

# WINNING AT ENTERPRISE ANALYTICS WITH A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BI

July 2017

Some might think of business intelligence (BI) exclusively as a static entity, such as a report or dashboard. However, today's reality, particularly at the enterprise level, requires a more comprehensive approach to analytics, from raw data to informed decision. This Knowledge Brief provides a snapshot into a Best-in-Class strategy for analytical success in the enterprise.



It starts with data and ends with results. Best-in-Class companies make it look easy...but is it? Successful analytics at the enterprise level requires a holistic approach that involves data maturity, decision efficiency, and user empowerment.

Most data-rich organizations have moved beyond viewing big data as a problem that needs to be managed and mitigated. Despite the expanded complexity of applications and data types, leading companies are starting to see and covet the valuable insights locked away in that complex web of information. Moreover, the complexion of the typical user is starting to change as well. Less technical business users are now having to perform activities that were once the sole purview of IT professionals and those in charge of maintaining the data infrastructure.

Aberdeen's March 2017 report, [Data Preparation: The New Normal, the Now Necessary](#), revealed that the top investment priority for enterprises today is technology designed to improve the quality, usability, and line-of-business relevance of data. Leading companies have gotten the memo that these technologies are not only an important earmark in the IT budget, but also need to resonate with users that may not have deep technical

## 52%

**of senior executives view inaccessibility of information (silos) as their top data-related challenge.**

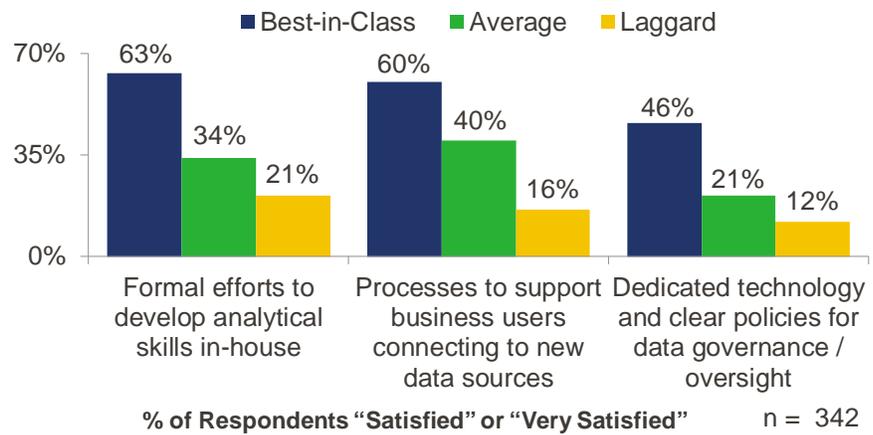
➔ Related research:  
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The New Normal,  
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➔ Related Research:  
*Leveraging  
Language for  
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expertise, but have an elevated sense of curiosity about their data. The research shows that Best-in-Class companies are 30% more likely to have data preparation capabilities that are accessible and relevant to their line-of-business users.

Additionally, top performing companies share a variety of internal capabilities that help support their ability to manage and move data effectively (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: A Foundation of Data Maturity**



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2017

The capabilities described above stand on their own as important foundational aspects of an analytical strategy, but there is a common thread that connects them. The most effective organizations use process and technology to increase data fluidity across the organization. Part of that fluidity has to do with improving the user mindset and ability to handle data, increasing access to a variety of different data for those very users, and at the same time creating a responsible degree of oversight of that data. Best-in-Class companies lean on these capabilities to help them drive data efficiencies, including:

- ➔ **Accessibility:** Top companies report that an average of 73% of data sources are accessible for the purpose of analysis, compared with 43% for All Others.

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Companies are evaluating technologies that are not only more visually appealing and easy to use, but also place the power of data science and exploration into the hands of less technically savvy users.

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- **Accuracy:** The Best-in-Class demonstrate that 90% of their data records are complete and accurate, compared with 79% for All Others.
- **Expediency:** Best-in-Class companies are 2.2-times more likely to report that the speed/efficiency of collecting data is “strong” or “highly effective.”

Essentially, on the “back end” of their analytical value chain, top companies apply the right resources, foster an elevated data-driven culture, and deploy the appropriate technologies to construct better and more timely insights.

