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Softonomy

Business Intelligence – Making It Real

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Softonomy Ltd

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1. Introduction

Softonomy Ô, a company launched in 2001 and headquartered in Dublin Ireland, are builders of **Software Solutions** for businesses. We design and develop software solutions, each one **customised** to meet the specific needs of our Clients.

We build and implement solutions via an efficient no-nonsense software development approach using either pre-built software/business components or one of our software products. Our customised software solutions enable Clients to realise real improvements in their business performance and deliver a real return on investment.

What we provide to our Clients is powerful, yet really quite straightforward - we build tailored software solutions, that:

- provide a custom and **optimal solution** for each Client's business
- deliver a **return on investment**
- **integrate** smoothly with people, business processes and systems
- facilitate enhancement to **meet changing business demands**
- are **business driven** and focussed
- based on pre-built **cost-effective** software and business components
- utilise **proven technologies**

We provide expertise for all the necessary steps when creating software solutions. We work closely with our Clients and become involved in the success of the solution. We use streamlined techniques to capture our Clients requirements, to design the appropriate solution framework, to iteratively develop and test the solution, to provide training and knowledge transfer, and where requested, change and project management.

Our software solutions are used in a variety of business situations, such as:

- **Strategic** or **Management** information systems
- **Operational** information systems
- **Process Management / Workflow** applications
- **Business Intelligence** applications
- **Web, Internet, E-business** and **Digital Media** applications
- **Integration** solutions
- **Add-on** solutions for ERP, CRM & SCM packages
- **Informational** Systems (databases, data warehouses, knowledge systems)
- **Security** or **Risk** applications
- **Compliance** applications

This white paper on **Business Intelligence (BI)** outlines how our developing suite of business intelligence software products delivers functionality that bolsters the business performance of an organisation.

2. Softonomy Research Programme

We are actively investigating the key **Technology** and **Business** methodologies, techniques and trends, emanating from both commercial and academic sources. We have experience of doing this for over 20 years within and for various organisations.

In terms of **Technology**, we stay familiar with all the relevant developments that take place, such as those developments in information systems and software development. We are not pure theorists as we have hands-on experience, being involved in the building and rollout of real-world, robust and functionally complex solutions for large and not-so-large Clients. We have provided solutions for Clients spanning across a wide range of sectors such as Financial Services, Pharmaceutical, Telecoms, Manufacturing, Hi-Tech and Government.

Typically, the solutions have been used to meet a demand or challenge in a **Business** environment. Trends and changes in business requirements have been drivers of technological developments. However, some new methods in both technology and business have not produced results and our experiences combined with analysis of the general marketplace has helped us to understand what works, and to distinguish between real value-adding improvements from the money-wasting "fads".

Softonomy have embarked on a **continual research programme** to sustain our leading knowledge of technologies and its links to business. We are conducting extensive research using our access to academic research material in Ireland, the US and Europe, complemented by primary research (see Fig 1). Our research programme allows us to understand how technologies can be optimally applied to business and primes us to build world-class effective solutions. The data we collect is analysed and selectively distributed and published on our website: www.softonomy.com

