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**FIVE THINGS TO
LOOK FOR IN A NEW
DATA VISUALIZATION
TOOL**



Introduction

When choosing a new data visualization tool, you want to be able to ensure that you can **start your first visualization quickly with minimal frustration**. The visualization component allows you to see the insights (e.g. operations and revenue drivers) in your business immediately and can connect to multiple sources easily and quickly. But there are also a few other aspects you should consider before committing to a new data visualization tool.

If you are using traditional BI platforms such as OBIEE, Microstrategy, Business Objects or Cognos and are looking to upgrade to a new platform, such as Tableau or Power BI, this white paper will really help you in understanding the factors to choose the right visualization tool.

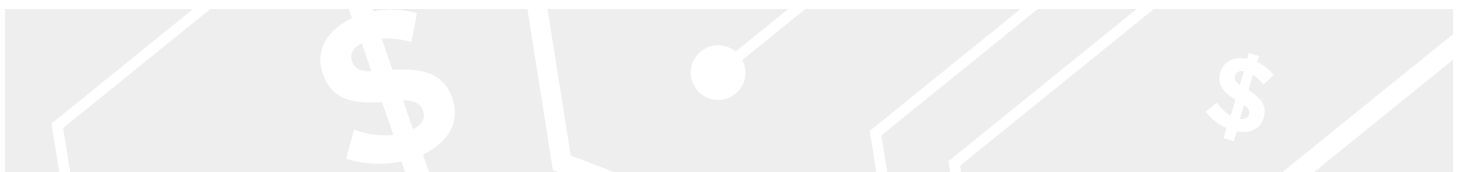


How steep is the **learning curve**?

In other words, how quickly can you create a visualization? If creating a visualization in a new data visualization platform takes an hour or two and the UI is easy to navigate, great. If creating a new visualization takes hours, help from your IT team and a creeping frustration, the new platform may become more of a liability than an asset at your organization.

Keep in mind that a lack of user friendliness may cause a drain on other team members' time and add unexpected costs on top of the purchase of the new platform.

The need for outside training may increase the costs even further. In general, the shorter the learning curve, the more ROI you can obtain from your new data visualization platform.



Consider that the cost of a new data visualization tool costs \$1,000 per user. If you require help from a senior member of your IT team for several hours over the course of three months, then you could be looking at a cost upwards of \$4,327.20* for support alone.

*20 hours of support per month over three months from a senior member of your IT team earning \$150,000 annually or \$72.12 per hour = approximately \$4,327.20.

2 How good is the visualization component?



Does the visualization component of the new data visualization platform enable you to more effectively see connections between multiple dynamic factors and events in your business (e.g. revenue and operations)? **If your chosen platform does not allow you to clearly view these vital connections, it may not be as powerful of a platform as it advertises itself to be.** Which brings us to the second point. Do the visualizations create more clarity or more confusion? If the visualization itself is not easy to understand with minimal guidance and reference points, it may cause unnecessary confusion and delays amongst your team when deciding on a new operational or sales strategy to implement or put on pause.

If a data visualization platform fails to live up to its promises, it would be fair to say that the opportunity cost would be significant. So choose wisely. This brings us to our third criteria: can you successfully connect to multiple data sources?

3 Can you successfully connect multiple data sources for ad-hoc analysis?

Whereas older data visualization platforms have to depend on IT, new platforms are self-service based and allow for ad-hoc (read: on the fly) visualizations. This is a plus, especially as most members of your team want to be able to create visualizations independently, without bothering IT. Also, it's unlikely that your business data is stored in a single data warehouse. **Likely, it's dispersed in a variety of data sources such as Salesforce, Google, Workday, ServiceNow, Excel, SQL data marts, SharePoint, Box and others.** Before committing to a new platform, it's critical to double check if it can connect to all data sources that you intend to use. Second, determine if combining data sources in the new platform is quick and easy or takes a long time. Remember: successful and easy connection to all the data sources you want will lead to greater ROI.

