



BBBT Podcast Transcript



About the BBT

The Boulder Business Intelligence Brain Trust, or BBT, was founded in 2006 by Claudia Imhoff. Its mission is to leverage business intelligence for industry vendors, for its members, who are independent analysts and experts, and for its subscribers, who are practitioners. To accomplish this mission, the BBT provides a variety of services, centered around vendor presentations.

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Guest(s):	Steven Schneider , Chief Product Officer David Abramson , Director of Product Management
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Claudia Imhoff: Hello, and welcome to this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust, or the BBT. We're a gathering of international consultants, analysts, and experts in business intelligence, who meet with interesting and innovative BI companies here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. We not only get briefed on the latest news and releases, but we share our ideas with the vendor on where the BI industry is going, and help them with their technological directions and marketing messages. I'm Claudia Imhoff and the BBT podcasts are produced by my company, Intelligent Solutions.

I'm pleased to introduce my guest today, Steven Schneider and David Abramson. Steven is the Chief Product Officer and David is the Director of Product Management for Logi Analytics. Welcome to you both.

David Abramson: Thanks for having us.

Steven Schneider: Thank you for having us.

CI: Steven, let me start with you. Why don't you give me an overview of Logi Analytics since the last time, about a year ago, that you were here. It's been a remarkable year, I think, for the company.

SS: It was a year really framed by product releases. We introduced a number of new products. We also enhanced our core product offering. This summer, we announced Logi 12 which was really the culmination of over two years of increased development investment.

We're really proud of that. We're up to about 1,700 customers, just shy of 1,700 customers in total. We continue to focus on both the small to medium size business, departments of large enterprise and OEMs.

We're really pleased just this summer to announce two large top-tier partnerships. One with Progress Software. The other with HP Software. These are much more than just product marketing partnerships. We've made joint product integrations. We're doing co-selling and working together very closely.

CI: All right. Well, Steven, let me stay with you. You showed us a slide on the lack of BI adoption. I think it's pretty well-known across the board that



adoption is around 20 to maybe 28 percent, but there's a vast audience out there that is not using BI technologies.

Why do you think it happens today, especially given the massive amounts of data that are available for people to analyze?

SS: The one thing I can tell you is it's not because they don't want access to the analytical information. I actually think that the primary reason we don't see broader end-user adoption is because of a failure of us as vendors and frankly us as practitioners to deliver things in a way that people can consume, without having to go through training, or without having to overcome whatever intuition that we have.

They're just too hard to use and they take too long. Part of that comes down to us as vendors have always treated the self-service analytics market, as one big market with one type of end-user. We haven't really gone and said there are different types of people that need to accomplish different tasks.

We need to deliver things to them in a way that they can understand and consume, and can understand and consume intuitively...to not have to go through a week training. The only way we do that is if we tailor them to their specific needs.

CI: Let's stick with that theme because the very next slide that you put up was the continuum of self-service analytics. You had three, let's say, "personas," in that continuum. I found them fascinating. If you don't mind, I'll start with you, Steven, then, David, I'd like to bring you into the conversation, tell me about this continuum of self-service analytics.

SS: It's something that has really, from a company and from a product management standpoint, transformed a lot of how we think about our products and how we think about the users that are going to be using them.

It's a framework that we develop based on going out to our existing customer base as well as our press box and segmenting the end-user community and understanding how they want to work with analytics.



We really looked at where we had high user adoption, where we had poor user adoption, and tried to understand what was it that people wanted to do. We broke it into three categories.

The first is really around consumers. People that want to operate a very defined experience. They want someone else to feed them the metrics and measures that they're evaluated on, in a way that they can understand and act on without having to explore or ask different questions or get confused.

One of our customers is in the food processing space. In that example, they wanted to actually have LCD screens on a dashboard that were showing them how much food product was going into boxes and weights and marination temperatures and all that sort of stuff.

That's a perfect consumption oriented case. If you give them something more complicated, it's just going to overwhelm them and it's not going to change the behavior.

The second persona is a creator type persona. Here, they want to really extend that defined experience. They want to work with managed data to create their own new metrics and their own new measures. I often think of that as someone that wants to go in and add additional formulas or maybe look at things in a different time period than what someone created for them in advance.

The third experience we refer to is analysts. These are people that ask different questions every day. They're literally walking in and saying, "What can I look at?" They want a blank canvass to do that. They want to explore in a very iterative fashion.

