



Analytics Everywhere: Making the Enterprise Versus Best-in-Class Decision

Thursday, November 17, 2005

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With Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) spending at an all-time high and expected to continue its expansion for the foreseeable future, companies are actively planning their near-term and midterm strategies for infusing stronger analytics throughout their businesses. Organizations realize they must push an “analytics everywhere” approach sooner rather than later to move the discussion from data capture to business insight.

For many, the decision quickly comes down to one fundamental question: Should I use the analytics provided by my enterprise vendor, or should I choose a specialist for this task? This is not a new question, and the answer is never binary. For the vast majority of companies, the answer remains the same: a blended approach is the way to go. However, decision-makers must weigh functionality, usability, integration, and technology concerns to make selections that are right for their firms.

Case Study: Oracle

Let's use **Oracle's** *PeopleSoft EPM 8.9* platform to illustrate the issues. The product was released in 2Q05, and existing customers are migrating to this platform now. I've spoken with a number of these firms the past few weeks, and they highlight the same points:

- The *EPM 8.9* platform includes analytic models that integrate natively to *PeopleSoft Enterprise* applications. In-context business content is populated in these models through delivered tools—currently **IBM's** *Ascential* product line, which should be of high value to customers.
- Pre-built applications, specifically the planning and financial consolidations modules, are designed to harmonize with the *PeopleSoft Enterprise* financial applications. Our research indicates that integration tops the list of buyer preferences in this area.
- Companies can choose the Business Intelligence (BI) product of preference. If there is a product in use, the models are built so those tools can be easily layered on top. The value in the data model can be gained without disruption of a new visualization tool.
- Firms interviewed were using the *EPM* platform for analysis of *PeopleSoft Enterprise* application data, not as a general-purpose enterprise warehouse containing data from all corners of the business. Regardless of the *EPM* release level—be it Financials, Human Capital Management (HCM), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and/or supply chain—the platform added a needed analytic environment to the *Enterprise* system.

There are a host of other factors that can influence these decisions, including two hot-button issues on the minds of many companies:

- *What if data quality and rationalization is the key issue?* Many organizations are struggling with Master Data Management (MDM), and this concern becomes paramount when data reliability is in question.
- *How do I effectively mine data for hidden insight?* It's not just about reporting for many—it has a lot to do with discovering something they didn't already know.

The issues here are complex, and they need research and discussion before you jump into a project that might solve some stuff now, but leave lots open later.

Conclusion: These use cases are strikingly similar to the scenarios other firms face, regardless of the enterprise software vendor(s) in place. Companies recognize that it may not be a simple either/or decision, but one that assesses the functionality, usability, integration, and technology requirements of both business users and IT.