

# Unlock the power of your information

## 5 ways Business Intelligence can transform your business



**How a Business Intelligence solution can help you identify efficiencies, embrace innovation and improve outcomes for customers, employees and your bottom line.**

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“Nearly 50% of executive management teams see Cloud BI as critical and very important to their information needs.”

**2017 Cloud Computing and Business Intelligence Market Study, Dresner**

As data grows at an exponential rate across all sectors, how business leaders analyse and use that information for decision making has a critical impact on their success.

### In this whitepaper:

- Common challenges for business leaders
- 5 key priorities for managers today
- How a quality Business Intelligence solution such as Power BI can make a difference
- Case study: how RSL LifeCare gained better decision making through Power BI
- How Huon IT can help businesses achieve transparency for smarter decision making

While many organisations have plenty of data, it's often not readily available, or is difficult to cross-reference with data from other systems. As such, it's nearly impossible for managers to easily gain a robust overview of the day-to-day workings and metrics of the organisation as a whole.

All of this means processes are often more labour intensive than they need to be, insights are limited, staff get unnecessarily frustrated and customers don't necessarily receive the level of service they expect.

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Frequently there is a lack of true integration between departments or systems within a business, so many are operating with a collection of very disparate and disconnected technologies.

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For this reason, we are seeing more and more organisations turn to Business Intelligence analytics solutions; embracing pre-built dashboards and sophisticated data models to make faster decisions, reduce workload for employees, and even improve customer service outcomes.

With a Business Intelligence solution, organisations can draw together data from disparate systems and view it in an easily digestible form. Imagine being able to see everything from customer trends, sales data, resource levels, financial information and employee activities in the one place. The software also enables you to view data as charts and graphs, and run cross-dataset queries, so that managers can yield quick and informed insights into the business.

**“Our business is so big and there is so much going on, we need to see what’s on the edges before they fall off the road, but this was near impossible before Power BI.”**

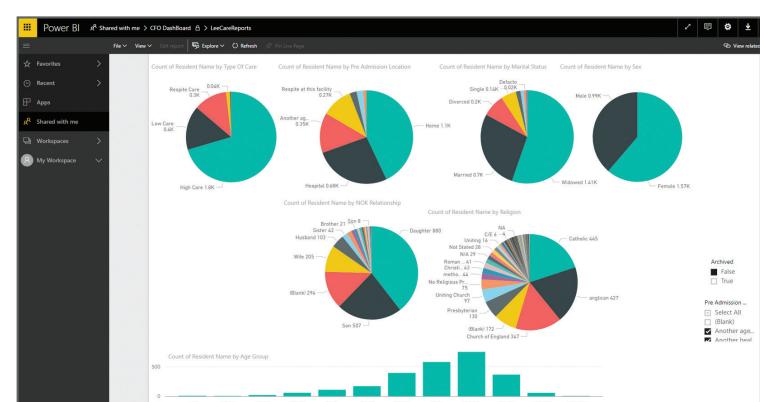
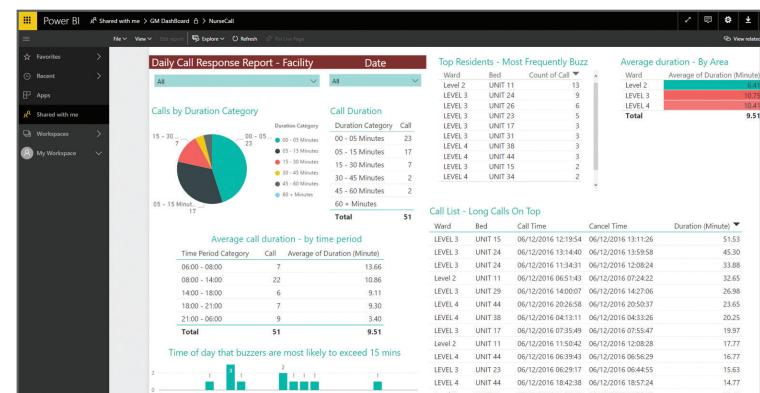
**Mark Broadhead,  
CFO, RSL LifeCare**



## What is Business Intelligence?

Broadly, Business Intelligence refers to the process of using technology to capture, analyse and report on an organisation's data in order to create meaningful insights and improve decision-making.

At Huon IT, we have implemented Microsoft Power BI for many Australian organisations. The collection of software services, apps, and connectors work together to turn unrelated sources of data into coherent, visually immersive, and interactive insights. Whether your data is based in a simple Excel spreadsheet, or in a collection of cloud-based and on-premises hybrid data warehouses, Microsoft Power BI lets you easily connect to your data sources, discover what's important, and share this information with those people you want to.





