

IBM Unveils New Business Analytics Software for Midsized Clients



Sample IBM Cognos Express dashboard designed specifically for midmarket users. (PRNewsFoto/IBM)

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- IBM Cognos Express delivers low-cost analysis, reporting and planning capabilities to midsized organizations in a matter of hours -

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 14 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- **MIDSIZE ENTERPRISE SUMMIT WEST** -- As part of IBM's ongoing investment in business analytics, IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today launched IBM Cognos Express, an all-in-one business intelligence and planning solution specifically designed and priced for midsized clients. Deployed in just a matter of hours, the new solution offers clients a low-cost and low-risk, integrated approach to planning, analyzing and reporting performance, identifying trends, and ultimately helping businesses make smarter business decisions.

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A recent [IBM Global CIO Study](#) involving 2,500 CIOs from 78 countries - the largest study of CIOs ever conducted - found that 83% of midmarket executives ranked "business intelligence and analytics" as their top priority for improving competitiveness and cutting costs. Faced with limited budgets and overstretched IT resources, midsized organizations are seeking faster and more affordable analytics solutions that can help them cope with information overload.

The new IBM Cognos Express solution provides pre-configured business analytics and planning capabilities in a single offering, enabling midmarket executives to quickly launch their business analytics strategy and then evolve it as their needs grow. The solution easily plugs into an organization's existing infrastructure and can be up and running in just a few hours. New capabilities can then be added over time as business requirements change. The new solution also offers a centralized, Web-based console that manages all administrative aspects of installation, deployment and ongoing management, minimizing the need for IT staff assistance.

"In the quick-service hamburger business, our success depends heavily on understanding what our customers want, then tailoring our operations accordingly to keep them coming back again and again. This is only achievable if you have the right access to information and fast and efficient means of communicating goals to the field," said James Irvine, financial controller with the 15-outlet Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers franchise chain in New Zealand. "IBM Cognos Express, with its deep analytics capabilities, is helping midsized companies like ours quickly glean daily sales, marketing and operations information and make the right business decisions to remain competitive."

Through its self-service environment, IBM Cognos Express allows clients to easily build reports, analyses, dashboards and multi-dimensional plans on their own, saving time and ensuring they remain responsive to competitive pressures. For instance, instead of waiting for the IT department to funnel reports that are often outdated by the time they are received, individual retail store managers can now immediately tap into IBM Cognos Express to build their own daily store sales reports. This enables them to forecast sales against corporate objectives, and adjust promotions and inventory levels

accordingly. This immediate access to critical business information better positions them to maximize revenues and stay one step ahead of their competitors.

The solution also comes with an in-memory analytics server that allows clients to centrally manage data, business rules, and calculations. By ensuring business information is accurate and consistent across an organization, IBM Cognos Express gives midmarket managers the confidence to focus their efforts on managing the business, instead of questioning the data.

"Midsized organizations are the engines that will lead the global economy back to growth and prosperity. Even in today's unsettled landscape, midsized companies are striving to better harness their information so they can continue to innovate and grow," said Ben Plummer, director of IBM's Cognos midmarket business unit. "We are committed to helping our midmarket clients harness the power of analytics with immediate, less-costly access to business insights, with the predictive abilities they need to make better, sharper, timelier decisions."

Industry-Focused Analytics Capabilities

IBM Cognos Express provides a complete spectrum of analytic capabilities - including reporting, analysis, dashboards, scorecards and scenario planning - across all industries. For instance:

- a small retail chain can take advantage of analytics to manage merchandise levels across all outlets to better control inventory costs and meet consumer demands
- midsized banks can quickly discover underlying trends and anomalies in their credit practices, then adjust loan portfolios appropriately to ensure healthy, profitable lending operations
- a manufacturer can create plans, budgets and forecasts to expand its customer base, then make instant, on-the-fly adjustments to respond effectively to rapidly-changing market conditions
- an insurance company can clearly communicate business priorities to its member agents using dashboards that provide an at-a-glance view of current performance, and scorecards that easily pinpoint organization-wide objectives

"IBM is the first to truly deliver a solution that is right-sized in terms of both cost to purchase and cost to implement without sacrificing capabilities," added Neil Morgan, president of BrightStar Partners, an IBM Business Partner. "IBM Cognos Express represents a terrific opportunity to help us provide our clients with a simple solution that will enable midmarket business executives and employees to make truly informed decisions based on data and not simply gut feel."

Built on an open platform, the IBM Cognos Express portfolio includes three products that can be purchased together or individually to meet a specific need:

- **IBM Cognos Express Reporter** - lets business users securely access any type of data to create detailed financial, operational, transactional production reports and ad hoc queries using simple drag and drop authoring capabilities
- **IBM Cognos Express Advisor** - offers sophisticated analysis and "what if" scenario planning for long- and short-term performance forecasting. Key metrics can then be shared among stakeholders using live dashboards
- **IBM Cognos Express Xcelerator** - helps managers transform their common spreadsheets with an underlying in-memory analytics engine for real-time multidimensional analysis, planning, budgeting and forecasting

IBM Cognos Express is part of a broader family of new [software and hardware offerings](#) being launched today through the IBM General Business Express Advantage program.

Availability:

IBM Cognos Express Reporter, IBM Cognos Express Xcelerator, and IBM Cognos Express Advisor will be available in mid-September 2009, either directly from IBM or its network of resellers worldwide.

While market and credit conditions are evolving, [IBM Global Financing](#) continues to lend to qualified customers. [IBM Financing Advantage](#) offers a comprehensive portfolio of financing solutions to help address the requirements of midsized businesses to fund their IT agendas, maximize working capital, recover technology value and manage risk.

Virtual Launch Event:

IBM will be hosting an IBM Cognos Express Virtual Launch event on Tuesday September 29, 2009 from 9:45 am - 4 pm Eastern. The event will feature product demonstrations and technical overviews on BI and analytics for the midmarket, as well as an Expo Area and Communications Lounge where participants can chat live with IBM representatives and business partners. To register, please go to <http://www.ibm.com/cognos/express>

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