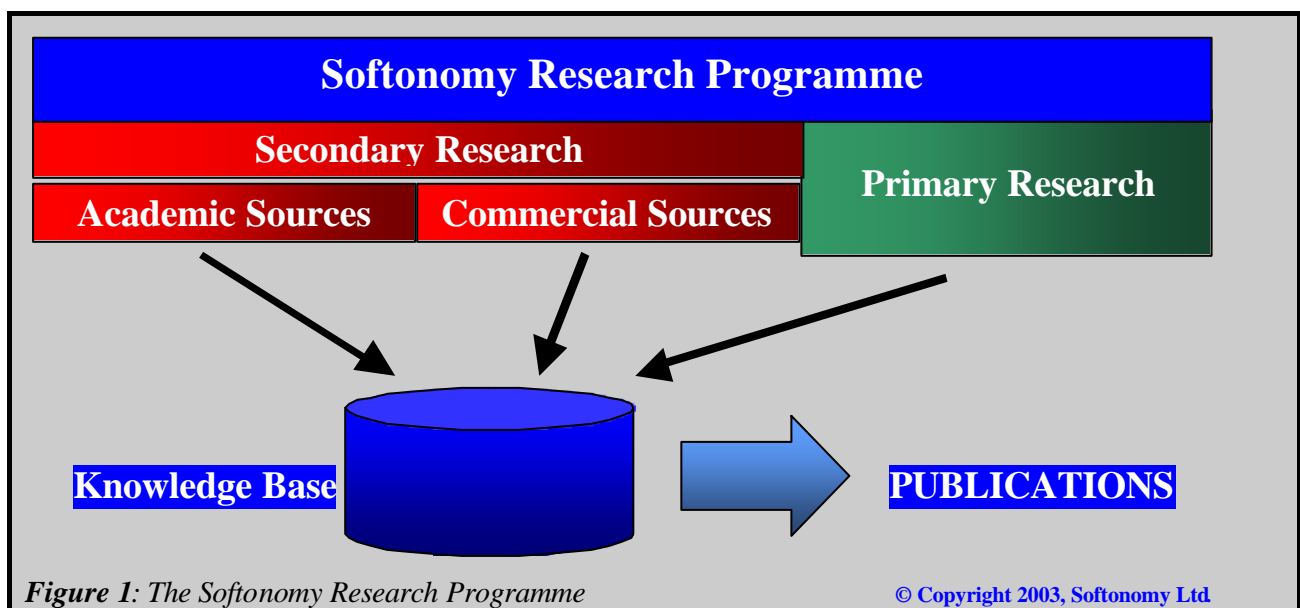


Figure 1: The Softonomy Research Programme

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3. Opportunity for Business

Our research is continually showing that there are still large areas to improve within Businesses. For example, in 2001, the *American Management Association* reported that one of the most important skills Businesses needed is the ability to use information to address business challenges and that getting the right information, at the correct level of detail, delivered to the right person and at the right time, is the key to operating an efficient and performing business in a dynamic market environment.

Clients can use this as a **business opportunity** to improve business **effectiveness** and to realise **efficiencies**, for example when interacting with Customers, when interfacing with Suppliers and Partners, or when executing internal business processes (see Figure 2).

