, and other analytics available directly through the solution’s transactional and informational tasks and views.

Finally, the delivery and dissemination tier offers a wide range of additional options for presenting, sharing, and collaborating on business insight. Many of those options optimize the capabilities of SharePoint technologies. This integrated, three-tiered approach can help organizations solve the most common BI challenges—whether for personal insight, team intelligence, or organizational analytics.

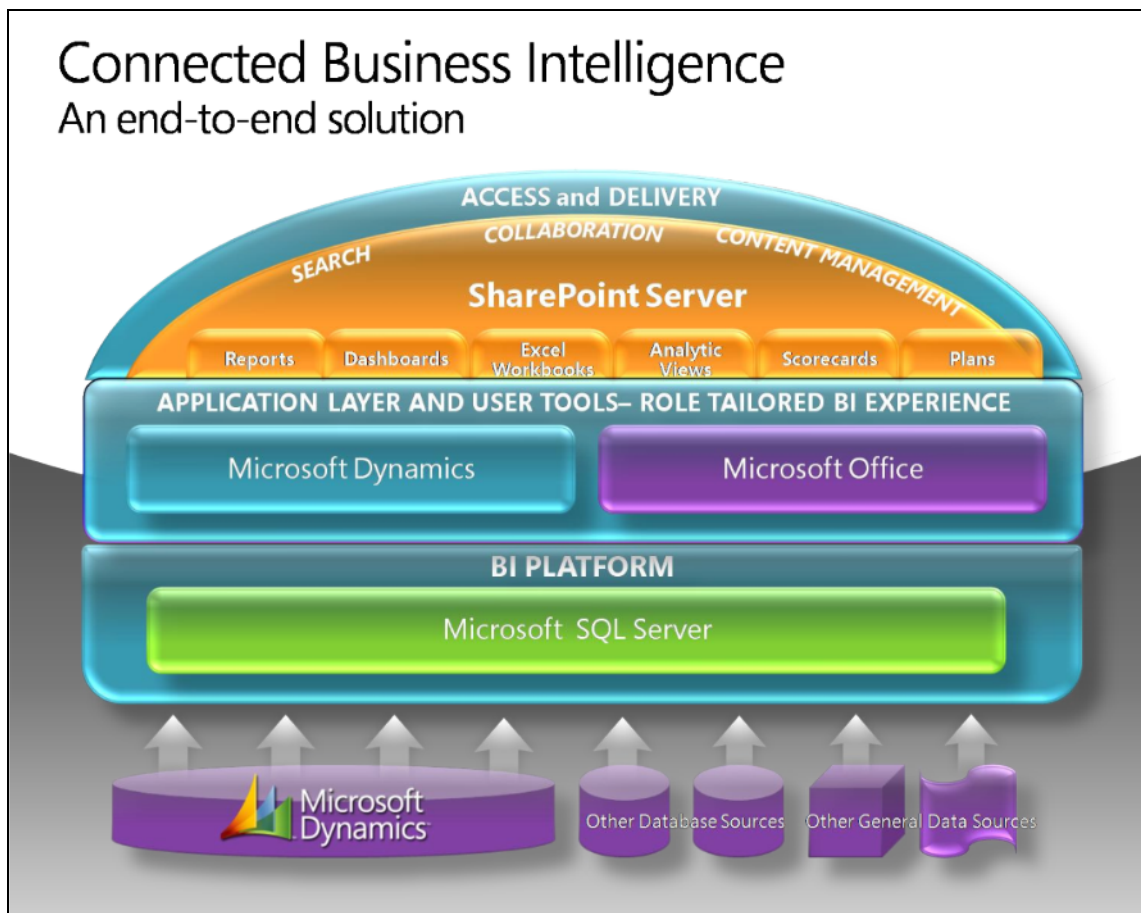


Figure 1. Microsoft Dynamics AX uses this three-tiered structure to deliver personal, team, and organizational business intelligence.

Personal BI: Empower More People with Self-Service Access and Analytics

With quick access to the information most relevant to their jobs, employees at all levels of the organization can gain greater business insight and make fast, confident decisions.

Simplify Information Access with Role Centers

One factor that sometimes hinders self-service BI is the sheer volume of information, inquiry criteria, or reports available. In Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009, Role Centers provide quick access to information, tasks, and reporting based on the individual's role. Role Centers streamline access to key business intelligence information, such as the KPIs, scorecards, and reports employees use most often, without requiring them to wade through extraneous information. As business requirements change, users can personalize their Role Centers to include only the information they need and want.