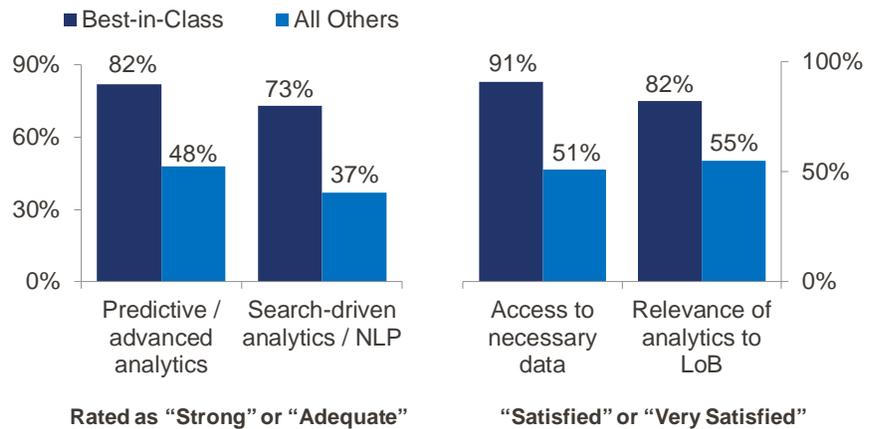
#### Putting Insight into Action

Today’s typical enterprise is more diverse than ever before in terms of the breadth of job roles and functional areas with a need or desire for analytics. As such, the process of managing and moving data effectively becomes significantly more challenging, but also more critical for success. Not too long ago, the typical business user would have been mired in “consumption only” mode when it comes to analytics. In other words, they would make decisions based on consuming a static report or dashboard view produced and delivered by IT.

Catalyzed largely by the rapid evolution of device-based apps and personal technology, users today have a greater curiosity for what drives their business. Supplementing the emergence of a discipline designed specifically for exploring and exploiting information (data science), users have simply become more analytically active. To quench this increasing thirst for analytics, companies are evaluating technologies that are not only more visually appealing and easy to use, but also place the power of data science and exploration into the hands of less technically savvy users. Technologies like predictive analytics help users apply their own domain-specific expertise, along with sophisticated algorithms to create forward-looking models of how the business might react under certain scenarios. Similarly, search-driven analytics and

natural language processing (NLP) tools enable users to explore data and ask questions of the business in their own familiar language and taxonomy. Best-in-Class companies are leading the charge in leveraging these and other technologies for enhanced line-of-business decision support (Figure 2).

**Figure 1: Empowering Users with Technology and Data**



n = 342 Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2017

**62%**  
of Best-in-Class companies rate predictive/cognitive analytics as a “high priority” for investment.

In addition to the technology in use, top companies exploit their maturity in the data environment to create a more approachable analytical environment for those very users. Best-in-Class companies are far more likely to report elevated user satisfaction in key areas like data accessibility and relevance, but other areas like trust in data and the ability to share information. These efforts to empower users lead to tangible and repeatable performance results, such as:

- ➔ **User engagement:** At Best-in-Class companies, 50% of users, on average, are actively engaged in analytics on a regular basis, compared with 34% of All Others.
- ➔ **Internal efficiency:** 84% of Best-in-Class companies report an “improvement” or “substantial improvement” in workflow/process speed, compared with 56% of All Others.

→ **Business growth:** Best-in-Class companies saw an average 21% year over year growth in organic revenue, compared with 10% for All Others.

### Conclusion

Small organizations or those with a fairly homogenous data environment can operate effectively with point solutions for analytics that solve a specific business problem. However, those at the enterprise level or those dealing with the type of data growth and complexity that confounds so many organizations today require a more holistic approach to analytics.

Best-in-Class companies are able to transition effectively from raw data to deliverable insight, to data-driven activity. Starting with maturity in the data environment and the right technologies to manage, move, and govern their data, top companies build a foundation of quality and consumable information. Engaging in activities to strengthen the analytical culture and empower a wider variety of users, Best-in-Class companies are able to socialize data-driven insight and accelerate the decision process.

At the end of the day, these top companies enjoy a more satisfied and analytically-equipped user base and deliver substantial business performance results.

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## About Aberdeen Group

Since 1988, Aberdeen Group has published research that helps businesses worldwide improve their performance. Our analysts derive fact-based, vendor-agnostic insights from a proprietary analytical framework, which identifies Best-in-Class organizations from primary research conducted with industry practitioners. The resulting research content is used by hundreds of thousands of business professionals to drive smarter decision-making and improve business strategy. Aberdeen Group is headquartered in Waltham, MA.

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