If it takes one person three months to get a data source in, by using a self-service tool your savings can be up to three months of the salary of that individual. **If their salary is \$150,000, then the cost savings would be \$37,500 per data source.**

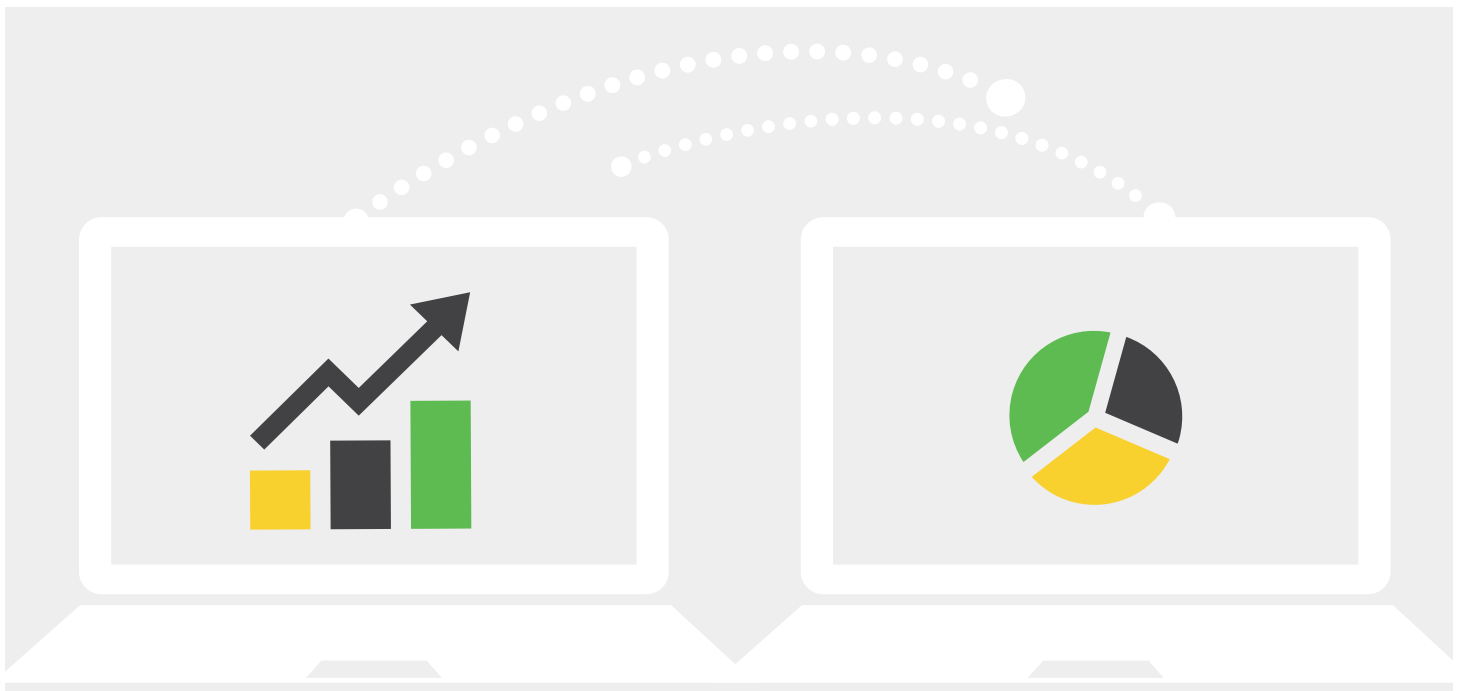
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Are you able to **reuse your existing data sources**?

Are you able to connect to your data from your existing sources or does it pose major challenges? You might have spent years and millions of dollars to create them, so reusing them will lead to greater ROI. When choosing a new data visualization platform, it's critical that you will have the ability to reuse the metadata and security from your existing BI platforms. If not, you may be facing significant engineering costs to re-engineer the metadata. For example, re-engineering your OBIEE

metadata in Tableau or Power BI could be a significant effort **but you can easily and quickly re-use OBIEE metadata by using BI Connector.**

Secondly, building data extraction out of existing BI systems may pose problems. For instance, using SQL, Excel or another database staging tool to integrate visualization platforms to existing data sources may not be the most manageable approach.



