



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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Vendor:	Sisense
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Host:	Claudia Imhoff , Founder, BBT
Guest(s):	Guy Levy-Yurista , Head of Product
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Claudia: 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. He is Guy Levy-Yurista. Guy is the head of product for Sisense, so welcome, Guy.

Guy: Thank you, Claudia, very happy to be here.

Claudia: First of all, we had Sisense here almost two years ago, and boy, you've been busy. If you don't mind, a little bit about what you've done in the last two years?

Guy: It's been a very busy couple of years for us. Sisense is a privately owned company. We are headquartered in New York City, with an R&D and sales team in Tel Aviv, Israel. We have been on a tear. We have been more than doubling sales, year over year.

We have over a thousand customers now, spread across 50 countries, and we cover everyone and anyone, from SMBs to Fortune 500. We discovered that the market for embedded analytics and OEM is huge, and now 50 percent of our business is coming from that segment. Overall, the interaction with the market is amazing.

Claudia: You're also pretty darn well funded, right?

Guy: That is true. We raised a total of about \$100 million so far, from world-class VCs, including Bessemer, DFJ, Battery. The last round of \$50 million came earlier this year, in the beginning of the year, so we can really support our very rapid expansion plans.



Claudia: Congratulations. Let's start in with Sisense itself. You mentioned quite a number of benefits from the Sisense architecture. If you don't mind, go over them.

Guy: Of course. The Sisense architecture provides significant power to the end user. It can handle complex data much faster than most tools out there. It boosts performance by 10x, at least, which means that you can cut down your hardware costs significantly. And it simplifies the data preparation.

When you look at all of that together, what we are doing is we're enabling the business user to have the power of a BI suite, a very powerful BI analytics suite, that five years ago was only in the hands of IT. Now, you can have that in your hands.

It's easy to deploy. You don't need to become a data scientist in order to utilize it, and it is self-service in a deeper meaning. You don't shun IT, but you help IT. IT becomes a friend of yours, you don't need to fight IT. IT is part of your team, in a way, and it shrinks your total cost of ownership, and time to insight and to value.

Claudia: It's an interesting proposition. We're going to talk about the architecture in just a moment, but what I liked about it is it's basically saying that business users, you can have a simpler environment to do very complex types of analytics, right?

Guy: That's correct. You can go and model your data, analyze it, and very quickly gain some significant insights into your data, as complex and as big as it may be.

Claudia: Let's spend some time on the architecture itself. There are two halves, and I'll let you handle the two halves, but describe it to me.

Guy: There are two key technological assets that we have, that are part of the Sisense offering, that we feel give us a unique capability.

The first one is the single stack capability. We are able to deliver value throughout the entire value chain, completely. All the way from connecting to data sources, prepping the data, bringing the



data in, building the model, running analysis on the data, creating the dashboards, and disseminating the insights derived from the data. We handle all of it in one tool, and it provides the user the ability to just utilize one tool that's very easy to install.

For small installations, you can install it on a laptop, and it will do the trick for you, all the way to the big Fortune 500 installations, and still one tool alone. That's the first part, which is very powerful, and we clearly see trends in the market, going into that integrated view.

The second part lies at the heart of the technology. It's what we call in-chip analytics. It's a unique technology that we've developed, that combines the ability to manage data very smartly, create cache aware algorithms that take the columns of data, because we operate as a columnar database. Take those columns, bring those columns into the CPU level in a smart manner, prevent the bottleneck that in-memory systems are facing when they're moving data between memory and CPU, back and forth. Prevent that by proper, smart mapping of those columns and column chunks into the cache.

You prevent the cache flashing, and just make it extremely efficient. That's one part of technology that we've built. We spent a lot of time on building it, and it's extremely powerful.

The other part is that we have a self-learning instruction set architecture. Every query, if you look at it deeply, at the machine language level, is broken into instruction sets. Those instruction sets are how the CPU gets the data, and analyzes the data.

When you look at it, every org has a certain set of queries that they're interested in. Let's say they're interested in, what's my overall sales? Which salesperson sold the most, which salesperson sold the most in EMEA in the month of April? When you look at it deeply, you see that, as you progress in those instructions, or those queries, the instruction sets, about 80 percent of them are reused again, and again, and again.



There's no need to recalculate those partial instruction sets. The more users there are, we become more efficient. The more queries the system is being asked, it becomes better self-learning, better attuned to the needs of the org. Every org has different in the type of queries they're asking. The system is able to tackle that in a very smart manner, and deliver the right answers to the user.

The combination of being able to have single stack, soup to nuts solution with an extremely powerful engine that sits in the heart of it allows business users that don't have access to the big, heavy IT machines still to be able to run against terabytes of data, if they wanted, against dozens and dozens of data sources, if they have those, and get almost real-time data discovery capability.

Claudia: That's fascinating. Let's turn to your customers, since you've mentioned them a couple of times. What kinds of companies would be buying your product, and what do you look for in terms of their characteristics, their data characteristics, for example, that tell you that Sisense is a good fit?

