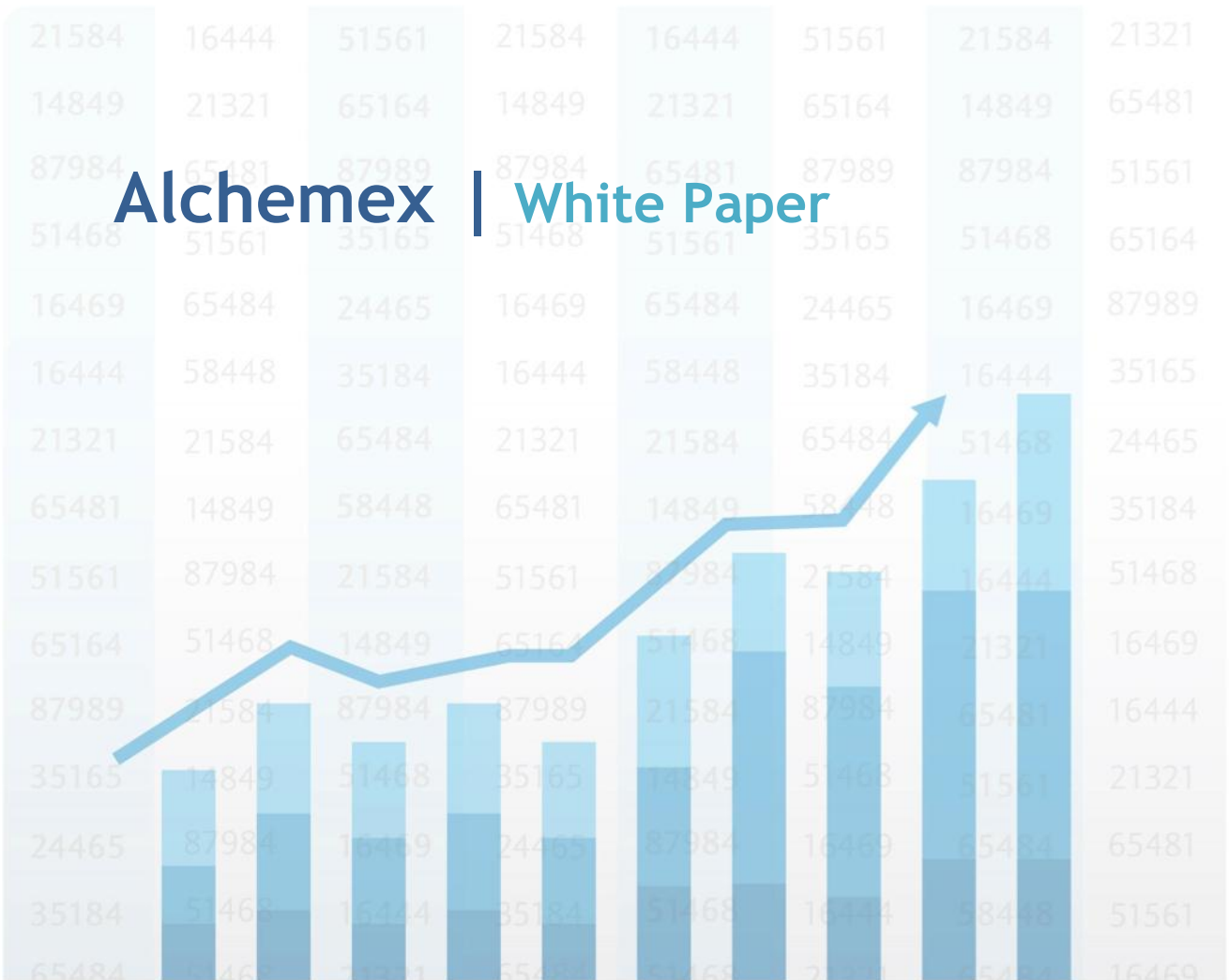


Alchemex | White Paper



Simple and affordable Business Intelligence is real



Executive Summary



Gary Boddington, Managing Director

Audience: This paper is intended for small to mid-market business leaders who need to get better information to make more informed decisions in order to drive business success.

Business Intelligence can be simple, affordable and more importantly, relevant, for the small and mid size market. The next generation of BI companies are making huge strides in delivering real time, simple and affordable BI, armed with simple pre-packaged reporting solutions.



Traditional BI environment

The traditional BI environment has become bogged down with high-ticket prices, delayed deployments, failed integrations and slow response to BI requests, and frankly has lacked any real new innovative ideas for a long time. This poor reputation has preceded the BI industry's advance into the small and mid size business sector which now has a vast population of sceptics and non believers who expound the "BI as an oxymoron" argument whenever they are confronted by BI vendors. The industry needs some fresh new angles and there are a number of smaller niche players that are forging the way ahead and disrupting the staid old business models of the big guns that have traditionally dominated this space, threatening to bring fundamental change to the industry. It's true, Business Intelligence can be simple, affordable and more importantly, relevant, for the small and mid size market - because that is what they want.