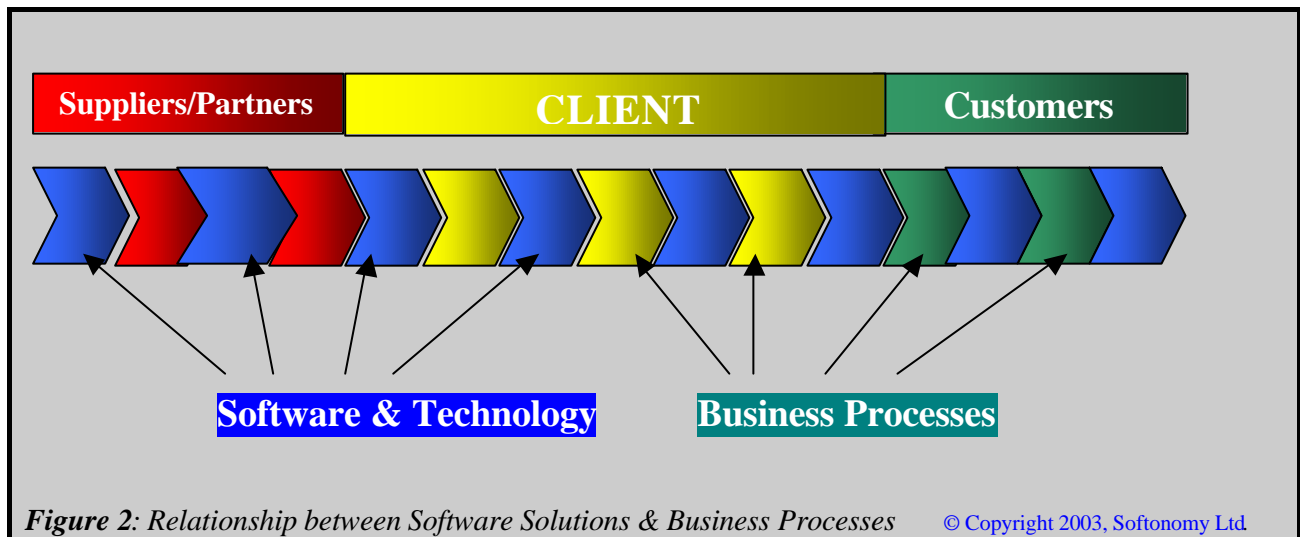


Figure 2: Relationship between Software Solutions & Business Processes

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Clients are using new software applications to improve the operations of their business processes, and hence improve the performance of interactions with their Customers, to optimise the supply chain, to improve margins and profitability and to generate and support revenues.

Software Technology is a key tool for enhancing businesses by improving on current business processes and increasing business competitiveness. Selected investments in software technology today can deliver results and returns in the short term.

Business Intelligence (BI) software applications are one of these selective investments.

4. Technology and Business Performance – The Great Debate

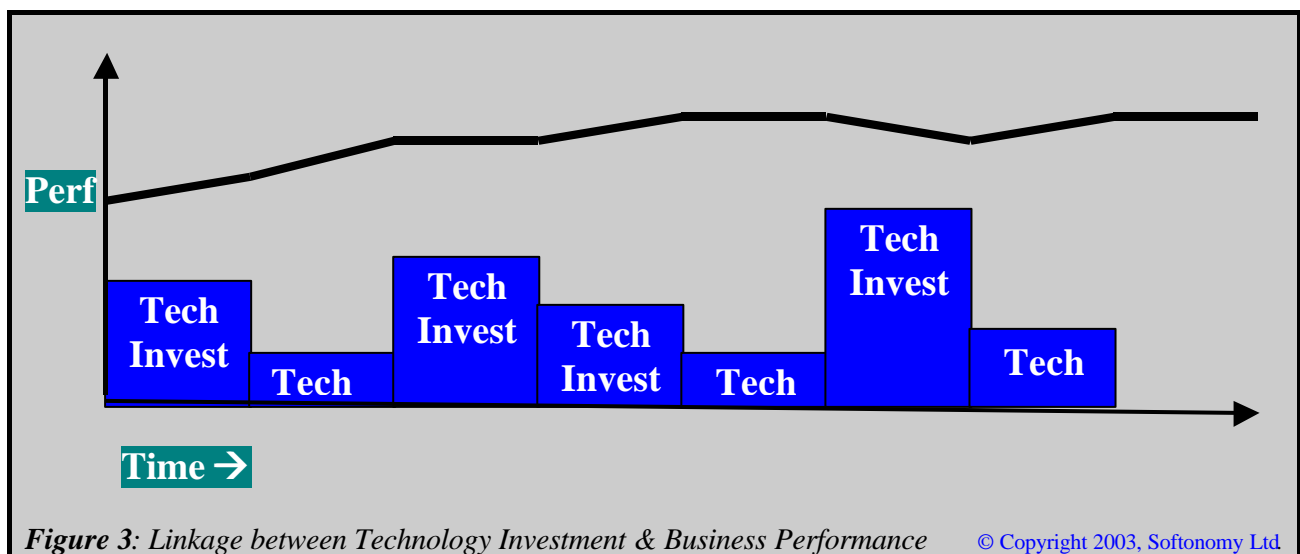
4.1 Does Technology Improve Business?

There has been **much discussion** in both academic and industrial circles about the performance of Businesses and specifically, about the usage of Information Technology in improving business productivity and business performance.

Large **investments** have been made in information technologies since 1990 and in some and perhaps many companies, these investment decisions were taken somewhat “blindly”. Organisations were under pressure to “keep up” with changing technology and in many cases implemented in a “leap of faith” without always knowing if the technology investment decision would likely yield a return and improve business.

For many, investments were made to “keep up” with other companies, such as with implementations of ERP and CRM packages. Ironically, some of these were so unsuited to the implementing business that very poor results were obtained (even making some businesses go bankrupt!). Add to this mix the 1998-2000 dot-com and telco-led **exuberance**, and it is easy to see why so many business managers are left scratching their heads and wondering what these large IT investments were all about. For many managers today, the linkage between business and technology is **not very clear**.