Extend Insight with Familiar Tools That Work the Way You Do

Microsoft Dynamics AX provides an easy-to-use interface that reduces training time and helps users get started quickly. Powerful business intelligence capabilities are extended with one or more of these familiar Microsoft programs and tools:

- The 2007 Microsoft Office system, which helps to extend BI to a broader audience without complicated tools. The solution's BI integration includes Microsoft Office Excel for individual information analysis and productivity.
- Microsoft MapPoint®, an integrated solution for people who need to analyze and communicate business intelligence using geospatial information, maps, and easy-to-use mapping tools, and then integrate the results with Microsoft Office system programs.
- Microsoft Visual Studio® and Microsoft Business Intelligence Development Studio, providing a range of tools for IT teams and developers working to customize analytics and collaboration functionality.

Integration with the Microsoft Office system empowers your people to answer questions and share the results from within the familiar Microsoft Office environment. For example, with the rich and familiar functionality of Excel, people can quickly create PivotTable® views, develop charts or graphs for analysis and presentation, or conduct data mining. Because relevant business intelligence can permeate everyday tasks and tools, it can be put to work faster and is more likely to influence not just one-time decisions but the work and choices that drive your business forward.

"The out-of-the-box Role Centers in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 add value from day one for all employees in our organization. Our users see enormous value with the visuals, the ability to easily design Cues, and the year-to-year comparison."

– John Elmer, Rodgers and Hammerstein

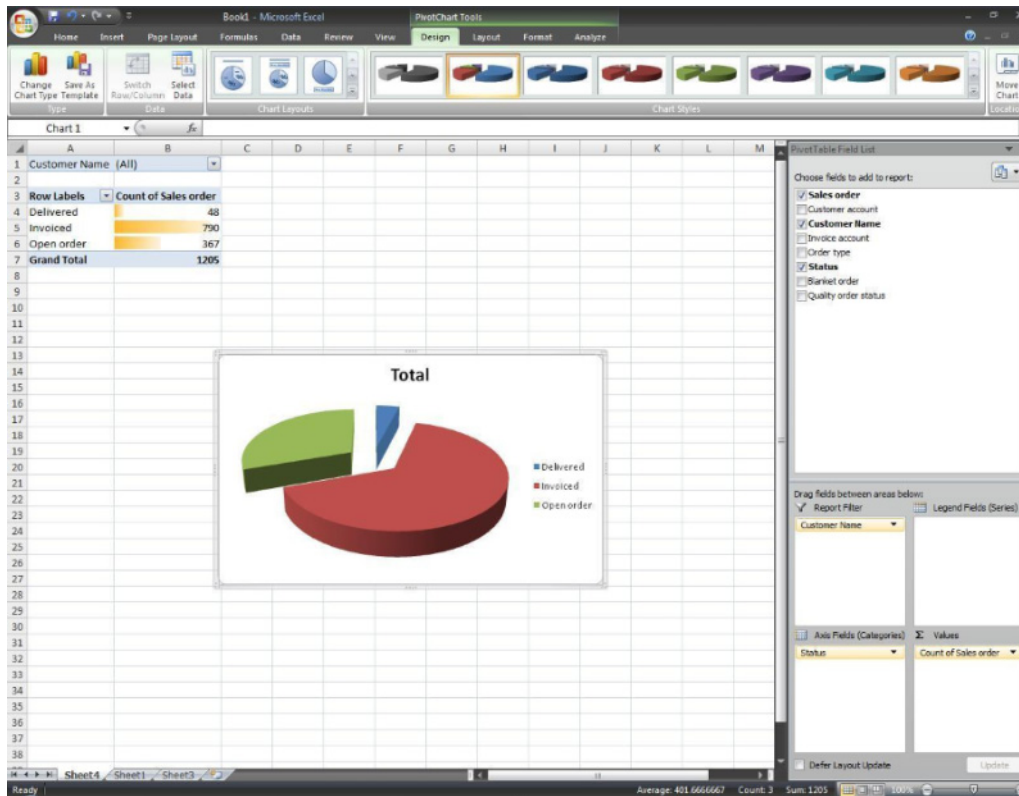


Figure 2. Quickly export sales orders to Excel and create a PivotTable view.

