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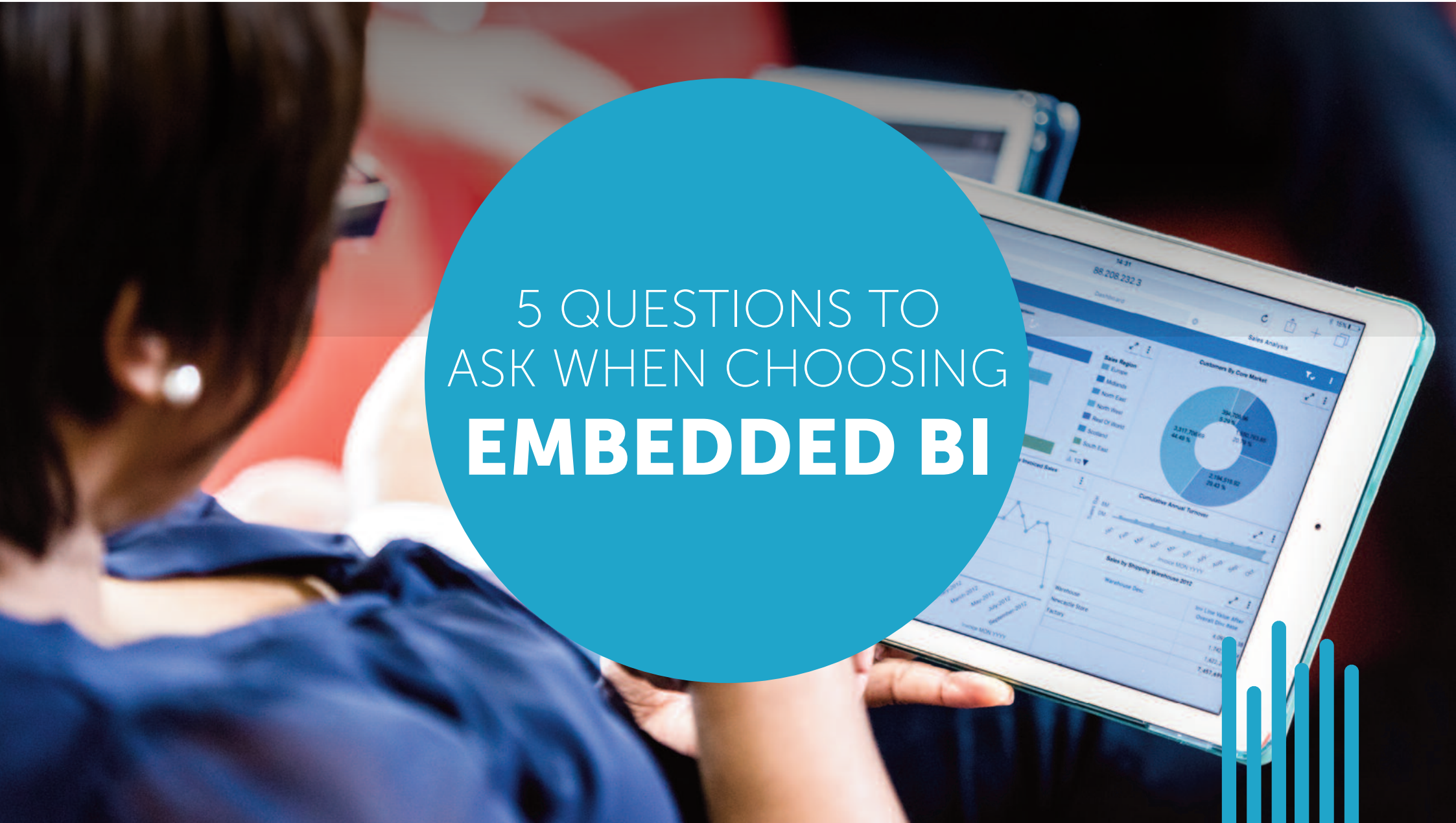

