



Which of the following current topics will significantly change the market in the next year? And what is the impact? (Business Intelligence/Analytics, Customer Engagement, Mobile, Security, or Social)

2012 saw the widespread acceptance of cloud computing, including the validation of the model by some of the largest software companies in the world. This acceptance comes as cloud pioneers continue to demonstrate that the cloud can exceed the highest standards around security, business continuity, and application functionality.

Companies are incorporating cloud services and platforms into formal IT portfolios, including business intelligence (BI) and analytics. In fact, the cloud has elevated the role of business intelligence and analytics to a whole new level. A recent [study](#) by Gartner predicts a significant increase of BI spending in 2013 and beyond due to the desire for department-specific and personal BI tools to drive even more productivity gains.

Business Intelligence integrated within an existing system adds more value

It's a daunting task for companies to manage and leverage immense amounts of data efficiently enough to make timely decisions. This is especially true in a manufacturing facility where collection and analysis of data at every single step is crucial, and often overwhelming.

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems contain the essential data and information needed to make decisions and run the manufacturing facility in an efficient fashion. But data without insight has no value. There are still difficulties in actually making use of the available data to derive meaningful conclusions. According to an Aberdeen report, "[ERP in Manufacturing 2012:](#)

[The Evolving ERP Strategy](#)

" about 33 percent of organizations reported more and more decision-makers want or need analytical capabilities.

More organizations prefer to pair their existing ERP solution with BI. When BI tools are integrated within the existing solution, they extract data from the system, add value to the information and transform it into business intelligence, which is critical for swift decision-making.

More vendors are now offering BI tools as an added value to their customers. This feature enables top-level executives to more easily leverage the data housed within the ERP system. Also, embedding BI into ERP adds a strong emphasis on the importance of analytics in making business decisions. Employees begin to cultivate the data-driven approach to problem solving.

The added advantage of cloud ERP with BI is that data can be accessed securely, easily, anytime and from anywhere. It acts as a one-stop shop for data access and analysis, enabling everyone in the organization to extract reports and charts specific to their particular roles and responsibilities.

In the years to come, executives and managers will increasingly rely on integrated BI tools to gain visibility into operations, improve collaboration and establish transparent processes to reduce errors and costs.

BI and analytics will drive customer engagement

As more enterprises wake up to the potential of business intelligence and analytics, the solution will evolve to accommodate the complex needs of the users. BI tools will not only be built based on customer feedback, but will also be used as crucial tools to engage customers. Organizations have begun to leverage data to gain insight into customer intelligence, a key driver of revenue. Business intelligence and analytics will have a huge impact on customer engagement.

According to a [2012 Forrester research](#) report, leaders will begin to leverage BI tools to

efficiently access, interpret and exploit both structured and unstructured data to enable customer engagement processes.

Plex Systems is one of the first vendors to provide a cloud BI tool to the manufacturing enterprise which allows customers to fully realize the data captured in their ERP system. Our customers use the BI tools to slice and dice data to create department-specific reports as well as executive dashboards. These reports identify gaps and help users engage in an ongoing, meaningful communication with customers.

As enterprises are becoming more agile and lean, they have to utilize the powers of emerging technologies to their competitive advantage. With the abundance of data circulated within an organization, executives will leverage BI and analytics to increase collaboration and visibility, drive innovation and improve efficiencies.

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