However, the beneficial linkage between Technology and Business has always been evident ever since the beginning of the industrial age. Technologies, whether mechanical as in the 1700's or electronic and information-based as in the modern era, effectively do the same thing – they change the way Businesses operate by enhancing what they do. But what is also clear is that Technology adoption needs to be **selectively targeted** - Business performance can improve with Technology investment, but it is no guarantee, and positive effects when they do come can lag behind investments for several years.



4.2 Getting More out of Technology with Business Intelligence

As Businesses have clearly spent heavily investing in a slew of software and other informational technologies over the past decade, the current focus for many organisations is trying to get the most out of these investments. Indeed, this is probably a wise approach to take, as leveraging the installed set of major applications is one way to bring on improvements in business processes and to improve business performance.

So how can a Business get more out of its current software applications and systems?

One approach that Businesses can adopt is to implement **Business Intelligence (BI)** applications. These applications trawl through vast swathes of business data, including all business transactions and other sources inside and outside a company, and produce *nuggets* of knowledge or information that allows an organisation to basically do something better. In some cases, the BI tools have been used as a way to combine data from the various datasets or data silo's that have been created in organisations, and some of these types of BI projects have proven to be a success.

However, some organisations have thrown BI tools at their data sets without any clear direction and without knowing if there is a possibility of getting these nuggets of information ie: results. For many, it can be a case of trial and error – and some organisations have had success but many have not. The key lesson is that most businesses have a wealth of data and information, the bulk of which they are unable to capitalise upon unless they selectively implement Business Intelligence software.

