

PART 2

A successful BI project as a key driver for digital transformation in Pharma & MedTech.

How to turn BI challenges into a company-wide, customer-centric, and fully data-driven strategy?

A series of field experienced based insights for Pharma and MedTech companies

By Jurgen De Baerdemaeker – CEO IM Associates

02. How to overcome the most common technology related hurdles in BI implementation

Hurdles can be seen as an insurmountable obstacle, or a challenge to conquer. For the latter approach we'd gladly share some advice. .



Technology related hurdles

Pharmaceutical and MedTech companies often face certain technology and/or system related challenges that might jeopardize the successful rollout of a BI project.

The exact purpose of the technology

- **Transactional vs. analytical technology**

CRM systems are developed to register omni-channel interactions with and feedback from different stakeholders, and to possibly record orders e.g. during pharmacy visits. Sometimes a CRM application is also used for reporting and dashboards arguing that the user then only has to work with one system. This can be a good idea provided that all the data needed for the reports is centralized in that one system. But reporting data usually comes from different systems. **An Enterprise Intelligence platform** is especially developed to process large amounts of data, to run queries quickly, to optimize visualization techniques, to recognize patterns and intelligence in the data, etc. Using a CRM system for business intelligence purposes makes the CRM functionality unnecessarily complex. As a result, users refuse to continue using it, which has a huge negative impact on the completeness and accuracy of the registered data.

Our recommendation: Use your tools for what they were developed for. Think carefully in advance about exactly which technology you need. It may well be more efficient to invest in two applications or platforms than to absolutely want an all-in-one solution.

- **Data visualization vs. enterprise analytics platform**

While some Pharma and MedTech companies still choose to do so, business intelligence is not just about visualizing data from one single, isolated source. Yet, it already helps to take some interesting corrective actions on a daily basis. However, when you're planning a digital transformation journey with the ambition to become a fully data-driven company, you'd better go for a true enterprise analytics platform. Such a platform will allow you to combine data from multiple business systems into a central data warehouse. It translates the data into easy to read and interpret dashboards and applicable insights and intelligence. Thus, patterns can be identified, and predictive models can be developed and integrated into business applications to accelerate the digital transformation of your organization.

Our recommendation: It is extremely important for your top management, together with IT and the various business departments involved, to exactly define what your company's ambitions are, as well as the scope of the planned BI project. Based on this only, the right choices can be made regarding technology and set-up, project realization, project team competences, stakeholders, etc.

- **Centralized dashboarding vs. self-service analytics**

IM Associates doesn't believe in the 'Everybody an analyst' principle. Commercial teams shouldn't spend too much time drawing up analyses, each in their own way, with their own metrics, their own dimensions, own interpretations. It only leads to confusion. Yet, what about self-service analytics? In view of the digital transformation of your organization, it is important for business people to be able to meet their own specific reporting needs. Self-service can contribute greatly to the business relevance of dashboards.

Our recommendation: We strongly believe in the combination of a central data warehouse, a unique metadata layer, and a straightforward self-service analytics function. This approach may take a little more time to get started, but it will ultimately ensure that enterprise dashboards and intelligent applications are complemented by self-made reports based on the same content for everyone. Otherwise, the typical silo mentality risks to come up again.



Cost-efficient upgrades of the BI platform

Upgrading an established BI platform towards a new version is often an important cost source. When you **upgrade to a company-wide platform**, several reports with the same content, developed by and for different departments, will have to be consolidated into one report that works for everyone. This involves extra work, time and budget. It is a major reason for upgrades to be postponed. As a result, the improvements brought about by the new version are also postponed.

However, there are **a few good reasons** to do such an upgrade anyway. If the technology you currently work with is mainly focused on the level of the individual user or the departments (so-called silos), each silo probably creates its own reports, often with the same content and metrics as other silos. In that case, when a software upgrade is required, each report must be validated and tested separately for each silo to see if it still works. By contrast, a company-wide BI platform ensures that in the case of an upgrade, you only need to do one validation that then applies to everyone. Also, a company-wide platform with a metadata layer can enable uniform definition and central maintenance of data fields, dimensions, and metrics throughout the organization. And it provides a central, yet secured library of reports and dashboards. That kind of platform can easily remain state of the art in a cost-efficient way.

Our recommendation: We advise you to opt for a BI platform that provides a metadata layer to centralize all data fields, dimensions, and metrics. This enables cost-efficient upgrades. Most companies have by now become familiar with business systems in the cloud. We therefore also recommend studying the possibility of a **BI platform in the cloud**. This set-up guarantees a secure enterprise analytics platform that can be kept up to date without major logistical or budgetary concerns.



