4 types of business intelligence dashboards

As you have been learning, the use of storytelling is very powerful when working with cloud data. As a cloud data analyst, dashboards are one of the key ways to communicate your data's story to stakeholders. Effective dashboards provide visualizations that help stakeholders track key business metrics, analyze relevant data, gain insights about their business practices, and create data-informed plans to achieve their goals.

In this reading, you'll learn more about the different types of dashboards that data analysts can create to unlock key insights for their stakeholders.

Types of business intelligence dashboards

Each business or department may approach business intelligence dashboards differently depending on their needs. However, there are four categories that most business intelligence dashboards can be grouped into:

1. Strategic
2. Operational
3. Analytical
4. Tactical

Strategic

Strategic dashboards offer a high-level overview, focused on long-term, organizational strategies and goals. These dashboards are used primarily by senior decision makers like directors and executives. You can include high-level key performance indicators (KPIs) in strategic dashboards to summarize the progress of company initiatives, and help executives make adjustments to operational costs and company-wide business strategy.

Strategic dashboards often include visualizations or data relating to long-term revenue trends, financial performance, customer satisfaction, and customer acquisition.

Operational

Operational dashboards frequently display near real-time data that allow managers to get a quick update on the operations of various teams or departments. These dashboards are more commonly a flexible design that can be used throughout an organization. Operational dashboards usually display data from shorter time frames that allow managers to monitor

teams, and swiftly pivot priorities to proactively address issues or build on positive momentum.

Operational dashboards often give managers an at-a-glance view of visualizations or data that relate to topics like short-term marketing initiative impact, production line performance, and customer support analysis.

Analytical

Analytical dashboards usually contain large amounts of data covering many aspects of the business, and are interactive to allow for deeper exploration of the data. Data analysts use filters and other tools to identify deeper insights and trends in the data. The insights derived from analytical dashboards are then used to create reports that senior management can use to forecast future business conditions, set goals, and develop business intelligence strategies that are supported by historical data.

Analytical dashboards often include visualizations and data relating to granular topics, like sales by category, website traffic, consumer behavior, customer service performance details, and inventory management.

Note: Due to the broad and complex nature of the data included in analytical dashboards, this is the most common type of dashboard you'll work with in your career.

Tactical

Similar to analytical dashboards, tactical dashboards are also interactive, and allow middle managers and data analysts to explore deeper meanings behind data. Tactical dashboards are less broad than analytical dashboards, and focus mostly on tracking progress towards a single department goal or business initiative.

Tactical dashboards often include visualizations or data relating to topics like marketing effectiveness, project budgets, timelines, and status of departmental KPIs.

Custom dashboard designs

Although each dashboard type serves its own purpose, the four dashboard types may be combined or overlap. These different types of dashboards can be used as general guidelines while you consider ways to design your dashboards. As always, keep the needs of your users at the forefront of decision making. Sometimes, you'll find the needs of your stakeholders don't fit perfectly into one of the dashboard types. When this happens, you can combine various elements of the four dashboard types to create a design that works best for your stakeholders.

Key takeaways

Business intelligence dashboards provide opportunities for business teams to identify helpful insights about data that inform business decisions. While strategic, operational, analytical, and

tactical dashboards each serve a different purpose, they all help stakeholders better understand their business, and make informed decisions. If you're knowledgeable about each type of dashboard, and keep your stakeholders' needs in mind, you'll improve your communication skills, and design more effective dashboards.