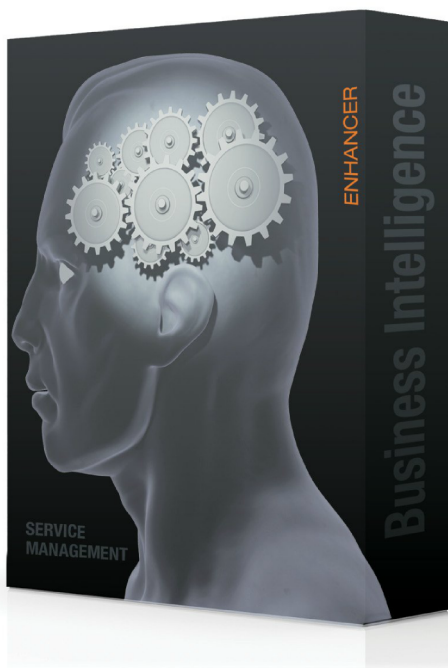# USE SERVICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE TO
ENHANCE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

B Businesses are drowning in data - oceans of data. To deal with this issue, a growing number of enterprises are harnessing Business Intelligence (BI) to transform data and information into actionable knowledge.

In the past, managers have relied on their intuition and experience to make critical decisions. This is changing. Today, managers need to respond faster with more accurate information on internal and external events. According to research firm IDC (the premier global provider of market intelligence on technology industries) this new environment is moving us from the "information economy" to the "intelligent economy" where the ability to analyze and act upon information creates a competitive advantage.

At one time, only "expert" users in very large companies could take advantage of BI as it required software that was expensive to acquire and complex to use. These experts needed training to learn how to analyze the available data.

Today, BI tools are already included with leading service management software systems. Not only is it less costly to acquire these tools, it is also easier to implement and just as importantly, easier to use.

BI MAKES DATA MAKE SENSE

Pure data by itself, regardless of type, is worthless unless businesses can do something with it that delivers value and meaning.

Traditionally, many small and medium sized companies have used Microsoft Excel as their BI tool -- simply because it is there, it is familiar and it has some basic functions to allow users to work with data. However, what Excel cannot do is analyze the meaning of the data.

The new breed of BI offers more analytical and visualization functions. Think of it as Excel on steroids.

TURNING INFORMATION INTO KNOWLEDGE

I'm sure that today, you are already collecting and storing valuable data in your daily operations, such as information about customer equipment and service sales, purchasing of parts and supplies, equipment repairs and completed work orders, the renewal dates of meter contracts and other information that can affect your profitability. The challenge is dealing with this volume of information in a meaningful way. The right service management software will provide you with BI tools that can give you valuable reports and analysis about your business.

Some examples of critical information that BI can provide, include:

- What is your first call resolution rate?
- What is your average repair time per task and per technician?
- What is the profitability of each customer?
- What are the reasons for service call reschedules?
- What is the equipment reliability by make and model?

With BI technologies, you can generate reports, such as key performance indicators, data mining and analytics. BI technologies provide historical and current views of business operations…what happened in the past, what is happening today…and predictive analytics, which is the ability to forecast the future.

The purpose of BI is to support a better decision-making process that positively impacts internal operations and customers. You can make operational changes with confidence knowing they will have a positive impact upon the financial well-being of your business. BI is more than having the right information at your fingertips; it shows you were the problems are in your operations. If you don't know where the problems are, you can't fix them!

BI FROM ONE STREAM-LINED SYSTEM

As a provider of service management software (Miracle Service), we have discovered that a lot of OE dealers' data on equipment inventory, contract terms, service work orders and billing information is often kept in separate data bases and systems. This results in major challenges when compiling a complete "picture" of their business.

One of the biggest advantages of service

management software is that it consolidates all the data in one system, allowing users to realize the full benefits of BI.

MOBILE BI

Many mobile platforms also have BI capability, making service reps more effective and more valuable to customers. Service reps are able to make better decisions more quickly, which is in the best interests of the customer. It goes without saying that when service reps are with a customer and they are empowered with the right information at the right time, it elevates their effectiveness…and that's something customers appreciate.

For some companies, this might be a more practical platform than traditional desktop computers. If the workforce is mobile or certain parts are mobile, then the company needs to make sure the service management software vendor supports mobile devices.

Three Basic Rules

Our advice is to implement a BI solution that integrates all the data bases into one seamless central system based on these basic rules:

1. Rationalize the data for easy access and analysis.

2. Enter the right information and format it so the data is cleaner and more accurate.

3. Make sure the BI system you implement has the tools to utilize the data and is able to execute an analysis based on your needs.

THE BEST SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

A BI capable solution has to provide the tools, processes and best practices to rationalize the data and make sure it is collected and recorded in a consistent manner so critical reports can be generated and accurate analysis can take place.

Another important and popular dealer support service is helping customers to create custom reports for their specific and unique needs, in addition to the regular standard reports that are built into the software. This means providing specialized services and "report designing tools" to fulfill each customer's unique analysis requirements.

The right BI software can provide insights into trend analysis that otherwise cannot be seen. It can help a small business compete with larger shops or increase market share. BI can also provide insights in to the cost of acquiring new customers and how these costs are related to customer gain or loss.

BENEFITS OF BI

Adopting BI will help make OE dealers' service departments and technicians more effective, improve operations, produce reports and "intelligence" that managers need to be more efficient and most importantly, increase customer satisfaction. The end result will be a higher customer retention rate and ultimately higher profitability.

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