

Tech Trends at BI & HANA 2018

Protiviti's Narjit Aujla was a first-time attendee at the 2018 BI/HANA conference. He shares his observations here.

The morning begins with Spanish guitars before the keynote session at the BI & HANA 2018 conference in Las Vegas. Taking the stage is Ivo Bauermann, SAP's Global Vice President, SAP Analytics, Head of Business Development & Global Center of Excellence. He tells an amusing story about how people had shunned the newly created automobile in favor of the horse-drawn carriage—a decision in favor of drinking more alcohol. To Ivo's point, people are resistant to change. What may seem farfetched now becomes the de facto standard tomorrow, such as the way we solve this problem today: Uber.

Today's analytics market is growing rapidly. SAP's data warehousing solution, SAP BW, is still commonly used in companies, with numerous conference sessions supporting it. Businesses are seeking enhancements to their data solutions, such as SAP HANA® in-memory computing and cloud agility. The good news is that there is a wide range of solutions for SAP users such as BW on HANA, BW/4HANA, and S/4HANA®. However, the ability to choose the right system architecture to meet your business needs is going to be critical for managing your data effectively going forward.

Analytical toolsets are more varied than ever. While products such as Tableau and Microsoft Power BI rival for the self-service spotlight, SAP's Analytics Cloud (SAC) is also a large consideration. Riding the bleeding edge of real-time and predictive, SAC is looking to reinvent the way we approach analytics. Simple workflows and powerful natural language queries might be the difference between a successful Business Intelligence (BI) strategy and an outdated software graveyard. Regardless of tool selection, what we continue to see is the criticality of established data foundations and governance practices.

With all the hype around new tools, I was somewhat surprised to see a steady interest in SAP BusinessObjects™ Web Intelligence®. I've helped numerous organizations analyze and understand their data through this tool, so it is near and dear to my heart. But, I really shouldn't be all that surprised with this trend. With features such as burst scheduling, complex calculations, ad-hoc analysis, granular security, and the ability to connect to a large number of data sources, Webi is truly an enterprise workhorse. In my experience, I've found that organizations with a structured collection of Webi reports and knowledgeable power-users fare better in making informed business decisions. Perhaps more importantly, these companies tend to have good end-user adoption and a head start on establishing effective data governance. These factors are heavy contributors to the overall success of their BI organization.

Protiviti has developed [FRA²ME, a unique methodology](#) a six-step process which maximizes every client's BI investment, turning business users into "raving fans." FRA²ME focuses on the importance of understanding end-user workflow and use cases to drive relevance, in turn ensuring usefulness and adoption.

Back home after the conference, I'm left with the impression that the state of BI remains in flux. As more businesses move towards the cloud and other new technologies, only time will tell which strategies remain standing. When it comes to data, the ability to govern and build trust is becoming more important than ever. Paraphrasing from Ivo's keynote, it is clear that success is often dictated by agility. Companies that can adapt to the changing pace of tech, and reallocate resources accordingly, will ultimately reap the benefits of progress—even if that means we stop driving our own cars.

Protiviti's BI and Data Governance subject matter experts shared their expertise on a variety of subjects in a recent Expert Webinar Series. [Click here](#) to listen to on-demand replays.