## 5 WAYS BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

### ► 1. Improving the quality and speed of customer service

Both here in Australia and globally, the nature of business is transforming; steep competition and ever-advancing technology means that customers expect immediate, customised quality service – or they will simply go elsewhere.

This paradigm shift represents an enormous demand to deliver innovation and results – a demand which is being met by successful leaders through better analysis of data – and developing how they can best respond to the evolving needs of their customer base.

Understanding that customer base is key, and is equally important at both ends of the spectrum – overarching trends will reflect market needs, while customer feedback (either direct or indirect through online behaviour) allows a business the opportunity to engage and personalisation. This helps to both retain existing customers, and attract target clients alike.

With a Business Intelligence solution in place, managers can access a great deal of real-time data on their operation and service – to drive smarter, faster and more customised outcomes. For instance, this could include getting a greater understanding of customer demographics, tracking how long employees are taking to respond to requests, or more effectively planning for the future.

#### **With a Business Intelligence solution, businesses can:**

- Gain a more accurate understanding of their customers' mix and behaviours.
- Jump on the latest industry shifts to implement new or improved customer service tactics.
- Track the average time that staff are taking to respond to requests, and if necessary, adjust staffing levels or service strategies accordingly.
- More effectively plan room allocations; potentially enabling residents to move to better or more appropriate rooms, sooner.

*“Even major corporations can understand individual customers, products [or services] can be improved based on customer feedback... all through the capabilities of business intelligence.”*

**MyCustomer, 2016**

“Companies using analytics are 5x more likely to make faster decisions”

Forbes 2014



## ► 2. Centralising insights for smarter decisions

While most sectors are exploding in terms of digital innovation, many IT solutions available still serve niche purposes and operate independently from one another. This means there is a distinct lack of consolidated data available from line-of-business systems. As such, many businesses still use fairly manual, error prone and time consuming methods of capturing and cross-referencing information.

For managers, this means it can be extremely difficult to extract insights, and to therefore make smart, accurate decisions. As markets becomes increasingly competitive, and compliance requirements grow in complexity, having a centralised view of the business is more and more essential.

Without business intelligence, organisations risk bad or poorly timed decisions. In 2016, Forbes reported:

- Knowledge workers reported up to 50% of time is wasted in hidden data factories, hunting for data, finding and correcting errors, and searching for confirmatory sources for data they don't trust
- Erroneous decisions made from bad data are not only inconvenient, but also extremely costly. IBM looked at poor data quality costs in the United States and estimated that decisions made from bad data cost the US economy roughly \$3.1 trillion dollars each year.

Damian Huon, CEO at Huon IT, explains:

“When businesses have a range of applications to suit their varied needs, often there is limited to no integration with some of these systems. Without pulling information together via a Business Intelligence solution, you can never overlay the data, which is a real missed opportunity to see both potential opportunities or problems before they strike.”

By being able to view this information in real-time, via compelling dashboards, providers can then make more rapid and accurate decisions that optimise their entire operation.

“Most of the clients we work with have a large number of applications; often best-of-breed, line of business applications. The advantage of Business Intelligence is that we can correlate this data, link it in a meaningful way and provide deep and relevant insights,” says Edward Judson, Head of Software Development at Huon IT.

With a Business Intelligence solution, organisations can bridge the information gap - bringing insights from a raft of core business systems together in the one central location, and then use powerful features to cross map the data. This includes data from applications that are on-premise, in the cloud, or even on a hybrid infrastructure.

### ► 3. On demand reporting and streamlined compliance

More and more, businesses are required to submit detailed reports to either internal stakeholders or boards, or external governance and regulatory bodies to meet compliance requirements. For many business managers, much of this information is captured, collated and provided using laborious manual processes.

This can add a significant administrative overhead and risks human error in reporting. With a Business Intelligence solution, businesses have the information they need at their fingertips, generate on demand and are empowered to effectively and rapidly respond to compliance and regulatory demands.

For instance, an operator can incorporate human resources data to very quickly determine what percentage of its staff has completed first aid training or undergone a full police check. Similarly, data can be used to track the hours worked by employees on restricted working visas; ensuring they don't exceed their permitted allocation.

"With any business, it's what you don't know that's going to catch you out when it comes to compliance. The more information managers can get onto their dashboard, the more visibility they have, and the more equipped they are overall," says Damian.

To stay competitive it is more important than ever before to be able to track, assess, meet and exceed compliance requirements as efficiently as possible.