Provide Personalized Analytics

For many organizations, it can be difficult to turn raw data into insight by filtering, correlating, and identifying the specific trends and causes for a given decision. Often the data was assembled for some other purpose, or it might relate two dimensions of information without consideration of a third dimension that could significantly affect the current business decision.

Microsoft Dynamics AX addresses this challenge with personalized, out-of-the-box BI tools, including:

- Flexible ad-hoc reporting and the cubes upon which those reports are based, so your people can quickly produce customized information.
- Rich visualization features for navigating data, creating aggregate or detailed views of business metrics, and then focusing precisely on needed information by grouping, sorting, and filtering data and drilling down to the details that matter.
- Predefined reports that are quickly generated, visually rich, and interactive to enable further focus and customization. For example, out-of-the-box SQL Server Reporting Services reports can be exported to Excel for analysis.
- Shared report folders with secure access limited by role, to keep report generation efficient and prevent unauthorized access or modification of shared reports.
- Role-based views such as list pages with options for exporting information directly to Excel, so data analysis and presentation requires little training and no need for IT support.
- Personal report folders that save time revisiting information by storing the published ad-hoc reports created and used most often by each individual.

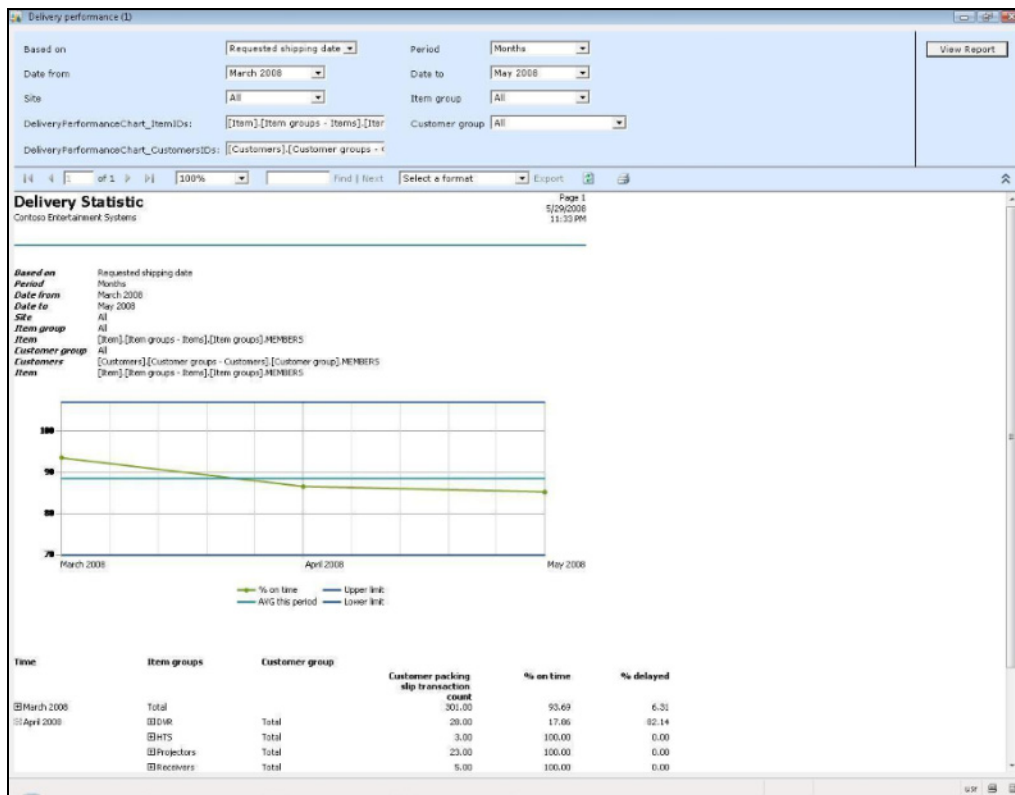


Figure 3. Drill down into report details with a SQL Server Reporting Services report.

The solution's integration with Microsoft technology and tools helps ensure smooth, contextual navigation paths to the information people need most. With SQL Server Reporting Services, analysis views can be displayed in Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 as an interactive and familiar PivotTable chart, making it easier for most people to compare information, choose different dimensions with drag-and-drop selection for metrics and parameters, and quickly analyze the results.

