

The Business Intelligence Decision Matrix

In the Decision Matrix, Datamonitor provides a summary of BI vendors' capabilities based on a quantitative assessment of their market impact and end-user sentiment, as well as the technology features that they offer. Datamonitor also provides guidance for enterprises looking to deploy BI solutions and whether they should immediately shortlist, consider or explore deploying solutions from these vendors.

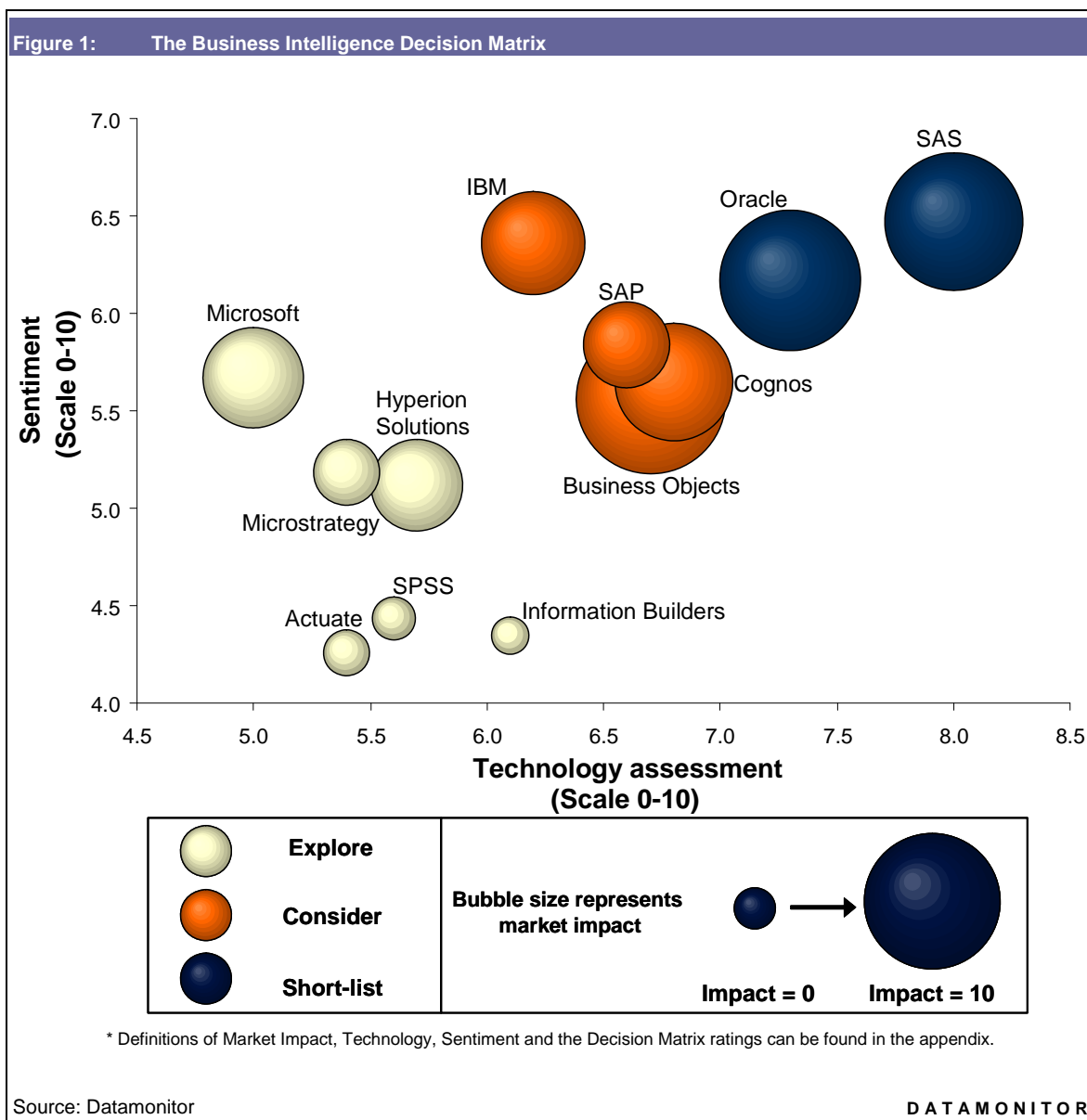


Table 1: The Business Intelligence Decision Matrix*		
Shortlist	Consider	Explore
Oracle SAS	Business Objects Cognos IBM SAP	Actuate Hyperion Solutions Information Builders Microsoft Microstrategy SPSS
* - vendors listed in alphabetical order		
Source: Datamonitor		DATAMONITOR

Market leaders: SAS and Oracle

SAS is the clear market leader as it leads technology assessment, dominates user sentiment and exerts considerable market impact. SAS offers a great portfolio of both basic and advanced functionality, backed up by a dependable support capability. Its stable financial footing, superb vision and lead in advanced analytics all imply that SAS is well placed to continue as the Business Intelligence market leader.