"At Huon IT, we work across a broad range of clients from large corporates, to smaller businesses. What we see is a landscape of different solutions – both across these businesses and within these businesses. But no matter the size, harnessing this data, and the knowledge within that data, is key for any business in order to ensure it's on the right charter and going forward focused on the right activities," Damian adds.



Mark says that until this 'silver bullet' software, Senior Managers had resigned themselves to the fact that they'd need to use multiple solutions. As Mark explains, "our business is so big with so much going on, we need to see what's on the edges before they fall off the road, but this was near impossible before Power BI. "

**Mark Broadhead, CFO  
RSL LifeCare**



**"The cost/benefit is very strong. Now we have a helicopter view and the business improvement has been wonderful."**

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## ► 4. Easy access to the right information – role based dashboard

Within any organisation, there are several different areas of responsibility. Information that adds value to one department may be largely irrelevant, or even restricted, to another.

For this reason, the ability to customise a Business Intelligence solution to suit the individual needs of the user, or the team, whilst keeping security levels top of mind, is vital.

For instance, an organisation's CFO could receive high-level insights related to the overall financial performance: fluctuations in operating costs and income, overall staff costs, variances in equipment costs and other outgoings, and more.

By contrast, a human resources manager could draw on a range of information sources and be able to schedule staff according to their: availability, location, travel requirements, experience, qualifications, skills – and importantly, the individual needs of clients. They may also want to track employee activity by service, program or time of day; or map services and delivery analytics to determine how efficiently services are being provided, and whether the most appropriately located or qualified staff are being allocated to the right jobs.

A team leader could also logon to a dashboard to get at-a-glance information about a team they are managing, even on the go, working from home, or out of hours.

"A quality Business Intelligence solution offers a broad set of dashboards that can be customised by location or role. So while each department – operations, finance, sales, marketing, etc – may have entirely different interests, so too might roles within each. The head of a department's dashboard might be quite different from a team leaders. The General Manager's different from a CEO's, and so on. For each person, it's about having a single, central location where they can view data that's customised to them and their information requirements, so they can do their job in an easier and more effective way," says Huon Head of Software Development', Edward Judson.

**"We created a dashboard for each of the general managers to learn about what was going on in their areas...we had input into all the logistical considerations, and each manager helped design their own dashboard".**

**Huon IT built the system quickly  
"They got it done within 2 months...It was very impressive"**

**Mark Broadhead,  
CFO, RSL LifeCare**

**"The feedback has been extremely positive. The GMs are able to see at a glance what they need to do. Our complex business just got simpler."**

**Mark Broadhead, CFO**



## ► 5. A familiar tool for many tasks

For all managers, time is a precious commodity. In order to be able to spend more time focused on building the business and delivering quality outcomes, staff need tools to help them be as efficient and productive as possible.

However, while many data-related tools offer great functionality, many are too difficult and cumbersome for busy managers to want to learn to use. Microsoft BI has been built to be user friendly, from the ground up. With its familiar Windows 10 interface managers feel comfortable and, even with little or no training, find the tool so useful they want to keep using it.

With Power BI, it is easy to intuitively navigate the reports drawn from multiple sources, and benefit from the insights that come through the simple, visual graphs and charts. In a well-designed Power BI model, you can even type natural language questions to get the best possible representation of requested data. For instance, a national manager could ask the tool to: "compare sales for July by state", or "show me the staff levels by role and customer service rankings" and the tool would get the data, make the comparisons and present the data as a graph, map, chart or raw data.

Organisations can also automate and streamline their reporting – unifying all the organisation's data in one central location, whether it's in the cloud or on premise, and publish it securely via an intuitive drag-and-drop interface.

With a Business Intelligence solution, such as Power BI, your aged care organisation can:

- Undertake data discovery and generate insights through data visualisation.
- Analyse and query organisational datasets without needing to have an in-depth knowledge of Microsoft SQL.
- Analyse data from a wide range of sources including; spreadsheets, databases, streaming and cloud services (SaaS).
- Load multiple sources of data into the same report and blend them together by linking the datasets on common attributes or identifiers.
- View reports online with other stakeholders
- Create mobile-formatted dashboards for tracking performance against key metrics.

- Leverage Microsoft's machine learning and advanced analytics capabilities to classify and categorise data more effectively based on historic trends, patterns and behaviour.
- Create role specific dashboards that give up to the minute data relevant for each manager
- Create or view data visualisations or subsets using natural language queries and questions.

And much more.