Increase Flexibility with Ad-Hoc Reporting and Built-in OLAP Cubes

With sophisticated, multi-dimensional analytical tools, people can work with business information in the way that is most meaningful to them. Ad-hoc reporting empowers everyone in the organization to locate and work with the information they need by using the criteria, relationships, and presentation they want. Ad-hoc reports created from Microsoft Dynamics AX business information, and accessed directly through the solution, can also be easily modified with SQL Server Reporting Services and SQL Server Report Builder.

OLAP cubes supported by SQL Server Analysis Services serve as the information source for analytical views, so your people can access, make inquiries on, and manipulate the information in these cubes by using familiar tools such as Excel and Microsoft ProClarity® Desktop Professional. Predefined OLAP cubes automatically extract information from key business areas and then transfer it using SQL Server Analysis Services. These results can be displayed as Excel spreadsheets and PivotTable views.

Because a variety of OLAP cubes featuring the most common dimensions and measures are included out of the box, your organization can save the time and money typically required to create them. You can also streamline the development of additional cubes by using the intuitive cube and dimension design tools of Microsoft SQL Server. Close integration between Microsoft Dynamics AX, SQL Server, and SQL Server Analysis Services offers sophisticated analysis opportunities with minimal development and training time.

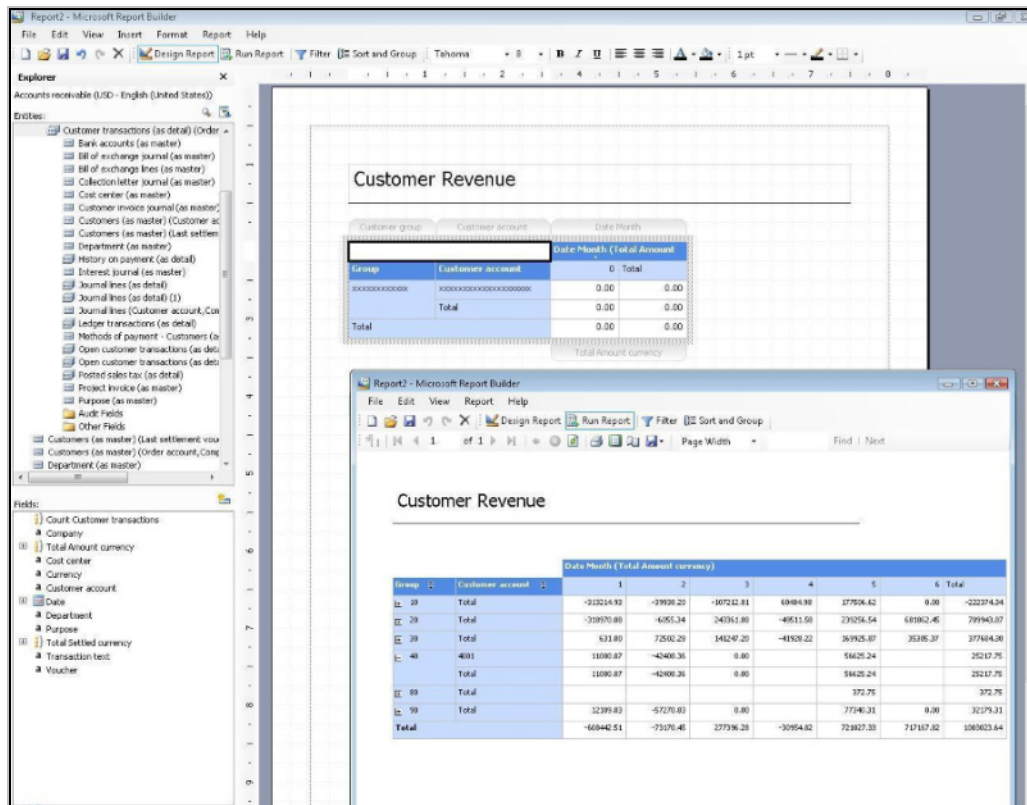


Figure 4. Create ad-hoc reports based on current business needs.

Team BI: Gain Flexibility for Information Sharing, Analysis, and Collaboration

Few things are more frustrating than spending hours analyzing complex business information and then being unable to isolate the pertinent factors in a visual format or easily share your analysis with others. Together with SharePoint technologies and other Microsoft Office programs, Microsoft Dynamics AX empowers your people with more options for sharing performance data, collaboration tools, shared resource repositories, and team workspaces.

Share Analytics Data in Graphic or Document Form

Easily present summaries or research results to others by using Microsoft Office system programs. From the graphics presentation capabilities of Microsoft Office Excel to the collaborative opportunities in sharing Microsoft Office Word documents and other information on a SharePoint team site, the solution works with the tools your people already know to make the dissemination of actionable BI accessible throughout the organization.