Guy: It's a great question. For private companies, finding the product market fit is always a telling sign. It's always an interesting stage in the life of a private company. For us, what astounded us is that we found ourselves going across verticals, horizontally, to almost every vertical out there.

We have customers coming, whether that's consumer electronics, whether that's manufacturing, whether that's government. We're selling to the DoD, we didn't plan to, manufacturing people, we didn't plan to. It just happened. People come to us, all verticals.

Sizes, again. We get to sell to Fortune 100 companies with very significant deployments, enterprise grade security, resiliency, disaster recovery capability, high availability on the one hand. On the other hand, we have SMBs, 80, 100, 200 people companies that have significant data needs that we are managing. We serve them, with the same tool, with the same type of capability.



We operate with a subscription model. It's an annual renewal that's going on, subscription-wise. We have three types of users in the product. We have the administrator, the designers, and the viewers. Administrators manage the entire product. Designers design the dashboard analytics, and the viewers interact with that.

We price the product against either the number of seats, or the number of rows of data that customers need to tackle. We tackle more than a billion rows today, and we're planning to extend even beyond that.

Claudia: As I understand it, on-premises, as well as in the cloud, is there a difference in the pricing model?

Guy: We offer both on-prem and private cloud offering to people. There's no difference in the pricing. Whichever way you go, whatever is comfortable for the customers, we will support that.

Claudia: You have a pretty remarkable customer retention that you mentioned. Tell me about it.

Guy: We're very proud with our customer retention numbers. Our number one concern, the way we are measuring ourselves is the customer renewal rate, the net promoter score, and how much our customers feel that they're being served properly. We've been winning awards for customer support and customer retention.

Our churn rates are in negative territory, meaning that we're not losing customers, and customers are actually buying from us more every time they renew, and during the year, the yearly cycle. It's a critical element. The white glove treatment of a customer is the number one concern we have.

Claudia: Let's talk about one of those customers. I think it was Celestica. What are some of the specifics there?

Guy: Celestica is a fascinating customer of ours. They're a publicly traded company, supply chain management, selling in the many billions of



dollars a year. They are reliant on many, many, many suppliers, over 4,000 suppliers.

It started off as a simple project with Celestica, where they bought the entry package, just 20 viewers that were looking at data, playing with it. They had different use cases, identifying customer needs before customers even identify those themselves. Prioritize opportunities for further reviews. Assimilate performance statistics versus analytics.

They wanted to know all those things. What they discovered very quickly is that the platform was so powerful, that it cut across different departments, and it could serve many, many projects. Very quickly, from the startup package they expanded, and expanded, and expanded, and within three years, we are deployed in over 30 departments and projects.

We just won, last week, the Best IT Partner award from Celestica out of 4,000 customers. It was us versus IBM, and I'm very happy to report we won. It's an example of how a customer realized very quickly the value of the platform, and decided, "Yes, I'm going to deploy it across my entire organization."

Claudia: Congratulations. I didn't realize you had such a big competitor there. Let's finish it out with, maybe a look at the future. You do have a new version coming out soon. If you don't mind, let's hear a little bit about it.

Guy: Of course. Version 6.4 is coming soon, truly in a matter of days or weeks. That version will enable us to augment the capabilities of the platform. It will allow us to address many of the requests that we've been hearing from the field, from different customers.

Several of the key elements that we're going to introduce in version 6.4, I won't go into all the details, because there's a lot that goes there, is the ability to use a generic rest connector to any web service out there that has data sources that are interesting for the user, plus the ability to get out of the box, many templates and



packages for the common web services, all wrapped in a nice SDK form.

The other one is the ability to create JavaScript libraries based on Sisense, and convert it into a JavaScript library. Essentially, we take a product and convert it into a JavaScript library. You can now edit the capabilities. Take those capabilities, create widgets, create visualization, data prep models, and embed those in other applications, other systems, effectively creating completely dynamically your own application with analytics elements embedded into it.

Claudia: I think that's fabulous. That's probably one of the best things I've heard. Just to put a fine point on it, what it means is that if I have another vendor's product, for example, I could take your widgets, your dashboard components, and actually embed them in their dashboard.

Guy: Absolutely. It's interesting, because on the one hand, that single stack capability gives us great traction in the market. On the other hand, we recognize that there are best-of-breed tools out there. People want to use Sisense where it's great, and use it with other tools that are great in other parts.

Claudia: That's a wonderful way of sharing the expertise, the brilliance of the visualizations, and so forth, across the enterprise. Excellent. We can probably talk about that forever, but unfortunately, we are out of time. That's it for this edition of the BBBT podcast. Again, I'm Claudia Imhoff, and it's been such a pleasure to speak with Guy Levy-Yurista of Sisense today. Thanks so much for speaking with me.

Guy: Thank you very much for having me. I was having fun today.

Claudia: 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!