



Business Intelligence:

5 RISKS & REWARDS





Launching a business intelligence initiative comes with substantial risks. **Do it right, though, and you'll enjoy significant rewards.**



Here's our guide to navigating the potential pitfalls of BI transformation, by making sure you have the right people on board to balance the challenges of implementation with the benefits of getting it right...

1

RISK:

Resistance to change.

Teams can feel hostile towards BI implementation or a change in BI tools. If new methods are forced on unwilling departments, there's little chance that they will use them well. Using BI badly or half-heartedly could be worse than not using it at all.

BI is where data meets commercial, and it's where you need talent with authority on both. Leaders need to be able to speak to sales-minded and data-focused people in a language that fits both. That way, they can communicate change as a colleague and equal, not impose it as an out-of-touch authority.



REWARD:

Stronger data culture.

With the right talent steering the implementation and communication of a BI initiative, a company's data culture can start to thrive.

A strong data culture means that you're using data intelligently and strategically to make business decisions, and allows data to inform everyday actions. It also means that processes and habits with data are standardised, so that data remains clean and useful however much it gets moved, shared, or accessed.



2

RISK:

Poor data quality.

Whatever tools you have, they'll be of no benefit if the data itself is poor. If large slices of data are missing, duplicates are rife, or the business is overwhelmed with data that's not actually useful, the best BI system in the world would be useless.

Responsibility and accountability must be part of your data culture. That means a) that everyone knows and feels that data cleanliness and quality is part of their role and b) you have expert data guardians who can oversee and champion that culture.



REWARD:

Accurate, game-changing insights.

When your data is clear, accurate, timely, you will start to see patterns and trends that either vindicate your strategy, allowing you to confidently commit time and budget to it, or reveal truths and realities you weren't aware of, so you can adjust your strategy.

Either way, that knowledge unlocks enormous potential for growth.



3

RISK: Escalating scope.

Enthusiasm for a new BI regime can lead to 'too much, too soon'. The scope of the project grows as users make small additions that soon build up, endangering the timelines of the project, as well as the quality.

Those in charge of the project need a deep understanding of what data will be useful, what level of priority it should hold, and what the impact of project additions will be. Once again, that requires a high level of data literacy combined with commercial business sense.



REWARD: Sustainable change.

When you focus on one priority at a time, change remains manageable, and most importantly your business intelligence remains accurate and useful.

By maintaining control over the scope, speed, and direction of the project, you can make sure it serves the business rather than seeing the business serve the project.



4

RISK: **Poor adoption.**

While active opposition is a huge challenge, at least it identifies itself. Apathy can be a greater threat — you don't know it's there until the project is well underway, and the root causes can be mysterious.

Either you haven't effectively communicated the benefits of the project, sufficiently trained all teams in the BI processes, or there are unanticipated weaknesses in the user experience of your tools.



REWARD: **Increased accountability and ownership.**

When you involve all of your teams in BI transformation they are more likely to:

- ✓ Appreciate the need for change
- ✓ Raise any concerns
- ✓ Feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for data

**That means better results
and a smoother business
intelligence function.**



5

RISK: Inflexibility.

Purpose and focus are vital for your BI transformation, but if the scope or remit is too rigid, it can't account for changes in your business, which is particularly problematic in fast-moving industries.

Having experts in your team who know when change is necessary (and when it's not) means that you can be sensitive and responsive to commercial developments, while avoiding getting distracted by endless modifications.



REWARD: More agile decision-making.

Implemented and used well, business intelligence improves your agility.

Monitoring trends and patterns in your own company and the wider commercial landscape enables you to respond quickly and strategically to new challenges and opportunities.



RISK:

An expensive BI initiative that doesn't live up to expectations.

If you don't have a well-conceived strategy, and the skills in house to guide the project, your business intelligence initiative could be a very expensive waste of time.



REWARD:

A commercially effective data-driven insight into your business.

When all decision-makers and stakeholders are part of the project, your software solution is the best fit for your business, and the project is guided by those who truly understand the commercial reality and utility of data, business intelligence can transform your company.



To find out how RPI can find and secure the talent that you need to turn data into commercial insights:

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