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING **EMBEDDED BI**

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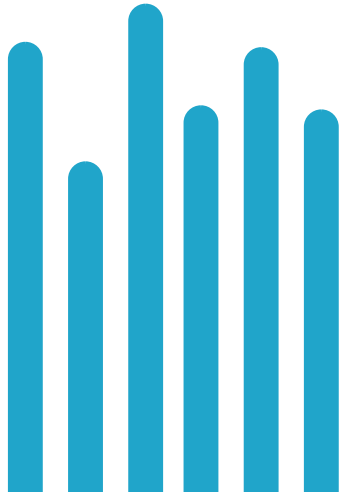
WHEN CHOOSING EMBEDDED BI

The rising tide of 'big data' has forced companies to think differently about how they extract value from multiple data sources and how they store and report on data.

According to the Technology Media company TechTarget, '84% of vendors view embedded BI as the next major trend' and 45% indicate that the embedded BI market is 'a very strategic initiative to their company's future'. However, the experiences of businesses embedding BI and achieving high levels of adoption within their agreed budget and timescales differ greatly. This eBook aims to provide you with 5 key questions to consider before embedding BI.



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1. TO BUILD OR BUY?
WHAT TO CONSIDER

Faced with the daunting task of understanding what is on offer in the marketplace and how it fits with your solution, the option of building an analytics capability in-house using internal resource can be appealing. There are several things to consider when choosing this path.

FOCUS ON YOUR CORE PRODUCT

The time it takes to develop your own analytics capability can be very lengthy as internal resources are diverted away from developing core products. When analytics is not a core competency of your developers, this can considerably lengthen the development cycle. It's worth considering the time that will be spent on testing as well as to keep up with ongoing maintenance and enhancements that will be needed post-launch.

FUTURE-PROOF YOUR SOLUTION

Scalability and flexibility are often key challenges when building in-house. A best of breed solution gives you the ability to scale up as your organisation grows and to extend across multiple businesses, allowing for acquisitions and expansions. You are much more likely to future-proof your analytics capability by taking advantage of the expertise of a third-party specialist in BI than if your development team tries to keep pace with market changes.

BEWARE HIDDEN COSTS

When weighing up your options, it is worthwhile to note that transparency of upfront and ongoing costs is critical. Additional IT infrastructure, and additional server and user licences can add significantly to costs, which are best known up front. Solutions which do not require investment in IT infrastructure or additional server licences are available and offer you a valuable alternative.

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2. WHAT DO YOUR USERS REALLY WANT?

Business Intelligence is about much more than fancy visualisations. It joins up multiple sources of data and allows you to analyse large datasets with ease. It allows users to explore and drill down into their data to problem-solve and spot business opportunities.

FIND OUT HOW YOUR BI OPTIONS COMPARE ON EASE OF USE

This is by far the biggest success criteria for your BI project. If you are aiming for high levels of user adoption and want to remove the need for dedicated reporting resources within your business, your tool needs to be quick, easy to use, and accessible. Users want the same capabilities they have in their day-to-day life outside work on a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop. Field-based teams want access to data on the move and users want real-time access to data without the delays associated with centralised reporting.

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Q 3. HOW DOES SELF-SERVICE BI SOLVE A PROBLEM FOR USERS?

The volume and variety of data within businesses has exploded over the last decade and businesses are struggling to make sense of their data, analyse it, and understand how they can use it to make better business decisions. Users are looking for a solution to this problem, and they want it now.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH EXCEL?

Businesses who are reliant on centralised resources to deliver reporting are struggling to keep pace with demand. Unable to access real-time reporting when they need it, users are frustrated. This has led many businesses to plug the gap by exporting data to Excel. The process of producing reports, distributing them, and repeating this every month is swallowing time and energy. Data stored on local devices is not secure, as businesses have limited means of controlling access. Businesses are crying out for 'a single version of the truth' to avoid the confusion and duplication of effort that arises from the cottage industry of report production.