Streamline Access to Performance Results

Often the majority of BI efforts are expended by multiple people repeatedly addressing the same information needs. Save time and increase efficiency by using hundreds of predefined, out-of-the-box reports in Microsoft Dynamics AX to generate and deliver the business performance metrics that are most in demand. These reports, accessible directly through personal Role Centers as well as through menus and action buttons on forms, enable quick reference to data such as sales margins, inventory receipts, and accounts receivable.

You can tailor predefined reports by selecting from a variety of parameters and viewing options, or browse and view previously published reports. In addition, developers and Microsoft partners can use a range of powerful reporting tools built on Visual Studio to customize existing production reports or design new reports based on business needs. With reports built on SQL Server Reporting Services, you can access rich reporting capabilities and tools for automatic scheduling, caching, and taking data snapshots.

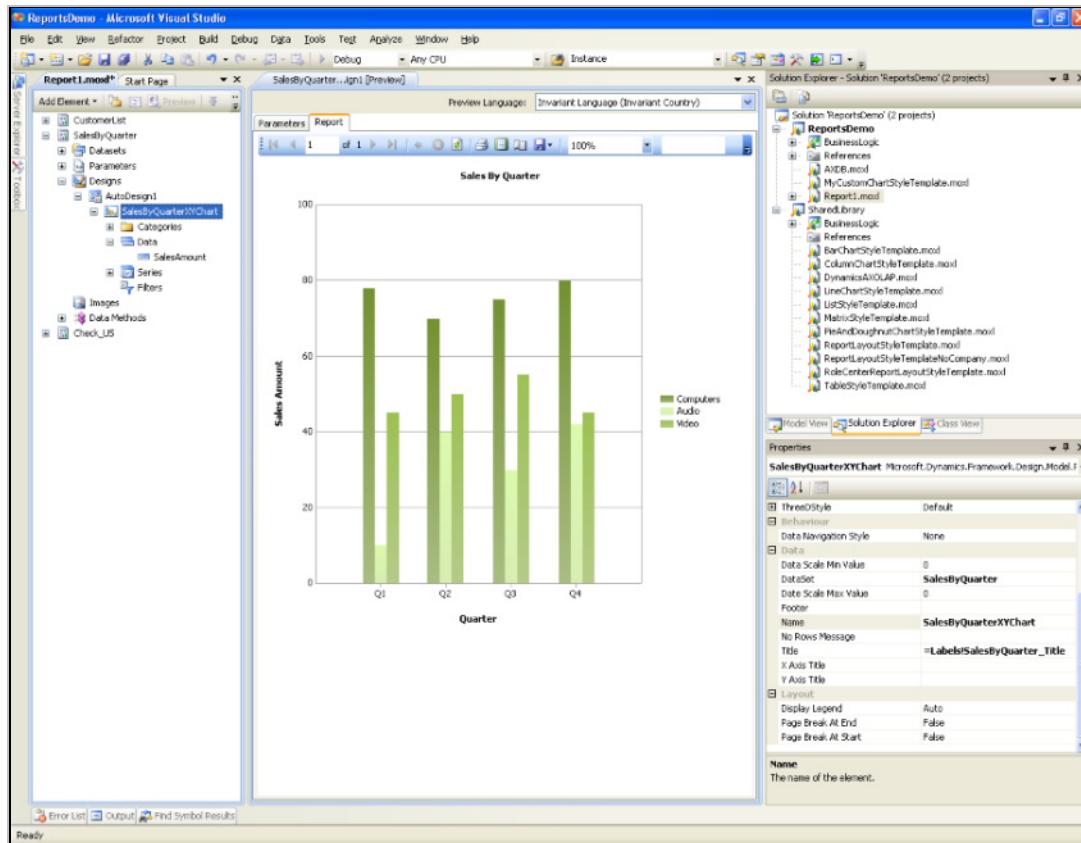


Figure 5. Easily create or edit a SQL Server Reporting Services report in Visual Studio.

Extend Reporting Capabilities and Delivery

Remote employees, trade partners, and others who may not frequently access your business management solution often need access to the BI tools. Microsoft Dynamics AX extends information wherever it's needed, no matter where your people work. Virtually any report can be posted and viewed in the solution, through Enterprise Portal in Microsoft Dynamics AX, attached to e-mail messages in Microsoft Office

Outlook. In addition, SQL Server Reporting Services reports can be easily exported to Excel. Role-based authorization helps keep sensitive information secure while ensuring that the right people can access it.

