BI

INNOVATION & TECH FEST

18-19 SEPTEMBER 2023 | THE MASLOW, SANDTON

eventful people
Connecting the ideas community

BI INNOVATION & TECH FEST

Community Snapshot

The biggest challenges, concerns and topics of interest to the BI Innovation & Tech Community

INTRODUCTION

Eventful People has specialised in developing and nurturing communities of common interest for business and IT professionals for over a decade in South Africa. The BI Innovation & Tech Fest will be taking place for the 4th year in September. The Conference is a celebration of the talent, technology and innovation that is transforming the BI Space.

This snapshot is a summary of the discussion points that are most pressing to those working in BI in South Africa. The themes identified in this research will form the foundation of the agenda for the BI Innovation & Tech Conference, taking place in September 2023.

THE EVENTFUL RESEARCH PROCESS

Each year, Eventful People embarks on a unique research project. Our extensive research for the BI Innovation & Tech Fest conference in 2023 involved engaging with 80 leaders in the BI, data and analytics space from various sectors from 60 leading organizations. These interactions took the form of roundtable discussions, providing us with valuable insights and perspectives directly from key players in the field.

By convening these roundtable sessions, we were able to foster open dialogue and exchange ideas with industry leaders, gaining a deep understanding of the challenges, innovations, and emerging trends in business intelligence (BI) and technology. The input and expertise shared during these discussions have played a crucial role in shaping the agenda for the conference, ensuring that it addresses the most relevant and pressing topics faced by the BI community. Our commitment to collaborative research, involving industry leaders and organizations, has allowed us to deliver a conference that is both comprehensive and impactful. We look forward to bringing together a diverse and influential group of professionals, including C-suite executives, data scientists, technology experts, and entrepreneurs, to explore and showcase groundbreaking BI solutions that drive organizational growth and success in the digital age.

01 Months of in-depth research

02 Hot Topics defined by round table discussions

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & MACHINE LEARNING IN BI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine learning (ML) are revolutionizing the field of BI by enabling advanced analytics, predictive modelling, and automation of data processing tasks. By leveraging these technologies, organizations can unlock the full potential of their data and gain a competitive edge in the data-driven landscape in which we operate. However, despite the infinite possibilities that AI and ML technology make way for, these concepts are by no means a one-size-fits-all silver bullet and there are several challenges associated with their implementation and ongoing success in the business environment.

Key Focus Areas:
- Realising tangible value from AI and ML – real-life case studies.
- Examples of how AI and ML can effectively be utilised in BI.
- Getting back to basics before diving headfirst into AI and ML.
- Addressing the impact, or perceived impact, of AI on employees.
- Insights into AI ethics and governance.
- Methodologies to validate the use cases of AI and intelligent automation.
- How to use AI to enable "do good for the community" as a business.
- Unpacking the AI and ML tools and technologies in the market, and the pros and cons for your business environment.

DATA REPORTING, VISUALIZATION & REAL-TIME ANALYTICS

It is vital for business leaders to be able to make informed decisions, backed by sound data, in real-time. By combining reporting, visualization, and real-time analytics, organizations can gain valuable insights, monitor performance, and make data-driven decisions. With the help of technology and improved processes, business leaders are being empowered to understand complex data, effectively communicate insights, and better respond to changing business conditions. However, although data-driven decision making is without doubt the way of the future, there is still progress to be made, in general, around extracting actionable insights from data.

Key Focus Areas:
- Addressing the challenge of achieving data quality and consistency.
- Shifting away from reactive responses and moving towards predictive practices with the help of data.
- Building an effective data visualisation strategy and the technology available to solve complex data challenges & provide enhanced data visualisation.
- Data Discovery in practice.
- Real-time analytics defined and overcoming the challenges associated with making it a reality in your business context.
- Data interpretation challenges.
- Tools and technologies available for data reporting, visualization and real-time analytics
- Enabling effective decision science.

DATA QUALITY MANAGEMENT, DATA GOVERNANCE & BUILDING A DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE

Data quality management and data governance are critical components of successful business intelligence initiatives. By homing in on holistic data quality management and data governance, organizations can establish and maintain a healthy foundation within the BI function. This includes the implantation of data validation processes, cleansing techniques, data governance frameworks, and the involvement of stakeholders at all levels to ensure that data standards are maintained at the highest quality to drive accurate analysis, reliable reporting and informed decision-making.