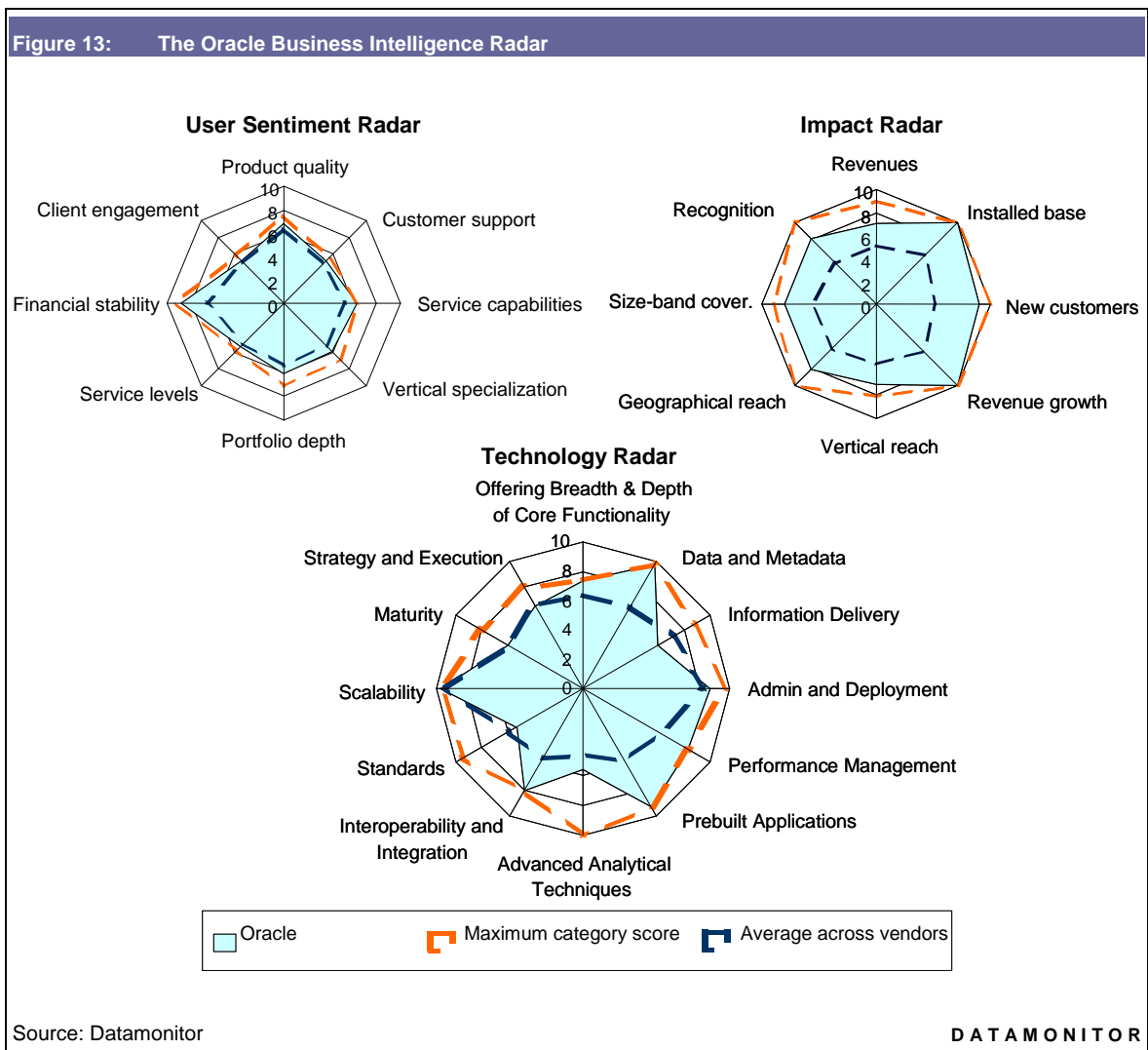
Oracle has successfully integrated its recently acquired BI expertise and, as a result, it has managed to exert itself within the BI market. If one considers its considerable user-base, commanding presence in the global applications market, and a comprehensive yet flexible BI solution, its position can not be considered as a surprise. Furthermore, Oracle's dynamic outlook, exemplified by recent M&A activity, suggests that this vendor will not be complacent and will continue to enhance its standing in the BI market.

The challengers: Business Objects, Cognos, IBM and SAP

The vendors from the *Consider* category are all capable of challenging the SAS and Oracle duopoly, should market conditions change. Business Objects and Cognos are perhaps in the best position to improve, but both need to recover some of the momentum lost during platform reengineering. SAP provides a compelling and comprehensive solution, but it needs to capture a larger share of the non-SAP market if its position is to change, while IBM requires further addition of certain functional areas if it is to compete with the most successful BI vendors. Although Microsoft falls much further behind, Datamonitor believes that its BI strategy is still evolving and that it may be a much more important player in the medium to long term.

Oracle: Business Intelligence Radars

Following its expansion into the application arena and its aggressive round of acquisitions, Oracle has boosted its BI offering and placed itself in a commanding position in the BI market. Subsequent to the successful integration of BI products into its well-known database stack, the acquisition of Siebel enabled Oracle to boost its BI capacity further, by consolidating all of its BI capabilities into the Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition (EE) product.



More importantly, Oracle's expansion into enterprise applications has created a great environment for BI to thrive in. The vendor offers a variety of enterprise solutions into which BI can integrate easily. If one considers Oracle's large user-base, massive market clout and its high quality solution, then its position in the Decision Matrix is not surprising.

Potentially more worrying for its competitors is that Oracle has a means to maintain a sustained push in BI market either through further acquisitions to address the gaps in its functionality, continuous support in the area of data connectivity or simply by using its large salesforce and market presence to its strategic advantage.

Recommendation: Shortlist

Oracle's power in the market, combined with a very good offering which receives good customer feedback makes for a compelling technical and business case. Its strengths in the database technology and the enterprise applications suite feeding the BI systems, combined with the wide range of high-quality BI tools, means that whereas lot of vendors talk about comprehensive BI solutions, Oracle is in the position to deliver them. Even more impressive is the fact that Oracle has not been complacent in tying its BI solutions to a single platform, but it provides extremely wide connectivity to other data sources. The combination of Oracle's powerful impact on the market, its expansive outlook and a good end-user product quality perception makes Oracle BI EE a logical shortlist choice. Particularly if a customer is in one of a growing number of industry sectors for which Oracle has a prebuilt offering.