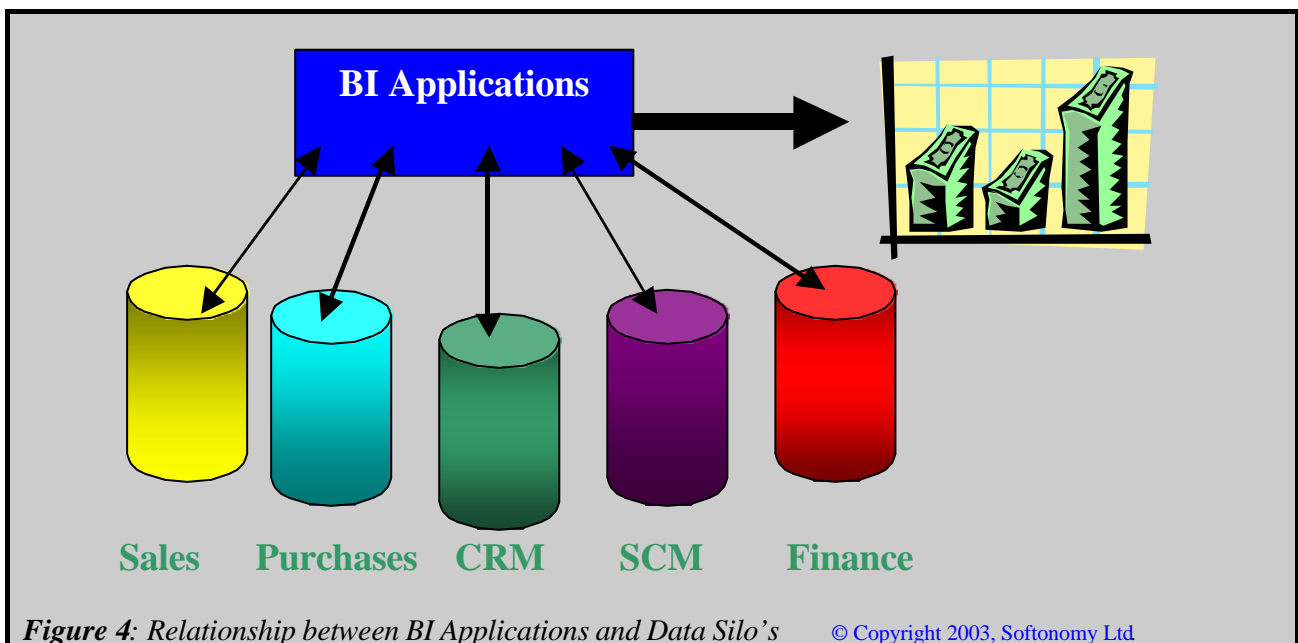


Figure 4: Relationship between BI Applications and Data Silo's

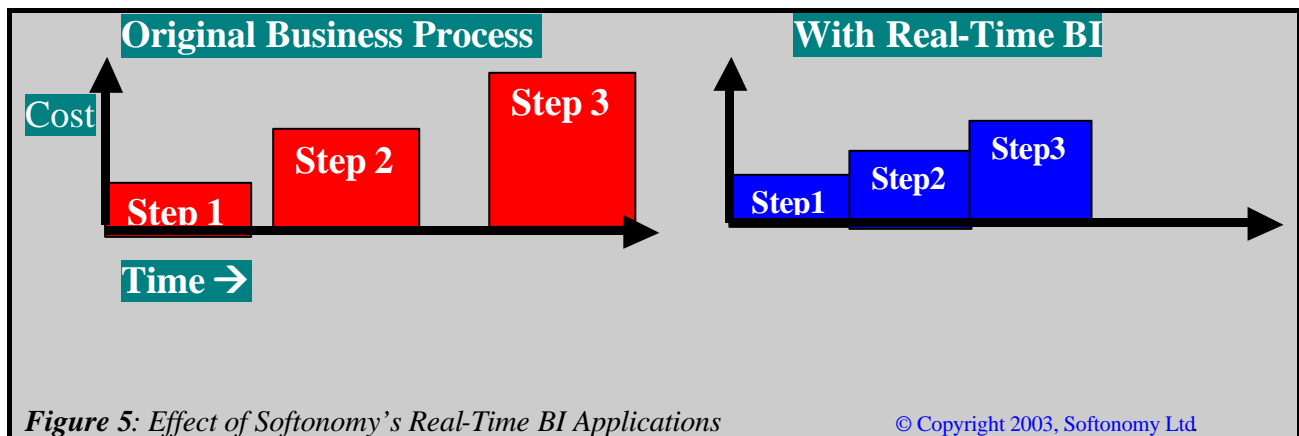
5. Softonomy's Real-Time Business Intelligence

Softonomy have recognised that it is important to provide companies with **Business Intelligence** applications that deliver results, rather than provide technology tools that may provide a benefit, if at all. To this end, we have embarked on building a collection of Business Intelligence applications that meets the needs of Customers in a real way that targets specific returns.

We believe that getting the right information, at the correct level of detail, delivered to the right person and timely, is the key to operating an efficient and performing business. Many businesses have invested in enterprise applications with this goal in mind but in most instances have not yet achieved it. Of course they have achieved considerable improvements in the efficient handling of information, and are able to act upon it, but significant delays still remain in the time required for staff to get the key information in the useable format that they require.

The Business Intelligence products from **Softonomy** provide **real-time** access to critical business information, typically on a per job function basis, so people can do their jobs faster and more effective and with less errors. Real-time and targeted information is delivered with effective **workflow** to guide job activities and tasks. These factors generate positive results by improving business processes, and hence business efficiency and business performance is improved.

Our Business Intelligence products enable an organisation to manage and operate its operations in real-time, with instant measurement and instant notification. The staff involved in the operations can provide instant responses to events that take place in "hidden" areas of the organisation. Information from a range of data sources and applications are used, whether these are internal or external. The solutions combine post-transaction analysis (classic BI) with **enterprise application integration** to deliver information in real-time to staff in a distilled and information-rich form.



Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) is a term that Gartner have defined for the concept of providing real-time access to critical business information to improve the speed and effectiveness of business operations.

Real-Time Business Intelligence applications from **Softonomy** can generally be placed in this category of BAM. However, the BAM term itself is not a good description of what our applications provide. Our solutions go further than merely “monitoring” and work more closely within the business than just at the activity level.

