Q&A: Picking And Implementing A Business Intelligence Tool

Joel Hans, Managing Editor, Manufacturing.net

Interview with John Woods, EVP of Sales and Marketing, ProTrans

With more manufacturers acknowledging the benefits of collecting and analyzing massive amounts of data on both their internal operations and external supply chain, many have turned to business intelligence (BI) software in order to simplify the process. But as with many new IT developments, the provider landscape is vast and complex, and making a decision on which provider to use, and then how to implement it, is never an easy process. In order to sift through some of the options and possible strategies, we sat down with John Woods the EVP of Sales and Marketing at ProTrans [1].

Q: What issues was ProTrans having that necessitated looking into business intelligence (BI) software?

A: ProTrans International is a third-party logistics service provider that offers complete network optimization and proven quality solutions to the manufacturing industry. Information reporting plays an integral role in ProTrans' ability to support its clients. Prior to implementing BI tools, ProTrans was relying on a manual reporting process that was slow and inefficient. As the company expanded, it became clear that our legacy reporting processes could not keep up with the increased business volume. We sought a BI solution that would improve the speed, accuracy and functionality of our reporting processes.

Q: Can you give a basic outline as to what BI tools are meant to accomplish?

A: As the overall volume of data increases, BI tools help companies across all sectors to acquire, analyze and visualize that data as actionable information, yielding targeted insight to execute operations more efficiently and to coordinate

activities with supply chain partners. An enterprise BI environment delivers timely information for a variety of essential analytic functions, increasing productivity, eliminating delays, improving business alliances and optimizing customer service. Essential elements of a BI environment include the following:

- BI dashboards and scorecards that give executives and managers a high-level view of critical indicators and metrics.
- Query and analysis tools that allow power users to efficiently retrieve corporate information.
- Mobile BI apps that allow users of smartphones and tablets to interact with corporate data from any location.
- Guided ad hoc reporting templates that enable business users to generate their own reports — often without IT assistance.

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