



Cognos 8 BI: Another Example of Why Architecture Matters

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Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) is at or near the top of the investment priority list in most companies today. Why? Everyone needs a string of "mores"—more timely data, more and higher quality information, more actionable analysis, more facts in context of the business process, more people using the available technology—to make the best decisions possible.

Much of the business and IT activity in this area is associated with organizations looking to rationalize and consolidate their current investments in EPM technologies and applications and to reduce the overall cost of ownership. These factors are behind the architectural shifts of the major vendors in a variety of software categories. To that end, **Cognos** has formally introduced *Cognos 8 BI*, the latest incarnation of its Business Intelligence (BI) platform, to address the opportunity for consolidation.

The Bottom Line: The release of *Cognos 8 BI* continues to raise the stakes for BI standardization. The vendor that can best sell both the business and IT value of its architecture will be the one to emerge (and perhaps survive) in a consolidating marketplace.

What It Means: This major release for Cognos brings the entire BI product portfolio onto the Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) platform, introduced in its *ReportNet* product two years ago. The SOA transformation will increase its customers' ability to use the technology in more places. Cognos believes this move will also make the company more agile so it can respond to changes or new opportunities in the market. **The Takeaway:** The SOA technology foundation sets the company up for further expansion into its users' business and IT environment.

The flexible architecture blurs the lines between the traditional BI functions of query, reporting, and analysis, and is featured in some of the following key areas:

- **BI self-service**—More self-service functionality is available through Cognos's portal interface, particularly in parameterized reporting and dashboard modules.
- **Dimensional reporting**—One of the direct benefits of the new architecture is the new ability to use analytics within standard query and reporting activities. The company is also much more open to multidimensional data regardless of source. The SOA message of common services is especially strong here.
- **Linking BI and Business Process Management (BPM)**—Cognos is partnering with leading BPM vendors **EMC**, **FileNet**, **IBM**, and **Savvion**, adding more insight into decision points in a workflow.

The Takeaway: Cognos's SOA design aids functionality and agility.

Conclusion: Cognos and its primary competitors must sell the value of the integrated platform and the differences in SOA approaches not only to IT, but to the business as well. Fortunately, IT organizations have been placing more resources on defining their own architectures and helping their business peers understand the importance of a solid architecture and its ability to create business agility.