Businesses that have implemented enterprise applications are finding that these suites offer little built-in functionality support for real-time business intelligence. **Enterprise Application Integration (EAI)** platforms are used to integrate multiple disparate applications that require two-way data exchange.

BI tools and EAI technology are key elements of the concept of real-time business intelligence:-

- The transactions, states and conditions that are held within the enterprise applications and from external sources, are correlated, distilled, prioritised, sorted and coded for **human interpretation** and are instantly made available in real-time to the user (staff or management).
- In essence, the key information that a person needs to have for their responsibilities at any point in time is automatically fetched from all data sources and “made sense of”, so the person just has to act on that information as guided by the workflow.
- Users do not have to go in search of that data and perform repeated data correlations and figure out what to do next.
- Their **individualised displays** automatically receive data alerts and are updated accordingly - instant information that delivers competitive advantage.

With **Real-Time Business Intelligence**, businesses have:-

- operational clarity and visibility right across all areas and functions.
- By compressing the complete end-to-end cycle of data interchange within businesses, productivity can be dramatically improved.
- No longer is there the need for weekly reports triggering decisions at weekly or monthly meetings.
- The business becomes “informationally” alive and uses information as its lifeblood.
- The Real-Time Business Intelligence applications are the heart that can pump the information around.

6. Conclusion

In this white paper on **Business Intelligence**, we have outlined how our suite of **real-time** business intelligence software products delivers functionality that bolsters the business performance of an organisation.

We are actively investigating the key **Technology and Business** methodologies, techniques and trends, emanating from commercial and academic sources. We have experience of doing this for over 20 years for various organisations. Our research is continually showing that there are still large areas to improve within Businesses.

There has been **much discussion** in both academic and industrial circles about the performance of Businesses and specifically, about the usage of Information Technology in improving business productivity and business performance. Large **investments** have been made but many business managers are wondering what these were all about. What is clear is that Technology adoption needs to be **selectively targeted** - Business performance can improve with the right Technology investment.

Softonomy have recognised that it is important to provide companies with **Business Intelligence** applications that deliver results. To this end, we have embarked on building a collection of Business Intelligence applications that meets the needs of Customers in a real way that targets specific returns. We believe that getting the right information, at the correct level of detail, delivered to the right person and timely, is the key to operating an efficient and performing business.

The Business Intelligence products from **Softonomy** provide **real-time** access to critical business information, typically on a per job function basis, so people can do their jobs faster and more effective and with less errors. Real-time and targeted information is delivered with effective **workflow** to guide job activities and tasks.

The key elements of the concept of real-time business intelligence:-

- transactions and conditions within the enterprise or externally are correlated, distilled, prioritised and sorted in real-time.
- key information is automatically fetched, "made sense of", guided by workflow
- no need to search for key data and perform repeated data correlations
- individualised displays automatically receive data alerts => instant information

With **Real-Time Business Intelligence**, businesses have:-

- operational clarity and visibility right across all areas and functions.
- compressed end-to-end cycle time of data interchange within businesses.
- no need to wait for decisions at weekly or monthly meetings.
- information as its lifeblood.
- applications that pump information around - "like a heart".

Further Information

For further information on **Softonomy** and other white papers, please refer to our website located at www.softonomy.com

If you have any questions, please send an email to: info@softonomy.com

Alternatively, contact us as follows: Tel: +353 (0) 1 284 6381

We look forward to hearing from you.

The key features of the **Software Solutions** provided by **Softonomy** are that:

- 1) we **build software**, first and foremost
- 2) we **work closely with Clients**, delivering optimum solutions for the business
- 3) we offer a **return on investment**
- 4) we build **customised** solutions, iteratively
- 5) we provide support, maintenance, and **a path for enhancements**
- 6) we deliver a **business-led** approach to software and technology
- 7) we **re-use** pre-built proven software **components** where possible
- 8) we are **practical about technologies**
- 9) we provide **skilled software development resources**

Softonomy focus on software development to bring our Clients cost effectiveness and efficiency, technology flexibility, effective software solutions and to provide a future solution path.