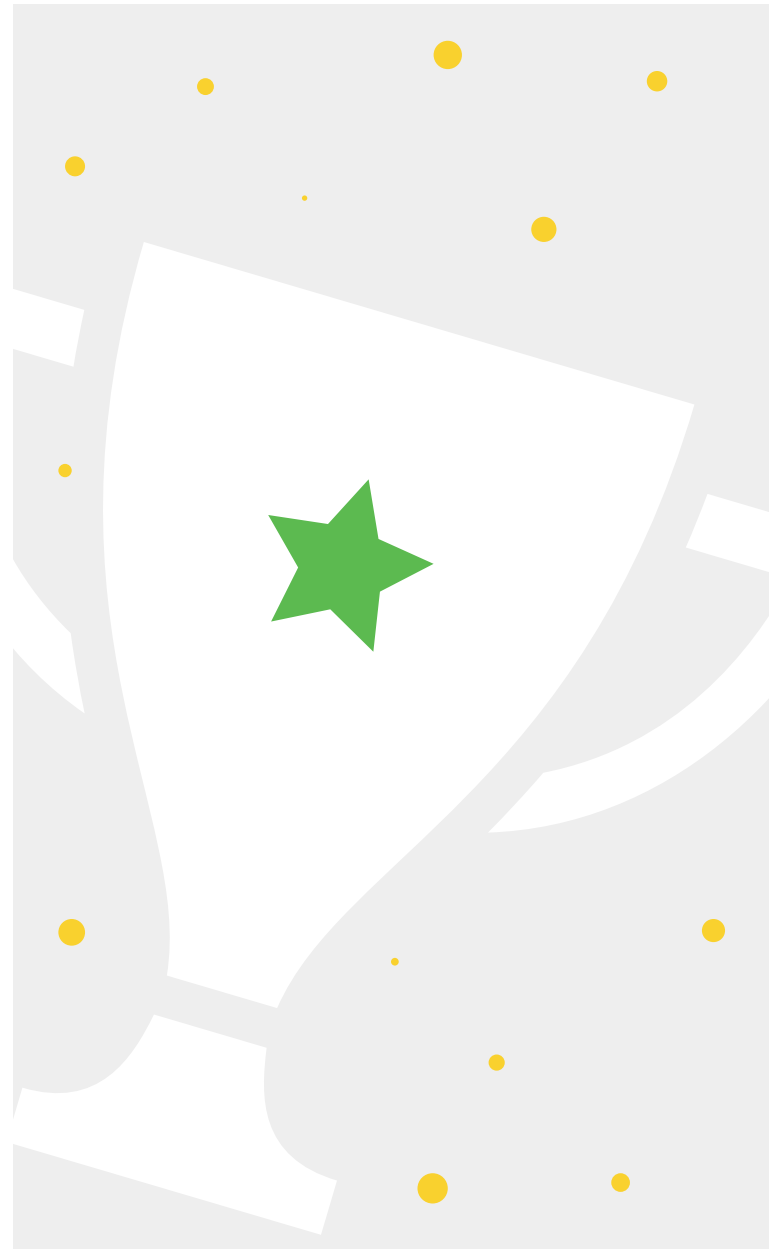
You are actually building an ETL on top of other ETLs. Before committing to a new platform, determine how much time you will need to spend to prepare the data and the scripts to manage this process versus using automated integration. **For some teams, the cost could be upwards of \$50,000*.**

*If a third of an engineer's time is being taken up for data preparation, then the cost would be one third of that engineer's salary (e.g. $\$150,000/3=\$50,000$).

5 Is the **new platform** going to allow for **data governance**?

Finally, consider if the new data visualization platform will benefit and be relevant to all stakeholders in your organization or if certain departments need to 'go rogue' to meet their BI needs. And don't forget to ensure if your new platform will allow the same level of data security as your current BI platform. **For example, you can re-use the OBIEE security model in Tableau or Power BI by using BI Connector which allows you to directly connect to OBIEE subject areas without any messy Excel or SQL data transfers.**

A lot is at stake and costs can add up quickly if a decision to switch to a more modern data visualization tool is not taken without the right long term strategy. Before committing, it's always a good idea to take advantage of the usual trial period provided by the vendors and setup, test and use your platform as if you had already committed to it in the long run. If it meets all your needs then you have selected a winner!





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