Dozens of additional reports can be created through SQL Server Reporting Services and accessed either through Microsoft Dynamics AX or outside the solution through a SharePoint team site.

Organizational BI: Increase Connectivity for Comprehensive, Actionable Insight

Measuring organizational success and the various contributions of separate departments, teams, and individuals can pose challenges of both scale and complexity. Microsoft Dynamics AX can help by delivering the centralized metrics, multi-dimensional analyses, and trend information needed to understand performance, plan strategy, make decisions, and coordinate the simultaneous and synergistic efforts that drive business growth.

In particular, many organizations struggle with rolling up business information from multiple manufacturing lines, warehouses, and various distribution, retail, or service operations. Even greater consolidation challenges arise for organizations with subsidiaries, recent acquisitions, or complex corporate structures.

With Microsoft Dynamics AX, you can reduce the complexity of consolidating or comparing disconnected information that is held in such organizational or technological silos. With access to comprehensive, real-time business intelligence data from a single database, combined with out-of-the-box BI tools, you can view, analyze, and modify data quickly.

Perform Multi-dimensional Analysis at Summary and Detail Levels

The built-in ad-hoc reporting, OLAP cubes, and other analytical capabilities described in the previous section on personal analytics also serve an array of organizational BI needs. Managers can leverage these analytics to aggregate and analyze performance metrics across core business dimensions to gain deeper insight into trends and business drivers, and to help make confident strategic decisions. With PivotTable views and the convenience of drag-and-drop metrics and dimension attributes, managers can also analyze multi-dimensional relationships and drill down to unit-, department-, and transaction-level details by using Excel.

Align Efforts to Goals with KPIs, Scorecards, and Performance Dashboards

Streamline communication of performance trends or trouble spots by using scorecards and performance dashboards. Microsoft Dynamics AX offers a wide range of tools for creating, automating, and sharing key performance indicators and scorecards, including dozens of predefined KPIs plus role-based KPI configuration and display. Drill-down capabilities provide at-a-glance indicators to people across your organization while giving managers access to the driving factors that influence high-level business decisions and the deployment of organizational resources.

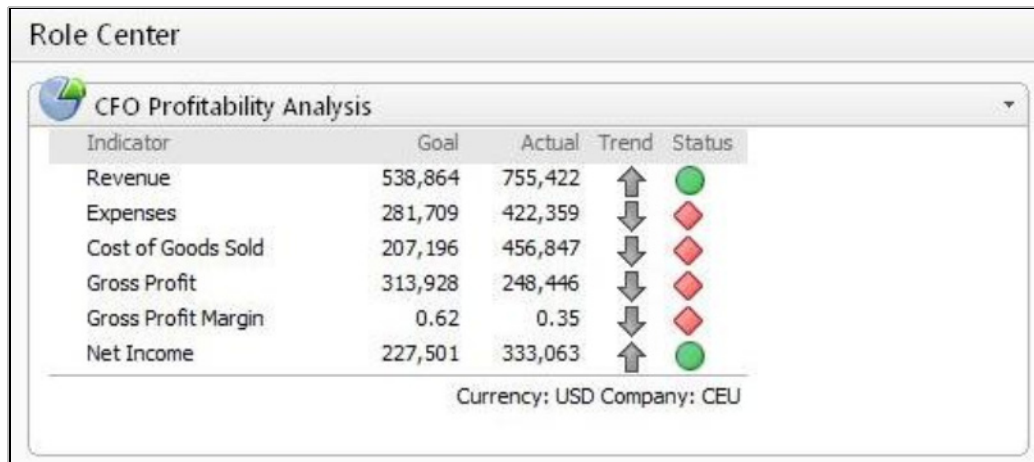


Figure 6. Monitor profitability and business performance directly from your Role Center.

Gain Business Insight with PerformancePoint Server

Additional functionality—including the integration of analytics and planning tools into monitoring options—is available with Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server, which extends Microsoft Dynamics AX for comprehensive performance management.

While business intelligence is useful for understanding current status or recent results, greater opportunities exist in using it to improve forecasting and planning, manage teams, and optimize future performance. To accomplish this, managers must identify how individuals, teams, and strategic decisions contribute to overall results, and then coordinate those efforts so the entire organization moves toward greater success.

