**How Tableau differs from SAP BusinessObjects.**

**Source: Gartner (February 2014)**

Magic Quadrant for Business Intelligence and Analytics Platforms



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| **Tableau** | **SAP** |
| [Tableau's](http://www.tableausoftware.com/) *highly intuitive, visual-based data discovery*, dashboarding, and data mashup capabilities have transformed business users' expectations about what they can discover in data and share without extensive skills or training with a BI platform. | [SAP's](http://www.sap.com/) BusinessObjects BI Suite delivers a broad range of BI and analytic capabilities through a semantic layer *best suited for large IT-managed deployments that require robust governance and administrative capabilities*. Companies often choose SAP as their enterprise BI standard, particularly if they also standardize on SAP for ERP applications. |
| **Strengths**   * *Tableau offers an intuitive, visual-based interactive data exploration experience* that customers rate highly, and that competitors, large and small, try to imitate. Customers remain extremely happy with Tableau (for the fourth year in a row), particularly with its core differentiator — making a range of types of analysis (from simple to complex) accessible and easy for the ordinary business user, whom Tableau effectively transforms into a "data superhero." Tableau's strong market understanding — as defined by meeting dominant and mainstream buying requirements for ease of use, breadth of use and enabling business users to perform more complex types of analysis without extensive skills or IT assistance — and competitive differentiation continue to increase its momentum, even though it operates in an increasingly crowded market in which most other vendors view it as a target. The company's initial public offering in 2013 provided the resources to enable it to fulfill more of its product and market expansion plans. * *Tableau has a focused vision with an evolutionary road map for enabling users to meet enterprise requirements for reusability, scalability and embeddability.* The company's consistently strong results on key product satisfaction and customer experience measures, combined with high growth, put it in a good position to keep gaining market share and traction in the market's unoccupied space, in increasingly large enterprise deployments, as buyers increasingly demand both enterprise and discovery and visualization capabilities from their BI platforms. Tableau's strong survey results for customer satisfaction, coupled with its market momentum, are behind its dominant Ability to Execute position. Surveyed customers identified ease of use for end users and developers, and functionality, as their main reasons for choosing Tableau. In fact, 73% selected Tableau's product for its ease of use for end users, which places it among the top two vendors in the survey. *A high percentage of users also said they chose its platform because of its low cost to implement*; Tableau customers reported one of the lowest implementation costs per user of any vendor in the survey. Moreover, Tableau earned one of the top aggregate, weighted average product scores (even when adjusted for enterprise deployments); above-average ratings for reporting and ad hoc query; and a ranking of No. 1 or No. 2 for dashboards, business user data mashup, geospatial intelligence, mobile and interactive visualization capabilities; it also has one of the highest percentages of users actively deploying mobile BI in the survey. Tableau 8.1, the latest release, adds R integration and prediction bands to existing forecasting capabilities. More business-user-oriented, advanced analytics are planned for future releases, which should add to the types of analysis users can conduct without advanced analytic skills. * Tableau provides purpose-built, business-oriented data mashup capabilities with data connectors that use Tableau's VizQL technology. Direct query access has been a strength of the platform since the product's inception. Customers report average deployment sizes in terms of users, with data volumes among the best in the survey as a result of Tableau's direct query access. Tableau offers a broad range of support for direct-query SQL and MDX data sources, as well as a number of Hadoop distributions, native support for Google BigQuery, and support for search-based data discovery platforms, such as Attivio. Tableau's columnar, in-memory data engine, which can be used as an alternative to, or in, hybrid mode with its direct query access, enables fast performance on large and multisource datasets and on complex queries, such as very large multidimensional filters. * Customers rate Tableau above average for customer experience (support, product quality). Moreover, despite frequent new product releases requiring customers to upgrade, Tableau customers gave it one of the lowest scores for migration complexity (lower means easier); over 90% of its surveyed customers were on the latest release of the software. Tableau's new cloud offerings, collectively called Tableau Online, build on its customer-facing offerings and have the potential to expose substantially more users to Tableau products — and thereby increase Tableau's momentum — than its traditional direct channels could. | **Strengths**   * *SAP's BI customers reported an average deployment size three times the survey average, with over 80% identifying SAP as their enterprise BI standard.