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Excel is Not Dead

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Recent news posted in The Wall Street Journal has depicted Excel as ill-equipped financial reporting software. Tatyana Shumsky discussed how it took users days to pull data from their various systems into Excel Spreadsheets. Adobe Inc.'s finance chief, Mark Garrett, (was quoted in the article as saying) "I don't want financial planning people spending their time importing and exporting and manipulating data, I want them to focus on what is the data telling us." Well, the answer to this common dilemma is BI360 by Solver, Inc.

BI360 is a full Business Intelligence (BI) suite designed for quick, low-risk implementations and to satisfy the needs of everyone in the organization. From entry-level individuals to top-level management, users are able to easily navigate their financial reports. BI360 is powered by Microsoft Excel for the budgeting and reporting aspects, Microsoft Silverlight for dashboards and Microsoft SQL Server for the data warehouse. Since BI360 is an add-in to Excel, users are familiar with the reporting platform; in addition, BI360 has enabled Excel to overcome the demands of corporate finance units today. BI360 allows the user to focus on the data that needs to be analyzed and forget about the hassle of the manipulation of data.

BI360 consists of different modules which include: BI360 Reporting, BI360 Data Warehouse, BI360 Planning, BI360 Dashboard and BI360 Report Publisher. BI360 Reporting is an Excel-based report writer that is able to connect directly to a Dynamics ERP or CRM system, and the BI360 Data Warehouse Manager. BI360 Reporting can also be used for operational reporting and not just financial reporting. The BI360 Data Warehouse is completely configurable to the user's needs and wants, to provide the utmost efficient and customizable reports; the Data Warehouse is fully integrated with all modules of the BI360 Suite. The BI360 Planning Module is also an Excel-based data entry tool with a SQL Server Database and fully compatible with BI360 Reporting. BI360 Planning is an easy way to save any data from Excel into a structured SQL Database. The BI suite also offers its own dashboard module, which is based on Microsoft Silverlight and is able to run as a stand-alone in a web browser or able to be deployed as part of a Microsoft SharePoint Portal.

In The WSJ article, Shumsky described woes faced by finance chiefs regarding inefficiency of distributing reports, especially in Excel: "A year ago, - [P.F. Chang's Finance Chief,] Jim Bell's team -spent hours distributing hundreds of Excel Spreadsheets to regional and unit leaders each month for planning and performance tracking of the company's 415 U.S. restaurants," Shumsky reported Bell as saying. However, inefficiency in distributing reports is another problem that can be solved in Excel through the use of BI360 Report Publisher.

The Report Publisher enables the capability to publish financial reports and

budgeting/forecast forms in static Excel workbooks based on the BI360 template that was designed specifically for the user, utilizing the Report Designer. Not only are you easily able to distribute reports but you can also integrate the security settings that have already been configured for the organization to distribute reports to different members and divisions within your organization. Report Publisher can be configured in the Windows Task Scheduler, so you are able to schedule when financial reports or other departmental reports are to be distributed on a specific date. Report Publisher allows you to customize the output format or the report delivery method upon report distribution.

Solver has just released BI360 Cloud, which delivers a business user friendly, dynamic and modern user interface that is accessed via an app or the web for devices that people use on a daily basis. BI360 Cloud is built on Microsoft Azure, allowing the modern reporting, budgeting, dashboards, and data warehouse solution to be accessed anywhere on a browser in real time.

So, for all those looking to solve their Financial Reporting and analyzation crisis; look no further than Solver Inc. for the ideal enterprise Business Intelligence platform. Feel free to contact [Schneider Downs Technology Advisors](#) for questions about expanding Excel's capabilities in your organization or developing an ideal enterprise BI platform tailored to your needs.

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