

# Cisco Uses SAP BWA Appliance to Improve Pipeline Visibility



Company increases accessibility and efficiency of business intelligence for sales management.

## Business Challenge and Objectives

Cisco Sales Operations plays a vital role in tracking all transactions and bookings for the company, and the demands on the organization are growing due to expansion, new offerings, and new revenue opportunities. With increased demand for sales operations, a need arose for quicker access to information. The company decided to address the issue by deploying a new, more efficient business intelligence solution that would not only increase speed to insight for the analyst community, but more importantly, make the business more agile by improving sales executives' access to data and self-service data analysis with real-time views into vital operational information.

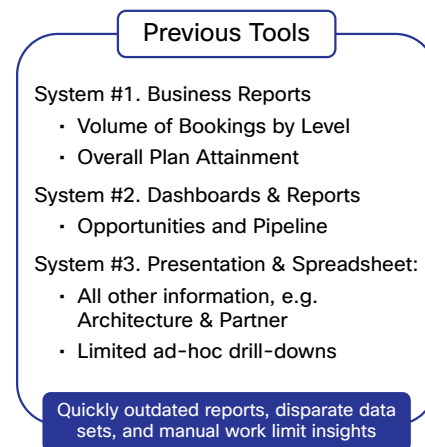
To decide where to begin, Cisco reviewed its Sales Operations technologies and processes only to find that they used too many disparate technologies with multiple tools for tracking bookings. As a result, many processes existed that were inefficient and time-consuming. Rather than continue this method of gaining sales insights, the company decided to explore the potential of using Cisco® Intelligent Automation software and a Cisco BI appliance to improve the processes that could become more efficient with automation, and deploy self-serve analysis capabilities to the top 200 sales executives.

The Sales Operations team worked with the Cisco SAP BWA Product Management team to learn how the Cisco Appliance for SAP BWA\* that includes Cisco Intelligent Automation software could be used to help them become more efficient, and worked with the team to build and deploy a solution.

The project that the SAP BWA appliance supports is called Dynamic Insights for Sales Executives (DISE) within Cisco. The project goal was to improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of business intelligence used by sales management.

## Technical Challenge

Figure 1. Prior to DISE implementation



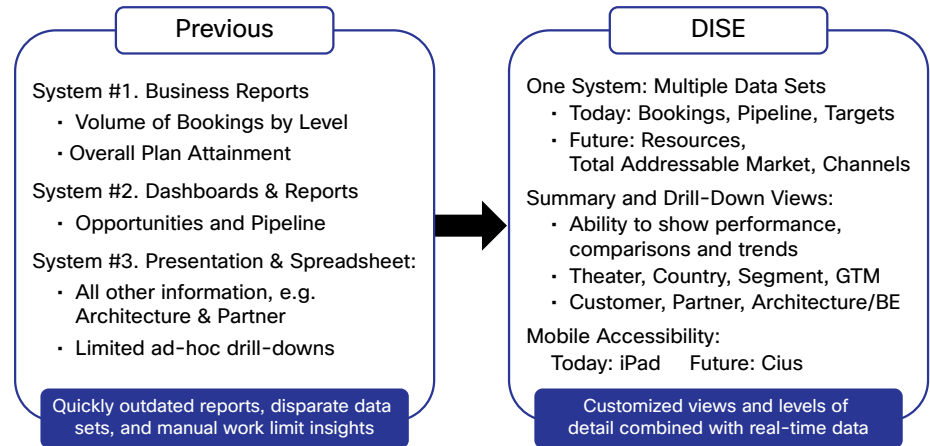
In 2011, Cisco Sales Operations had a diversified portfolio that its infrastructure was struggling to support. The reporting and data to support the portfolio consisted of three parts: My Business Reports, which laid out bookings by Level; Dashboard & Reports, to identify opportunities and move them along the pipeline; and basic presentation/spreadsheet tools for other data entry and modeling. The three-part system was difficult to manage, because it lacked an easy synchronization system across the three technologies that the sales operations processes touched. This deficiency resulted in productivity lost for Sales Operations and support teams.

The three disparate systems and the lack of synergy among them meant that business intelligence could not easily be kept current. For example, reports quickly became outdated, models no longer were the latest, and Sales leadership had to conduct further cross-referencing analysis and make educated choices as to which sets of data were relevant.

Moreover, the use of Microsoft Office applications could only provide a limited degree of insight due to the nature and limitations of their modeling tools. The group wanted to organize its bookings data more effectively, while working on a single platform to consolidate its information and quickly model much-needed data, and have more modeling flexibility and power.

## Solution

Figure 2. After DISE implementation



Cisco Sales Operations teamed with the Cisco SAP BWA appliance Product Management team to deploy the new solution. The SAP-certified Cisco Appliance for SAP BWA provides a real-time, in-memory analytics capability that allows for consolidation of data collection and modeling, and eventually quick access via tablet PC systems including the Cisco Cius™ and the Apple iPad.

Working with the Cisco Product Sales team, the SAP BWA appliance product management quickly identified that a 15-blade appliance would suit the needs of the Sales team. Equipped with NetApp FAS3240 filers, the 15-blade appliance was quickly put into operation, and Cisco Sales deployed the DISE program with the SAP BWA appliance.

## Results

The Cisco Appliance for SAP Business Warehouse Accelerator has greatly expanded and accelerated the Product Sales analysis process. By integrating multiple data sets into one system, sales executives are immediately able to tap into today's bookings, pipeline data, and targets through custom dashboards in a matter of minutes. "Performance is blazingly fast," says Piyush Bhargava, distinguished engineer in IT, who led the SAP BWA deployment for DISE. "It runs on in-memory Cisco UCS, so it's fast for large data sets." In fact, DISE is now able to process queries for data sets up to a hundred million rows of data in seconds. Sales executives and the Cisco Sales analyst community can also quickly access summaries, comparisons, and trends by multiple categorizations: theater, country, segment, and business. Then, analysts are able to share those insights through bookmarks and email.

Jeff McKittrick, in charge of the DISE initiative at Cisco Sales Operations, emphasized that the self-service capabilities that Cisco Intelligent Automation for SAP BWA software adds are valuable to the Sales team, giving universal access to bookings data across the entirety of the analyst community. “The ability to do quick comparisons year-over-year... allows us to show information in terms of growth,” he says. “We are giving them new dimensions from which to look at that growth.” DISE supports drill-down of data from an aggregate level as well as a transaction level, allowing a three-dimensional look at the data. This capability helps enable quick reporting on pipeline opportunities, allowing for comparisons and trends to be easily accessed by sales executives, whether it is from a browser, phone, or tablet.

Sales Operations met its objectives to increase the accuracy, timeliness, and accessibility of business information, making it faster and easier for sales to make decisions and take action.

## Next Steps

With a greater focus on in-memory analytics, the Cisco Sales Operations team will be implementing DISE for two key businesses: Telepresence and Security. Moreover, the sales product has a roadmap to deploy DISE to other Sales segments and Operations leads.

Cisco Product Sales Operations will migrate to the SAP High Performance Analytic Appliance (HANA) platform in FY12, further making use of Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS™) blades to transition Sales Operations to exploit the benefits of the next generation of in-memory computing.

\* The latest version of the appliance supports BWA and HANA. Customers can use it for BWA now and migrate to HANA at their own pace without changing appliances.



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