DELIVERING RELEVANT DATA THROUGH SELF-SERVICE TOOLS

Self-service BI gives users simple tools which enables them to self-serve information and drill down to the underlying source, allowing deeper analysis and problem-solving. Self-service BI makes data visual and easy to understand, allows the user to access highly relevant data and removes reporting bottlenecks. Embedding a self-service BI tool can help you deliver:

1. Self-service reporting - users can simply build their own reports instantly
2. A mobile workforce solution – insights from multiple data sources can be accessed from anywhere on any device
3. One view of the truth – connect to all organizational data from one solution
4. Stakeholder engagement – non-users of core systems can access data e.g. internal and external customers
5. Data security - secure and audited data access in readiness for GDPR compliance
6. Real time visibility of KPIs and exception reporting – to drive improved performance, new organisational behaviours and enable better decision-making
7. Improved workflow across systems – key exceptions can be worked and launched from BI tools to improve process workflows.

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4. HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A SOLUTION THAT IS GDPR READY?

The biggest change to data protection law in a generation comes into force May 18, 2018.

Companies will now need to report data breaches within 72 hours and fines of between 2-4% of turnover will be applied where this does not happen. Because of GDPR and existing regulations, most of your customers will be aware of their responsibilities and will be asking five questions:

1. Where will data be stored?
2. How secure is it?
3. How easy is it to access?
4. Who is responsible for the data?
5. Who is responsible for reporting data breaches?

UNDERSTAND WHERE YOUR DATA IS BEING STORED AND HOW SECURE IT IS

One of the biggest challenges with data security is the movement of data. Most businesses have multiple sources of data and some choose to invest in lengthy data warehouse projects before their BI project begins. Others use spreadsheets, with organisations accessing and storing data on local devices, which poses significant risks.

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS OF DATA MOVEMENT

When choosing your BI tool, make sure you know where data will be stored and whether it relies on ETL. This process requires data to be moved from one location to another and is reliant on replication down to the device. Under GDPR, you need to understand exactly where your data will be stored and how secure it is. Tools which connect directly to existing databases do not require any data movement and are a better option.

HOW EASILY CAN YOU CONTROL AND AUDIT DATA ACCESS?

Under GDPR, organisations which process data will need to ensure that data security complies with the new regulations as well as with their own industry bodies. Role-based security allows you to securely control who sees what and give access based on user rights. A BI tool should also allow you to audit what data users are accessing and alert you when behaviours are outside of norms, as most data breaches are found to come from inside the organisation.

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Q 5. HOW CAN YOU ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION?

Successful implementations rely on close partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and a common understanding. This is much easier to achieve with a local UK-based BI partner who puts partner relationships first. Consider what support you will need throughout your BI project and how accessible it will be.

EXPLORE TECHNOLOGY FIT AT YOUR PACE

When embarking on your BI project, you will want to take the time to ensure the solution works with your technology. Ensure your vendor can offer you an agreement which will allow you the time to fully explore fit across the BI solution, and then pilot this with customers. When you're prepared to take your solution to market, consider how much, what type, and the quality of technical, sales and marketing support you've received so far. Make this the measure of what to expect once you've signed your commercial agreement.

DE-RISK WITH FLEXIBLE COMMERCIALS

Working with a vendor who offers flexible commercial arrangements de-risks your purchase. Seek out a vendor who allows you to fully test and pilot your BI before a full commercial agreement. Vendors who offer this are invested in your success and offer better value for money than those that don't.

ABOUT
PANINTELLIGENCE

Panintelligence is a dashboard and visualisation solution that provides highly customisable embedded business intelligence for any software application, whether hosted or on-premise.

With Panintelligence, any user can visualise, navigate and interact with their data within the context of the applications they use every day. We are a best of breed, white-label BI solution which can be totally rebranded as your own. Panintelligence is a UK-based BI provider who work with software vendors to create remarkable partnerships through deep technical knowledge-sharing, sales and marketing support, accessible people and continual involvement of our partners in our product roadmap.

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