* Over 60% of its surveyed customers use SAP as their primary ERP system, which indicates a strong stack-centric value proposition. This is underlined by 20% of its reference customers — among the highest percentage in the survey — indicating that integration with enterprise applications was their main reason for selecting SAP as a BI vendor. * SAP has been investing heavily in SAP Lumira to establish a presence in the rapidly growing data discovery market where demand is high for BI tools that empower business users to self-serve without being restricted to a centrally governed semantic layer and IT-managed content. Lumira has been the focus of aggressive product development (including some "smart data discovery" features) and marketing efforts, which are expected to continue, with functional enhancements planned for both the desktop and cloud versions, along with the release of Lumira Server, which will run natively on the SAP Hana platform. * *SAP is widely used to embed BI content, but is not widely used by customers to embed advanced (predictive and prescriptive) analytic content.* However, this capability is a key strategic aim for SAP, with both Hana and KXEN, which it acquired in 2013, at its core. Its intention is to expand the reach of its BI and analytics to make advanced analytic content accessible at the point of consumption for end users by embedding it into purpose-built packaged applications powered by Hana, or bundling it with SAP's Business Suite applications. The release in late 2013 of SAP InfiniteInsight (based on the acquired KXEN product), which is bundled with SAP Predictive Analysis, confirms SAP's strategic direction and commitment to embedded and accessible advanced analytics and smart data discovery by combining the capabilities of Hana, KXEN and Lumira in a single platform that delivers sophisticated (in some cases, automated) predictive and prescriptive analytic capabilities to a broad range of business users. * *In 2013, SAP continued to expand its BI Customer Success initiative, which is aimed at improving its overall customer experience in response to years of poor survey results in this area.* In addition to a focus on product quality and reliability, the most notable aspects of the initiative are a new BI Customer Success website and an expanded online curriculum of BI- specific courses available through its openSAP training portal, which have been well received and used by customers and SAP's large network of partners. *These efforts appear to be benefiting SAP's customer experience survey ratings, which have improved overall from the previous survey.* Although still below this year's overall Magic Quadrant vendor average for customer experience, customers running SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.1 noted improvements, which indicates a positive trend in terms of customer experience for SAP's recent releases. |
| **Cautions**   * Although Tableau's average user count continues to grow and was above the market average in this year's customer survey, its products are often used to complement an existing BI platform standard; *only 42% of its customers considered it as their BI standard*. For organizations that deploy multiple tools, this can present challenges in terms of governance, consistency and skill silos. Given the success of Tableau and other interactive-visualization vendors, traditional BI platform vendors with substantial installed-base market shares but lacking in growth momentum, including IBM, Microsoft, MicroStrategy, SAP and SAS, are aggressively investing in their own data discovery capabilities to reverse the trend. Moreover, new shoots of innovation relating to the automation of advanced analytics are emerging from vendors like IBM (Watson Analytics), which could threaten the dominance of the Tableau-based data discovery paradigm. These vendors are integrating and bundling data discovery capabilities with their platforms for free, or at low cost, to meet their customers' requirements for ease of use by business users proactively and, more importantly, to defend their installed bases from Tableau and other data discovery vendors. Although these efforts have had limited success to date, the stakes are high for the incumbent vendors that are losing new license purchases to data discovery vendors such as Tableau. At some point, these BI platform vendors are likely either to become innovative enough or simply "good enough" to satisfy their existing customers, or to make acquisitions to fill the gap. This could threaten the "land and expand" growth strategy that Tableau has so far relied on for adoption as a complementary vendor. * *Tableau's customers report a below-average sales experience, which includes the entire sales life cycle from presales activities to contracting, pricing and the ongoing sales relationship.