I have to agree that the biggest problem with BI vendors has been the BI vendors themselves and their collective inaudibility to hear the market demands of a different client profile in a different market altogether. An outdated view that the end user in this new target market is simply too unsophisticated to understand the multitude of 3 to 5 letter acronyms required to successfully conclude a system integration, and therefore should be ignored because they simply never have, and never will grasp the concepts. Traditional BI vendors are now applying big ticket thinking to small ticket business - high volume and low margin being a largely foreign concept to their business models. They also continue to apply complex solution stacks to very simple business requirements because they carry the burden of expensive consultants who only know time and billing principles learnt in the corporate sector. This lack of empathy with the business requirements, and inability to offer price points more applicable to the SME budget, is not sustainable and change is imminent.

Next generation BI

The next generation of BI companies are making huge strides in delivering real time, simple and affordable BI, armed with simple pre-packaged reporting solutions, targeted at frustrated end users and which carry ticket prices driven by realistic customer focused pricing policies. They have identified the market, understand the solution requirements implicitly and have cutting edge solutions built on a new Web 2.0 wave, amongst others ushering in the future of Software as a Service and the powerful reach and deployment possibilities that this represents in the mid size BI space. Their pioneering solutions have a far better probability of succeeding in this space and their edge is simply those they we have grown up with SME "thinking" - it's in their blood.



They are more nimble to accurately respond to market demands in this space and go back to the basics. They use Excel as a major “ice breaker” as it immediately looks familiar to the SME business but they can also deliver rapid and significant, solution driven, returns on investment. Evidence is apparent in successful symbiotic relationships that exist between, for example a successful Accounting software vendor and a mid-sized focused niche BI player. On the one hand a vendor that understands accounting for SME’s but doesn’t understand how to truly create BI value for their end users, and on the other hand a BI vendor that has a demonstrable pedigree in SME market and which offers a solution that adds immeasurable value to business partners and clients of the vendor and drives BI growth into the customer base. A real and tangible example of a winning SME BI strategy.

Opportunity

Untold opportunity is rife in the SME BI space globally and the big guys will do well to integrate their traditional models into this space. Potentially they just carry too much baggage to wade down into this space and won’t find the returns as attractive as they have been accustomed to in the past. However, the end user will need to look past the regular suspects and seek out a vendor that might not have the same history or reputation as those that has gone before, but they certainly know the market. The future is here and it belongs to those BI vendors that are first to bring disruptive, unique and refreshing change to a BI environment - these vendors are in our midst today.

“We use Alchemex products extensively in our business. I believe that being able to obtain a “snapshot view” of your business is critical in today’s business environment when there is just too much information floating about. Managers need to dedicate their skills to managing - not sifting through endless reports trying to make sense of heaps of information. Alchemex does this neatly and efficiently - with no fuss at all and delivers this information “on demand” and through Excel. What more could you ask for?”

**Steven Cohen,
Managing Director,
Pastel Software**



About the Author

Gary has a passion for Business Intelligence and for driving change in the BI industry believing that BI has gone mainstream and seeks to demystify BI industry jargon to provide real and affordable alternatives for simple yet powerful solutions to small and midsized businesses.

About Alchemex

ALCHEMEX is a leading developer, enabler and support provider of affordable Excel-based Business Intelligence software for small to mid-market enterprises.

For nearly 20000 registered users in Africa, Europe, Australasia and North America, ALCHEMEX's reporting software delivers automated financial, payroll and other decision-support reports in Microsoft Excel 'at the click of a button', directly from a company's accounting or payroll system.

ALCHEMEX integrates with leading accounting and payroll packages, pulling real-time data directly from the database, thereby eliminating manual report preparation and repetitive data extracts. ALCHEMEX provides complete automation of pre-formatted Excel reports for MYOB Exonet, Pastel Evolution (BIC), Pastel Partner (BIC), Pastel Payroll (BIC), Pastel Xpress (BIC), Sage50, Sage ACCPAC ERP (SAI), Sage MAS ERP 90/200 (SMI), Sage MAS ERP 200 (SMI), SAP Business One, Simply Accounting by Sage, Sybiz Vision (BIC), SYSPRO and VIP Payroll (BIM).

ALCHEMEX is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner.

The information contained in this material represents the views of Alchemex on the issues discussed herein current as of the date of publication. As market conditions are always subject to change, the information contained herein shall not be interpreted as any commitment from Alchemex. This material is for informational purposes only and Alchemex makes no warranties, expressed or implied.



Visit Alchemex
www.alchemex.com



BI Community
www.alchemex.ning.com



BI Blog
www.alchemex.com/blog



Online Training
www.alchemexacademy.com



Facebook
www.facebook.com/alchemex



Twitter
www.twitter.com/alchemex