They answered one question but actually result in a different question that they then want to ask. Collaboration is a lot more important to them. Being able to connect to their own data is a lot more important to them. They really want a very free form type environment.

What we find is that most organizations have each of these different personas. They either will say, "We're just going to satisfy one and leave the others out," which again leads to poor user adoption, or they say, "I'm



going to try and bring in different technologies to satisfy each of these different needs and try to cobble together this patchwork of different solutions," and that's real struggle as well.

David, do you have any other examples you might want to bring up to better explain these different personas?

DA: I think it truly is a continuum of capabilities that we're trying to offer to those different personas as Steven mentioned. The consumer user, it might be somebody who's looking at that LCD screen on the factory floor.

It might be somebody who's managing a facility and they're just trying to get the information that they need to do their job and get those analytics and self-service capabilities in the context of where they're working.

As we move across the continuum to that creator user, you get into a little bit more sophisticated type of user experience. You want to be able to deliver capabilities for somebody who is building their own custom reports and they'd be sharing those with other users within their workgroup or in their organization, then all the way down to that analyst user which might be a smaller segment of people within a company.

They might not have that analyst word in their title, but there is somebody who wants to take a look at the data that maybe they're using separately from the corporate IT governed systems. They bring that into the mix. As part of that continuum, they're able to, in a very self-service way, analyze that content.

SS: Marketing comes to mind a lot. When I think of that analyst title, we have a whole team of people in marketing. None of them actually have the word analyst in their title, but if you look what they're doing every day, they're testing new campaigns. They're importing new data. They're figuring out did one keyword work better than another keyword.

It's a very iterative type model. The questions they ask everyday change. That's particularly interesting because I don't think any function in organizations changed over the last 5 or 10 years more than marketing.



CI: I'd think of market research. I think of insurance actuaries. The people that are really exploring the data more than the production creators, as you would say, or the dashboard lookers, the consumers. These are experimental guys.

SS: I want to highlight something you just said there Claudia, because I think highlights an important point and that's that the world is changing. When BI started, it was really around those operational use cases. It was finance, it was operations production. It was six sigma efficiency. It was all about that stuff.

Now, the people that use analytics are very different. Those people, whereas before they were maybe in a back office and they had titles like data scientist or forecasting specialist, now they're everyday people that are working in organizations in non-analyst oriented roles but have analyst responsibilities as part of their job responsibility.

CI: Exactly. David, let me go back to you because I do want to dig in a little bit more about Logi Analytics' products. How do you... How does the company support these three personas? You've got three interesting products, tell me about each of those.

DA: Sure thing. To achieve the types of self-service capabilities for that consumer user, we have our Logi Info product which has been, for the longest time, our core platform capability to deliver those interactive dashboards and user consumer experiences, to create those rich and embedded user interfaces, for the consumer users to work with.

Then as we move further down that continuum to the creator user, we have our self-service modules within Logi Info that deliver the ability not only to work with and manage data and query that data and build some formulas and create your own visualizations, but also even create and share and customize your own reports and dashboards as that consumer type of user.

Then as we look at that analyst persona, our product, Logi Vision, is really tailored to that full self-service analyst experience. The ability to bring your own data to interact with the data in a very iterative way. I think we've



used that word a lot in describing how we see those analysts working with the information and being able to discover new insights.

Logi Vision really has all of those capabilities baked in to recommend best visualizations, to provide a very data forward interface to quickly iterate and work with the information that they've brought, from potentially multiple different data sources.

Then to tie it all together, our newest product, Logi DataHub, which operates as a consolidated backend that can be feeding data into both a Logi Info managed applications as well as Logi Vision self-service analytic experiences.

CI: I have to tell you, David, I think you're one of the best people to demonstrate a product I've ever seen. You are fabulous.

DA: I appreciate that.

CI: All right, Steven, let me go back to you because there is one other persona, and we don't want to forget this persona. They're pretty important. That's the IT folks that are supporting this overall architecture. You stressed the need to support IT and the business needs. Let's talk about Logi Analytics and how does the company support both IT as well as the business.

SS: Actually, that's a change that's happened in our industry over the last couple of years. When I first started at Logi, seven or eight years ago, it was really primarily IT people on the phone. You would occasionally get a business person to pop their head in at the end and I'd say it looked pretty or it looked ugly, but that was about the extent of their involvement. It was very much an IT-driven initiative.