* Gartner's inquiries reveal that customers often view Tableau as inflexible in contract negotiations and complain that its 25% annual maintenance fee is higher than those of most other vendors. Although Tableau's license costs per user are below the survey average (particularly as customers increase their user numbers), the cost of the software was identified as limiting broader deployment. * *Although customers report that they employ Tableau for a broad range of uses, the company lacks traditional BI platform capabilities, such as production reporting*. Customers needing capabilities spanning systems-of-record reporting and interactive dashboards and visualization from a single tool are unlikely to choose Tableau as their enterprise standard. Similarly, Tableau's user ratings for enterprise features such as metadata management and BI infrastructure are below the survey average. Although Tableau does offer its Data Server product to facilitate data reuse and governance, this suggests that Tableau's ability to satisfy the combination of business user requirements and IT requirements for enterprise governance and manageability is still a work in process, and the race to secure this market "white space" remains open and highly competitive.   Tableau continues to expand its international presence, but the majority of its customers are likely to be large (often international) companies located in North America. Tableau has opened sales offices in Europe and Asia (for example, Singapore) and introduced support in Asia; it also plans further global sales expansion with live, time-zone-appropriate support in local languages | **Cautions**   * *Customers rated SAP third-lowest overall for market understanding*. This includes ease of use and support for complex types of analysis, where it came second lowest*. Additionally, 25% of SAP's reference customers indicated limitations on wider deployment in terms of ease of use for business users*, the second-highest percentage of any vendor in this Magic Quadrant. SAP customers use SAP BusinessObjects BI primarily for reporting; the number that use it for interactive discovery or visualization was well below the average for vendors in this Magic Quadrant. While SAP has reported significant activity in terms of Lumira software downloads, Gartner has yet to see evidence that Lumira is gaining traction and being adopted in production as a data discovery tool. SAP will have to continue to invest in and evolve its data discovery capabilities in order to convince customers that Lumira is a viable option, compared with the strong leaders in this competitive sector. * Before the release of version 4.1, SAP customers upgrading from BusinessObjects 3.x to 4.0 in 2013 encountered issues during the migration, and this was clearly indicated in the survey results when reference customers were asked about migration difficulty. Overall, SAP was rated more difficult than the survey average for migration difficulty; customers using BusinessObjects 3.1 rated it the most difficult of all the products in the survey, and many customers on version 4.0 also rated their migration experience more difficult than the survey average. It should be noted, however, that references who have migrated to SAP BusinessObjects 4.1 rated the migration experience better than the survey average, indicating improvement in this area for SAP's most recent releases. This should benefit customers who have yet to upgrade to the latest version of SAP BusinessObjects. * *SAP's reference customers rated it third-lowest overall for sales experience, and 42% identified cost as a factor limiting wider deployment.* This theme has become more prevalent in Gartner's dealings with clients (including contract reviews), with customers raising concerns about being pushed by SAP's sales team to increase capacity, add functionality in new bundles, or move to the Hana platform, which would result in increased license cost structures. This has frustrated customers who expect upgrades to be included in the software maintenance cost. SAP needs to address this concern with more transparent pricing and improved communication of upgrade requirements and upselling and cross-selling proposals, so that customers can make more informed buying decisions. * *Although SAP offers a broad range of BI and analytic capabilities, seamless integration of these across the product stack remains a work in progress*. There have been improvements in this respect, particularly with the integration of individual products within the SAP BusinessObjects BI platform (Web Intelligence, Explorer, Dashboards and Crystal Reports), but SAP has more work to do to integrate newer products, such as Lumira, Predictive Analysis and KXEN, fully into its BI and analytic portfolio. SAP is positioning Hana as the strategic database and in-memory platform that will enable much of the advanced analytics functionality delivered by Lumira, Predictive Analysis and KXEN, but this has generated some concern among SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse and SAP BusinessObjects customers, who perceive a lack of clarity about the level of investment and product development effort that SAP will commit to traditional BI platforms and products in the future. |