

Foreword

In the past years, research in the field of responsive business environments has had many successes. The most significant of these has been the development of powerful new tools and methodologies that advance the subject of Business Intelligence (BI). This book provides the BI practitioner and researcher with a comprehensive view of the current art and the possibilities of the subject.

Dr. Raisinghani and his colleagues delight us with a breadth of knowledge in Business Intelligence (BI) that ranges from the business executive viewpoint to insights promised by text mining. The expert authors know that BI is about reducing the uncertainties of our business world. A timely and accurate view into business conditions can minimize uncertainty.

The reduction of business and technical risk is the central theme of this text. If data gives us the facts and information allows us to draw conclusions, then intelligence provides the basis for making good business decisions. Information technology can help you seize the information that is available.

Intelligence involves knowing information about your competitors, such as their profitability and turnover rate. The most important thing to gain from intelligence is knowledge of customers and potential customers. This knowledge will help you to better serve customers and ensure that your service offerings align with their needs. Performing an annual survey will not give you this type of information. You need to know why people are or are not your customers. If they are not your customers, whose are they? Have they heard of your company? Are they familiar with your services or are they part of an untapped market?

An IT organization is responsible for putting information in a place where it can be mined by salespeople, product developers, and others within an organization. One way to achieve this is through an information portal. An information portal uses the same technology as Web search engines to find and catalog information within your company giving access to everyone. IT sets up pointers to the information, allowing people to turn it into intelligence.

Business decision makers need rapid access to information about their customers, markets, investors, suppliers, governments, employees, and finances. There are four critical success factors for strategically using and managing IT. First, enterprises must be able to quantify the value of IT. They must know how IT contributes to the creation of the value and wealth of their organization. The second factor involves the ability to collect and organize intelligence, both internally and externally. This intelligence includes information about your market, your customers, and your potential customers. Third, enterprises need to understand the wide spectrum of capability and productivity of IT people within the same skill set. The final success factor is to invest in IT people that can invent and create new tools or services. The internal and external business information problem has existed for centuries — the best hope for the future is the wise use of business intelligence tools.

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Thomas Hill has the distinction of being an EDS Fellow, the highest level of technical achievement in the corporation. He brings more than 30 years of extensive experience to EDS' efforts for clients around the world. EDS Fellows are visionary thinkers who represent the top echelon of EDS' thought leadership capabilities. Fellows play a vital role in promoting innovation at EDS and in extending EDS' external reputation as a thought leader and an innovative company through their work and engagements.

EDS, the leading global services company, provides strategy, implementation and hosting for clients managing the business and technology complexities of the digital economy. As the world's largest outsourcing services company, EDS, founded in 1962, is built on a heritage of delivery excellence, industry knowledge, a world-class technical infrastructure and the expertise of its people. EDS brings together the world's best technologies to address critical client business imperatives. It helps clients

eliminate boundaries, collaborate in new ways, establish their customers' trust and continuously seek improvement. EDS, with its management-consulting subsidiary, A.T. Kearney, serves more than 35,000 business and government clients in 60 countries. EDS Fellows provide ongoing support to a large number of EDS clients, including General Motors, Sabre, Veterans Administration, Inland Revenue, British Petroleum, First Health and Telecom New Zealand and are integrated into other client-facing engagements. This integration is critical to thoroughly diagnosing their clients' business challenges as well as developing innovative solutions.