Key Focus Areas:
- Unpacking the technology solutions available for effectively managing data quality.
- Defining data ownership and bringing together business strategy and IT practices to make data-driven decisions.
- Data governance best practice and the role and importance of data governance team members.
- Defining data standards and building a data strategy with data quality as the foundation.
- Building the business case for business to invest in data quality management initiatives.
- Defining and achieving truly data-driven business model.
- How to go about building an Information-Drive Culture within the organization.
- Training, change management and communicating the importance of data quality management to stakeholders.
- Understanding the use of data contracts.
- Building a data literacy framework that the business can use to monitor the data driven organsiation.
- How to show the impact of poor data quality to the business.

SELF-SERVICE BI

Self-Service BI is a key enabler to encourage the use of independent data-driven practices in an organisation, without heavy reliance on IT teams and data experts. The aim of self-service BI is to give the users of BI tools more freedom and responsibility at the same time, and the ever-growing demand is a result of business users' need for more flexibility and self-reliance in reporting and analytics. It is, however, important to consider the potential shortcomings with self-service BI, and to establish guidelines, training programs and governance strategies to promote responsible and effective use of self-service BI tools.

Key Focus Areas:
- Understanding the importance, benefits, and challenges of self-service BI for the business.
- Self-Service BI technology – what technology is available and factors to consider when selecting specific tools.
- Mobile BI considerations and challenges.
- The training and change management requirements for successful Self-Service BI.
- Governance frameworks for self-service BI.
- User training and improving data literacy.
- Self-service BI as a means to achieving data democratisation.

BIG DATA ANALYTICS

Big Data Analytics involves applying advanced analytics techniques to uncover meaningful insights from complex data sets to drive business decision making. Big Data Analytics technology is constantly improving and evolving, the impact thereof being that historically unmanageable, high velocity, variety and veracity big data a lot more palatable.

Key Focus Areas:
- Structuring of resources and processes to achieve optimal big data analytics.
- Big data quality and accuracy measures and monitoring.
- Ethical, legal, privacy and security considerations in the big data context.
- Scalability and infrastructure requirements for big data analytics.
- Recruiting and retaining the skillset requirements to achieve big data analytics.
- Realising ROI on big data analytics technology investments.
- Change management and managing the cultural shift required to adopt big data analytics.

CLOUD-BASED BI

Cloud-based business intelligence enables organizations to leverage the scalability, flexibility and cost efficiency of cloud technology to access, analyze and visualize data for decision-making purposes. While the advantages associated with cloud-based business intelligence are vast, there are several challenges that organizations may encounter.

Key Focus Areas:
- Building a business case and strategy for cloud-based BI.
- How have organisations modernised their data governance and data management strategies to accommodate cloud?
- How does Cloud change the way we approach data governance and data management?
- Preparing for Cloud Migrations – Considerations, challenges, and opportunities.
- Understanding the various cloud deployment options available.
- Cloud security and privacy challenges.
- Addressing uniquely Africa Cloud challenges.

DATA MESH & DATA FABRIC

Data Mesh and Data Fabric are two emerging concepts in the field of data management and analytics. Both Data Mesh and Data Fabric aim to address data complexity, enable self-service analytics, and ultimately enhance data agility within businesses. While Data Mesh is focused on decentralized ownership and management of data, Data Fabric provided a unified, integrated layer of data access. Together, these concepts contribute to the evolution of data-drive capabilities and can impact how organizations approach BI and analytics.

Key Focus Areas:
- Understanding the principles, benefits and challenges associated with each approach.
- Team structure considerations for each approach.
- How to get data mesh and data fabric to compliment each other.
- Case studies from organisations who have experienced success with Data Mesh and/or Data Fabric.

DATA PRIVACY & SECURITY

Safeguarding sensitive information, ensuring compliance with data protection regulations, and preventing unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of data, is critical to business intelligence operations.

Key Focus Areas:
- Navigating the impacting and complying with POPIA.
- Implementing data access control measures.
- Understanding the tools that are available to effectively manage and support the security of your data.
- Disaster Recovery lessons learned.
- How to be security conscious without negatively impacting the speed of delivery.
- Managing security vulnerabilities in hybrid landscapes.

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