

"Standardise enterprise BI"

Boon Huat Lee talks about BusinessObjects XI and the Crystal Decisions' acquisition



Boon Huat Lee
Vice-president,
Asia-Pacific
Business Objects

Where is the Indian BI market headed?

Lee: Large companies have deployed ERP, and they are trying to gain the maximum mileage out of it. With such systems in place, they even have new methods of generating data. This is the right time for business intelligence (BI) solutions to make inroads into Indian enterprises. The Indian market for BI is valued at \$85 million with a CAGR of 23 percent, according to IDC estimates.

Companies face the hurdle of cleaning up the primary data in their databases. How do you address this issue?

Lee: We have faced such problems worldwide. India will be relatively easier to handle because of two factors. First, companies now look at ERP and BI together, so we have more control; this was not the case in mature markets. Second, we have learned from our global experiences. We have also deployed a data-cleansing tool in our solution.

What's your strategy for India?

Lee: India poses a good opportunity for BI. With partners such as TCS, Wipro Infotech, Polaris and L&T Infotech, we are now pursuing the manufacturing, BFSI, government and telecommunications segments. We have expanded our partnership with Sonata Software to make it the first authorised partner to resell both Business Objects' and Crystal Decisions' product lines. We have also tied up with Venmitra Systems as distributors for India.

Kamath: We tied up with Business Objects since it is focussed on building its relationship with the developer community and OEM partners. Also, it currently has about 700 OEM partners, including Microsoft, PeopleSoft and SSA Global. Among the developers, it is targeting the Java and Microsoft communities, and bundling Crystal Reports with both VisualStudio.net and Borland's tools for the Java environment.

How will you differentiate yourself from the competition?

Lee: As a BI pureplay, Business Objects is focussed solely on BI. Our acquisition of Crystal Decisions last year has positioned us to provide a complete spectrum of offerings to our three key target markets: enterprise BI, performance management and the developer community.

We are a strong advocate of enterprise BI standardisation—one BI infrastructure that will be easy to deploy, whether the software sits on a single server or in a distributed environment that could span dispersed geographies. There will be broad product coverage and platform support, irrespective of data sources, the middleware that you have, or the user interface that customers are using.

All our customers have disparate IT environments. It is difficult to bet everything on one platform. Customers will be able to choose the best-in-class, and that's where our value proposition lies. The reach that Business Objects has within the developer community makes it easier to prove ROI to our customers. The content is already in our format. If they want to cross-use, the information is there. The skill-sets are there. It's a lot quicker to achieve ROI, which is vital and utmost in the minds of CXOs.

Kamath: BusinessObjects XI allows users to standardise on a single advanced platform for all of their BI needs. Considering that the SMB segment is growing rapidly in India, we are going to scale up the BI. The product is easy for everyone to use, and is scalable not just in terms of how many users and how much data, but also in terms of enabling people to extract functionality and interact with data as and when they require it. The bottom line is an application more accessible to the so-called 'information consumers' and less technically sophisticated business users who need access to data without having to develop complex analytical formulas. It supports live integration with Excel and other Microsoft Office applications such as Word and PowerPoint, so that users can incorporate live data from reports into the documents created in those applications.

Further, customers can migrate to BusinessObjects XI directly from BusinessObjects 6 and Crystal Decisions products version 7.5 or later.