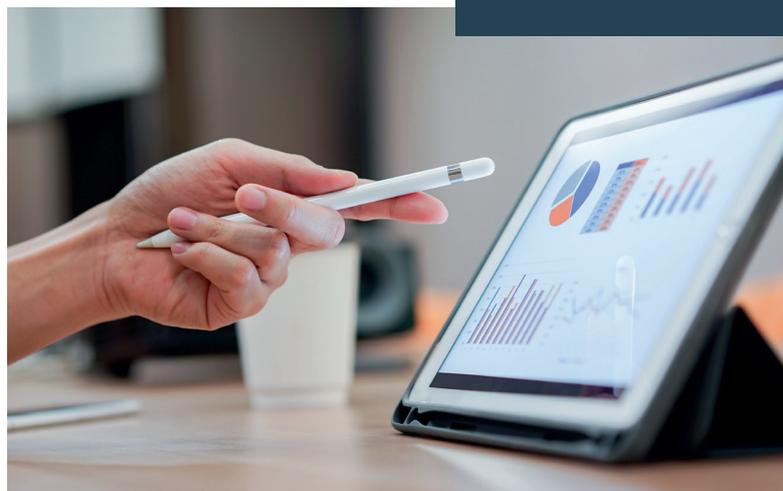
Reporting/query speed

The speed with which reports, queries, or algorithms are run is usually a decisive success factor in the adoption of a new enterprise analysis platform. **It will also determine the pace at which your company goes through its digital transformation**, especially when your ultimate goal is the use of data-driven insights by all levels in your organization.

Our recommendation: On the one hand, technology obviously plays a role in the speed with which queries and reports are run. On the other hand, if you'd assign junior profiles to business intelligence projects, we kindly advise to have them sufficiently assisted. To permanently challenge them in terms of how the data model has been set up, and in terms of the speed with which queries run and reports appear. Moreover, they probably need guidance in deciding whether the calculations should be carried out in the database or directly in the dashboards.

PC or mobile - Offline availability

Pharma and MedTech companies typically see the need to support several mobile teams. Just think of commercial teams, teams of key account managers or MSLS, ... They all have **to be able to consult all sorts of data and insights on the spot**. Mobile devices such as tablets and smart phones are therefore very popular, although they don't have the same power as a traditional PC. Also, in many countries the network coverage (3G, 4G or even 5G) is not always sufficient to generate the necessary reports ad hoc. This combination leads to an increased importance of offline availability, caching and refresh of dashboards and applications, query speed, etc. Of course we want to avoid that offline availability equals Excel exports. The latter is usually not compliant with your company's security policies. Consequently, facilitating reliable offline availability takes more than the standard features in BI technology or the competences of default BI teams.



Our recommendation: We advise to reduce a trial and error process to a minimum. From the beginning of your BI project, during scope definition, it is important to evaluate the needs and possibilities for offline availability of dashboards, reports and built-in application intelligence. Evenly important is it to know in advance which specific skills and expertise your project team needs to have in order to provide reliable offline availability of reports and insights.

Security

A lot of 'business intelligence' or analysis tasks are still done in Microsoft Excel today. We also see that many companies opt for silo or departmental solutions instead of enterprise analysis platforms. This results in frequent exchange of analysis files and reports via email. It means that there is no control over compliance with the security rules to which Pharma and MedTech companies nevertheless attach great importance.

Our recommendation: Do your policies, your instructions to your teams, your systems and firewalls take your security management into account? Good. But the only possible solution to realize the same level of security throughout your organization, is **a company-wide platform with a central security management approach**. It should also allow to adjust the analytics, dashboards and insights to the needs of every individual user, with his or her specific user profile. We are convinced that BI platforms in the cloud can offer an equivalent level of security today compared to systems managed entirely in-house.



How can we help Pharma and MedTech companies realize their BI projects

IM Associates has a unique blend of global Pharma and MedTech expertise and a dedicated team of data warehouse, business intelligence and data science specialists.

We support Pharma and MedTech companies in their transformation towards a data-driven culture with that indispensable human touch. You only realize the expected added value of your data-related investments when it concerns everyone at all levels of your organization. Not only your BI specialists, data officers and top management, but every single end user throughout the company.

IM Associates' BI expertise:

- We help you define and describe your KPIs and associated data rules, and develop storyboards to translate your KPIs and dashboards into an intuitive data story.
- **IM Smart is our secure, full-service enterprise intelligence platform** (based on SQL Server / MicroStrategy technology) that allows you as a Pharma or MedTech company to consolidate your data and translate it into interactive dashboarding and intelligent applications as a service.
- We provide resources, e.g. to accelerate your business intelligence initiatives in MicroStrategy, PowerBI, Tableau or Qlik.
- Together we look at how your data and models can be optimally set up or improved, to make your reporting faster, more frequent, and more transparent.



About IM Associates

IM Associates offers data-driven added value for all stakeholders in the healthcare industry. We invite pharmaceutical companies (human as well as animal health), providers of medical devices, hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, and governmental institutions to question us on their strategic and operational challenges. These challenges are mostly related to insights in the business dynamics, route-to-market questions, data science, and the transformation of data into business intelligence. Together we'll design innovative ways to excel, based on thorough data analytics.

IM Associates combines a long healthcare experience with strong analytical skills, flexibility, short time to action and a high level of ownership and involvement. **Our goal is to deliver added value in every project within three months, so we can save you time and money, and optimize adoption.**



**Please contact me for more details.
I'll be glad to answer your questions.**

JURGEN DE BAERDEMAEKER

CEO IM Associates

✉ jdebaerdemaeker@im-associates.eu

☎ +32 16 22 47 43

www.im-associates.eu

www.im-associates.eu/we-build

www.im-smart.eu