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Demand for BI is High, Says HiT Software

by Dan Burger

Making better business decisions is the goal. Building better business intelligence into information systems is the means to reach that goal. According to surveys by respected analyst firms such as Gartner, BI ranks at the top of most companies' priority lists. Apparently that's true in AS/400 shops as well.

Last week, a press release from HiT Software noted a one-year, 400 percent increase in the number of product evaluations for its software that supports projects related to business intelligence, data warehouses, data marts, database synchronization, and database migration efforts.

HiT's accounting of a notable spurt in database integration was recorded at the end of 2008 and is a comparison of product evaluations that occurred in 2007. HiT is a privately owned company, which doesn't disclose sales or other financial information, but spokesperson Carolyn Hughes says the number reflects a combination of sales and evaluations.

In more than 80 percent of cases where HiT has provided software and customers have disclosed they are involved in BI (not all product evaluators reveal what projects they are working on), the projects are active, Hughes says. "We help them through their database synchronization needs, which is either the initial setup or, in a lot of cases, the rework of a setup that didn't go as planned," she says. "Most setups don't occur until after program approval and funding."

HiT Software is not a business intelligence solutions provider. Its products are designed to access data that supports business intelligence projects. IBM midrange customers, which include shops running their businesses on AS/400, iSeries, System i, and IBM i servers, are most likely to have heard of HiT's DBMoto product. DBMoto is a Windows-based data replication tool that moves data among numerous database management systems, including DB2 for i (or DB2/400 as it is still commonly known), DB2 UDB, Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle, Sybase ASE, Informix, MySQL, and others.

Giacomo Lorenzin, CEO of HiT Software, and others are backing the idea that the economic conditions we are facing today were developing in 2008 and they play a role in magnifying the importance of business intelligence.

"We are seeing two key changes," Lorenzin says. "Organizations want to implement data analysis quickly, and they are changing from an 'ask IT for a report' approach to an environment where key business data is readily available to the consumer."

Joseph Guerra, vice president at RapidDecision, a business intelligence solutions provider for J.D. Edwards environments, says, "There are many reasons to employ business intelligence systems but none more critical today than to stay financially competitive and relevant. No organization wants to rip and replace large-scale systems right now, and the smartest thing they can do is to leverage those systems by synchronizing key data with highly efficient databases designed specifically for reporting and analysis."

Guerra claims his company's RapidDecision, which is powered by HiT's DBMoto, has picked up sales momentum due to increased interest in leveraging existing systems, and he expects that momentum will continue.