Starting about four or five years ago, you started seeing business sponsors engage in the evaluation process very early on. Sometimes, you'd even see business-driven with IT coming up in between. That elicited a lot of conversations internally. It was like, "OK, who's our champion? Who's our blocker? Who's our enabler? Who's trying to cause us problems?"



I think that's the wrong way to think about it. I think companies that have that challenge where one is a blocker and one is an enabler, are companies that don't recognize that both constituents are important in organizations.

If organizations try to implement something that's a 100 percent business-driven, they're not going to satisfy the needs of governance and security that are still important. If they go out supplement something that's a 100 percent IT-driven, unfortunately, all too often, most of the technologies out there aren't really agile enough to meet the business needs.

When we think about how we designed our platform, we recognize that both constituents are important. We don't try and do that with one product. What we have is our platform that's very much focused towards IT-oriented, custom, and engaging end-user experiences.

Then Logi Vision which takes all of that same technology but wraps it up in a pre-canned application that you can setup really, really quickly with very little IT involvement, but has a common backend that you can move between them, and that IT can have the governance and control they need from an administration standpoint, but doesn't necessarily get in the way of business that needs to be able to work with data that they're pulling in from third parties or other vendors or things that don't have to go through that managed process.

If we had gone out and said we were going to try to make one product and it's going to satisfy both the needs of the IT and the business, that would've resulted in a lowest common denominator approach. Instead, we treat them as separate constituents and we think about how we have common technology to bridge the divide.

CI: I think it is a very mature, a very sophisticated approach to supporting these two very interconnected and very important groups of people. No doubt about that.

David, let me go back to you. I think the design of your interface is beautiful. I think it's been intelligently designed to support each and every



one of these personas. How did you go about designing it? What's the philosophy at Logi Analytics?

DA: Creating a beautiful, intelligent interface was certainly our goal from the beginning. I think as Steven alluded to, our focus for the last several years has really been on improving our product portfolio.

We took a very conscious decision at that point to say “design first” and really focus on bringing our own experts in user-experience and user-interface design in house, and really grow that internally so that we could make a conscious effort to focus on building beautiful products and designing them in a highly intuitive way.

It's not just about sitting in a room and building great-looking products with our team, with our user experience experts, we go out to the field, we do a lot of user testing. We actually started a whole program a couple of years ago of bringing in user groups, almost like focus groups, if you will, where we bring in the types of people that we thought would be using the products and we put them in a room and we let them play with product and gather feedback.

We have a bunch of people looking over shoulders and seeing where they got caught up and seeing what worked and what didn't work. We really used that process to our advantage. I think it really shows through in the interfaces and the design that we've been able to launch over the last couple of years with the products that we have today.

CI: It does indeed. It is a beautiful interface. All right, Steven, let me end up with you. Let's talk about differentiators. It's sometimes difficult to see differentiators, but how do you see your company as being different from all the other companies?

SS: The very first thing is that we recognize that there are different users that need to consume information in different ways and one-size-fits-all model isn't going to work, and that our technology can be tailored to each end user's unique skills and roles and delivers them in a way that they can understand.



Most of our competitors will just focus on one or the other. That means organizations have to cobble multiple of them together to serve their constituents. That's simply not going to work.

Secondly, as part of that, we want to make sure that the outputs are easy to use, that they're highly intuitive and provide a really customized and engaging end-user experience. That's actually really important now that the business has gotten more involved because they're evaluating that and they're looking for that. If it's not a really engaging experience that just captures them without the need for training, it's simply not going to work.

Finally, embeddability, from a product standpoint is really important to us. It's important to us because we believe that the best way to deliver information to consumers, the people who just want to consume the metrics and measures that they're getting evaluated on, is in the context of where they work.

That often means in the context of the applications they're already using. That's our heritage. That's something we're still a leader on.

The last thing I probably just mentioned, which is less a product thing and more of an approach thing, is that we also really want to balance the needs of both business and IT, not one versus the other.

CI: Yeah, all right. Done and done, I think. Unfortunately, we're out of time, though. That's it for this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust podcast. Again, I'm Claudia Imhoff. It's been a great pleasure to speak to Steven Schneider and also to David Abramson of Logi Analytics today. Thank you both.

DA: Thank you.

SS: We very much appreciate being here.

CI: I hope you enjoyed today's podcast. You'll find more podcasts from other vendors at our web site www.bbbt.us. If you want to read more about today's session, please search for our hash tag on Twitter. That's #BBBT. And please join me again for another interview. Good bye and good business!