**To find out more about Business Intelligence solutions and how it could help you discover insights and tracking to deliver better service more efficiently, get in touch with Huon IT on 1300 4866 48 or visit [huonit.com.au](http://huonit.com.au).**

# Success story: How RSL LifeCare improved resident care through Business Intelligence

RSL LifeCare is a leader in senior living, providing high quality retirement villages, nursing homes, and personal home care throughout NSW and the ACT. Proudly serving Australia for over 100 years, RSL LifeCare is a not-for-profit organisation which began as a haven for war veterans, and has grown to serve all Australians. They are a large and complex organisation, with more than 30 locations, 7,000 residents and care recipients, and 2,500 staff.

As a client of Huon IT for almost a decade, RSL LifeCare has long appreciated Huon IT's commitment to helping them solve business challenges through innovation.

**"We had input into all the logistical considerations, and each manager helped design their own dashboard."**

**Mark Broadhead, CFO RSL LifeCare**

So when Huon IT recommended that RSL LifeCare deploy Power BI to improve insight across their organisation, it didn't take long before RSL LifeCare decided to move forward with the recommendation.

Before they worked with Huon It to deploy Power BI, RSL LifeCare's managers had no way of seeing key information in a centralised spot. Like many large organisations, their important data and key performance indicators were housed in a variety of disparate software systems, which means managers would sometimes miss warning signs until problems had blossomed.

"What we lacked was something centralised like the dashboard in a car," When you're driving, you want a little red light to pop on when your oil is low. You don't want to find out something's wrong after your engine's been stripped," says Broadhead.

He also points out that until implementing this "silver bullet" solution, members of RSL LifeCare's management team had resigned themselves to the fact that they'd need to use multiple solutions. "Our business is so big and there is so much going

on, we need to see what's on the edges before they fall off the road, but this was near impossible before Power BI." The management team were impressed with Power BI as a way to overcome this challenge, and worked closely with Huon IT to design the dashboards that would make key performance indicators readily visible.

"We created a dashboard for each of the relevant managers and general managers to learn about what's going on in their areas," Broadhead says. "We had input into all the logistical considerations, and each manager helped design their own dashboard."

Collaborating with RSL LifeCare's database administrator, Huon IT built the system quickly, within just two months, and the benefits were fairly immediate.

"All the feedback from the team has been very positive. The GMs are able to see at a glance what they need to do. The cost/benefit is very strong. Now we have a helicopter view and the business improvement has been wonderful. It's a fantastic resource management solution," says Broadhead.

## The solution Huon IT provided RSL LifeCare with:

- Discovery sessions in which senior managers could determine what information needed to be accessible in their dashboards.
- Full project design that included all the steps, frameworks, and actions required to deploy the solution in an efficient way.
- Collaborative planning with RSL LifeCare's database administrator.
- Build and implementation, including access to all the required data across multiple platforms.
- Training and change management to ensure that RSL LifeCare's management team could use Power BI as designed.

## Benefits of Power BI

- Customised dashboards for managers, providing at-a-glance, real-time updates about key performance indicators.
- Fast, efficient project process and deployment.
- Faster, more strategic decision making.

Broadhead says that the experience has reinforced the decision to work with Huon IT. "Huon IT - they're the people," he says. "They do what they say and say what they do. They're upfront. There are never any surprises. They feel like a partner. In fact, it seems to me that they're as passionate about our business as I am."

“Huon is passionate about the work we do and they always provide expert support and innovative ideas,” Mark says. “They’re more a partner than a supplier.”

**Mark Broadhead, RSL LifeCare’s CFO**



## How Huon IT use data to improve management and care outcomes

At Huon IT, we specialise in helping businesses overcome core challenges with IT and data: by providing access to the right information, in the right context, at the right time.

Our sophisticated Business Intelligence solutions leverage Power BI's powerful features and customisable dashboards to deliver insights and enable faster decision making, increased efficiency, automated processes and significantly improved collaboration. With Power BI's sophisticated business analytics tools, organisations can pull data from multiple platforms and line-of-business systems, and analyse it, visually, in one, handy location, from any internet-enabled device. Dashboards can also be customised to suit the needs of different departments or teams, meaning everyone gets the insights that are specifically relevant to their needs.

Huon IT has worked with Australian businesses of all sizes and industries since 1989. Together we develop and deliver the technology road map, and can assist with every stage, from strategy to overflow or procurement.

We deliver fully customised solutions that bring together clients' line-of-business applications, and deliver powerful, timely insights.

To find out more about Business Intelligence solutions and how it could help you discover insights and tracking to deliver better service and improve your bottom line, get in touch with Huon IT on 1300 4866 48 or visit [huonit.com.au](http://huonit.com.au).

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