

INFORMATION INDEPTH NEWSLETTERS

Business Intelligence Edition

May 2009

ORACLE®[back to the main page](#)**Beyond the Spreadsheet: Business Schools Embrace Next-Generation BI and EPM**

In response both to the economic downturn and rapid advances in Business Intelligence (BI) technologies, business schools around the U.S. have begun retooling their curricula, moving beyond spreadsheets to embrace process-oriented, holistic BI and Enterprise Performance Management (EPM).

Both Denver University and St. Joseph's University are now offering master's degrees in BI. At Boston University, students in the master's program in computer information systems can concentrate in database management and business intelligence. Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business has founded the Center for Business Performance Management.

Oracle was invited to discuss the growing importance of performance management and BI in business school curricula at the May meeting of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)—the world's leading accrediting organization for business schools.

Tough Economic Climate Ups the Ante

Despite the economic downturn, Gartner's "[Magic Quadrant for Corporate Performance Management Suites](#)" (April 2009) indicates that the Corporate Performance Management (CPM) suite market is growing at 19 percent year-to-year.

Given current economic conditions, the growth in this market is impressive as companies scale back other capital investments. However, investments in BI and EPM solutions make sense in exactly such an environment.

As margins tighten, businesses—and the business school graduates that they employ—must more carefully assess their costs and profit drivers, understand their markets and customers, and be able to make quick, informed decisions both as markets contract and in preparation for the inevitable rebound.

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Historically, BI reporting has been the function of the technical elite. At the same time, a few business managers would distinguish themselves as "spreadsheet gurus," according to Mark Conway, Director, EPM Alliances and Research at Oracle.

Of course, spreadsheet-based BI comes fraught with risks, including data silos, data inaccuracy, and time-consuming manual processes, says Conway. Yet business schools still tend to design their curricula and programs around the old way of doing business intelligence.

"Business school graduates across disciplines—whether finance, HR, marketing, or logistics—will find themselves far more competitive in the marketplace if they increase their understanding of BI tools and processes," says Conway. "That includes data collection, data cleansing and alignment, data processing, analytics, planning, simulation, and reporting."

Today's technology has changed the game, according to Conway. "Industry is already embracing these new technologies, and now forward-thinking business schools are recognizing that they must train students to succeed in this new reality," he says.

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[Smart Decision-Making in the New Era of Financial Challenges](#) (PDF)

[Ventana: Making One from Many - Standardized BI and best practices help Ingersoll Rand become a single global entity](#) (PDF)

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