The BI solutions in Microsoft Dynamics AX provide people across the organization with greater visibility and access to critical business performance information. For organizations that also want comprehensive performance management—including the ability for more people to formulate strategy, monitor results, and drive planning and execution—the addition of PerformancePoint Server can help.

In conjunction with Microsoft Dynamics AX, PerformancePoint Server provides sophisticated corporate performance management tools—including custom scorecards, extensive analytics, and full integration with forecasting, budgeting, and planning processes—in a unified solution that extends across functional boundaries to people in sales, marketing, operations, finance, and human resources. The solution delivers broad and easily accessible performance management capabilities by combining the ease of use of Microsoft Office tools with the power and scalability of Microsoft SQL Server. As a result, organizations can leverage their existing IT infrastructure to implement a performance management application that is easier to use, requires less training, and is less costly to deploy than traditional or stand-alone solutions.

PerformancePoint Server builds on the familiar Microsoft Office environment and the foundation provided by Microsoft SQL Server and its affiliated services to deliver the three critical components of sophisticated performance management:

- **Performance monitoring**, including scorecards, dashboards, and KPIs that can enhance visibility of performance information to help drive accountability and strategic alignment across the organization and deep into functional departments.

- **Integrated analytics**, which help you quickly move from passively monitoring information to understanding underlying causes in context and sharing business insights throughout the organization.
- **Forecasting and planning functionality**, including flexible budgeting, management reporting, and consolidation, which enables business intelligence to more effectively drive critical business processes for both day-to-day and strategic decision-making.

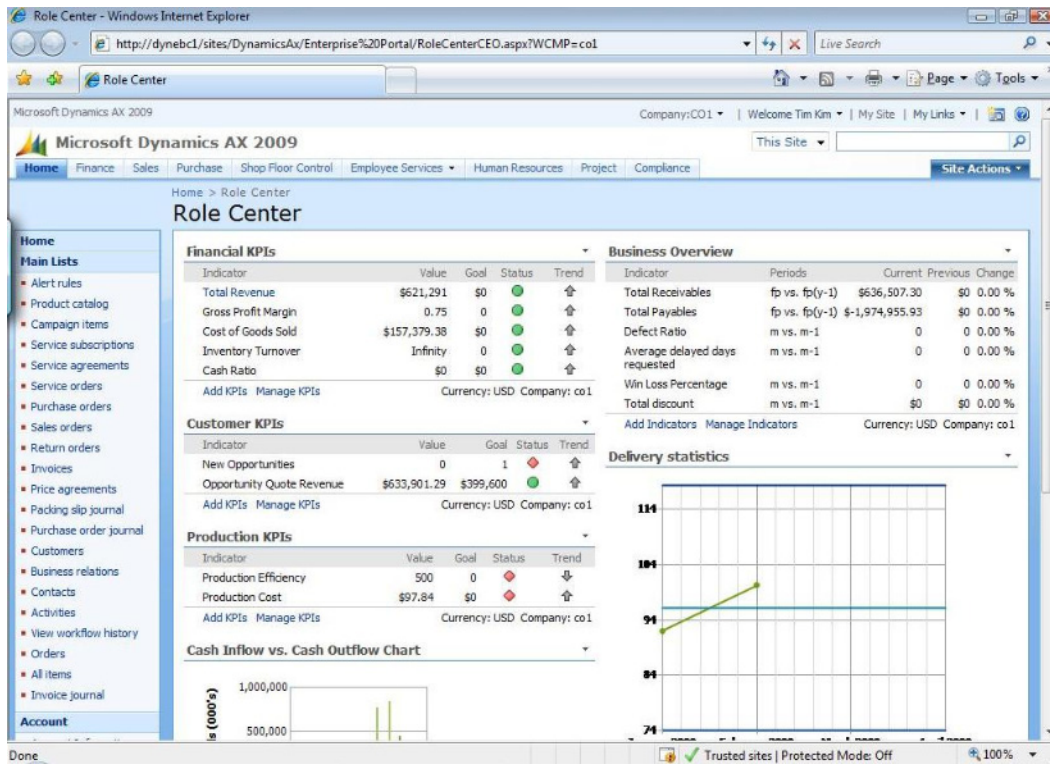


Figure 7. Provide dashboard views that reflect corporate performance and strategy.

With PerformancePoint Server, you can access consolidated financial information from a variety of sources. An easy-to-use Data Import Wizard provides a guide for configuring and moving data from Microsoft Dynamics AX into PerformancePoint Server, and includes built-in functionality for general ledger and budget transactions. With this level of connectivity, organizations can integrate diverse systems and bring transactional data and other information into a rich dashboard environment to simplify reporting and accelerate decision-making.

With the Management Reporter tool in PerformancePoint Server, managers and finance teams can create, generate, and share financial reports directly from either a general ledger system or PerformancePoint Server financial models. Consolidate disparate information, achieve real-time figures, and begin analysis quickly to improve reporting accuracy. Because it's easy to learn and use, Management Reporter helps financial managers find and work with the specific information they need—without the need for IT support—to streamline the distribution of key financial information and help simplify compliance.

A simple wizard instructs users on how to create financial reports such as trial balances, income statements, and more, which can be customized as needed. Built-in financial intelligence, such as understanding of debits and credits and various time periods, can automatically incorporate changes to the chart of accounts, dimensions, or hierarchies, virtually eliminating report maintenance. Similarly, report reusability greatly reduces time-consuming formatting, while central report storage provides quick, role-based accessibility while helping to ensure security and version control.

Streamline Financial Monitoring, Analytics, and Budgeting

Organizations dealing with multiple sites and currencies face particular challenges with financial monitoring that must span geographic boundaries. To help, Microsoft Dynamics AX is available with Microsoft FRx^{®1}, a powerful solution for creating and viewing compliant, presentation-quality period- and year-end financial reports. This combined financial solution builds on a variety of generally accepted accounting principles so that financial managers can easily roll up cross-organizational information to create every kind of fiscal report—from simple income statements and balance sheets to cash flow reports and multi-company summaries. In addition, connectivity between Microsoft Forecaster, Microsoft Dynamics AX, and Microsoft SQL Server can enable the direct application of those financial results to forecasting and budgeting processes.

Achieve a Flexible, Long-Term BI Solution at a Low TCO

Help ensure an effective and adaptable BI solution for your organization without overextending your budget or using custom or add-in solutions that can't accommodate business growth. By using the variety of sophisticated BI capabilities provided out of the box with Microsoft Dynamics AX, you can quickly gain greater insight and apply it to current business processes, with the ability to meet the demands of growth and change. Because your people are already familiar with how to access, analyze, and share critical information, learning curves are shorter and adoption rates higher, so your organization can more quickly and effectively use enhanced business intelligence to drive greater success.

Microsoft Dynamics AX offers a comprehensive, integrated business management solution with familiar, cost-effective desktop productivity tools combined with powerful analytical and performance management functionality. This combination significantly simplifies BI and performance management processes and extends their benefits deeper into the organization, while also reducing implementation and training time. It also provides the enhanced security, stability, and centralization needed for optimum efficiency and a low total cost of ownership (TCO).

The integration capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics AX help ensure that it can adapt to new technologies and meet future business needs. In addition, Microsoft Dynamics AX can be easily extended by custom Microsoft partner solutions. Microsoft is committed to the ongoing improvement and evolution of its BI infrastructure and solutions. New technologies and programs will continue to connect, support, and increase the efficacy and power of the Microsoft technology stack.

¹ Not available in all countries.

Conclusion

Definitions, uses, and challenges of business intelligence continue to evolve with technology and the changing demands of the global marketplace. In today's competitive markets, success depends on empowering everyone in the organization—individuals, teams, and executives—with self-service access to business intelligence information.

With the robust, out-of-the-box capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics AX, you can get quick access to personalized BI information using familiar, easy-to-use tools. With the ability to access the right information at the right time, you can transform business information into practical insight to make fast, more confident business decisions. By extending business intelligence across the organization, you can improve productivity and enhance overall performance.

As an end-to-end business management solution built on the proven Microsoft technology stack—including the performance and services affiliated with Microsoft SQL Server—Microsoft Dynamics AX can solve today's business intelligence challenges with integrated information and tools, custom BI access, flexible viewing and analysis capabilities, and scalability for future growth. Microsoft Dynamics AX, with or without the addition of PerformancePoint Server, represents a culmination of core Microsoft technologies, solutions, and programs designed specifically to deliver the insight you need to drive business success.

For more information about business intelligence in Microsoft Dynamics AX, visit www.microsoft.com/dynamics/ax.

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EMPOWER YOUR PEOPLE WITH SELF-SERVICE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE