



# ZenOptics

## The Power of Informed Decision Making:

Why Providing Your Users With A Unifying Platform Is Crucial To Success

### Overview

Businesses make thousands of decisions all the time, which cover everything from basic everyday operations to strategic future projections. Everyone is involved in this – from the entry-level employee to the top executive in senior management. For businesses, the quality of these decisions directly affects business success. In fact, research conducted by the Ohio State University claimed that as many as 50% of companies that fail, do so because of flawed decision-making, especially at a critical time.

The digital age, with its array of tools, has only compounded the issue: with so much information to process, insights to evaluate, and perspectives to factor in, how does a business make sense of everything? What drives successful decision making? And how do you make sure that your organization harnesses the most of today's technologies to positively impact your business goals? We will discuss all these and more in this whitepaper.

### Business Decision Making in the Digital Age

Digitization has transformed the global business landscape, and

while the technologies that drive it are not exactly ever-new, they are ever-evolving. Businesses that respond well get the payoff, and those that do not lag behind.

With digital technologies, data is ever-present, from all types of sources. With these, even market entrants that are agile can have the tools that they need to outperform incumbent businesses previously thought to be immune to competition. Developing strategies and making decisions must thus adapt to digital trends and adopt the necessary measures to stay ahead in the game. These measures include:

- Looking towards new business or operating models that drive key business aspects, such as customer service or product innovation
- Tightening management decisions across several business functions, including reducing operational risks and boosting resource allocation for marketing; and
- Improving business dynamics between your customers, stakeholders, and suppliers

Working with these in mind, businesses must also arm themselves with a good

understanding of the digital shifts that are transforming decision-making in the digital age. These key aspects can provide the foundation upon which quality operational and strategic decisions are made.



#### Pervasive Intelligence:

Analytics are driving unprecedented amounts of data across all components of the value chain



#### The Internet of Things (IoT):

The rise of physical connectivity in both small and large scales powers new services and operational improvements



#### Fluid Workforces:

Access to technologies is disrupting the traditional business model and creating a more mobile workforce



#### Trust As A Currency:

The digital age values trust more than any other as a key lever of business revenue

# How to Make Informed Business Decisions

At its most basic level, making informed business decisions is predicated on harnessing the data that you have towards finalizing the right step to drive the result that the decision should bring about. According to the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, there are seven key steps to that.



## Identification

To start, have a clear definition of the nature of the decision that the business must make.



## Gathering Relevant Information

Both internal and external information must be assessed to inform your thought process. Consider the type of information that is needed, where you should get this information, and how you can get it.



## Identification of Alternatives

List all your desired paths of action or alternatives, as well as those that may possibly crop up.



## Weighing of Evidence

Assess each path of action or alternative that you have on your list and measure it against its probability of manifesting the result that you have outlined in the first step. Along this process, you will be drawn to those with higher success margins than others.



## Selection of Alternatives

Following weighing evidence, you can then choose the course of action that best aligns with your goal.



## Taking Action

Now you can implement the alternative that you have chosen.



## Decision Review

Finally, evaluate the success of the decision by its consequences. If it met your goal, that's good; if it has not, go back to the earlier steps to assess where you can choose differently.

Unfortunately, it is not always as simple as that.

**A McKinsey survey found that among 1,200 managers in global companies, about 61% say that half the time they spent making decisions proved to be ineffective. For a typical Fortune 500 company, this translates to about 530,000 days potentially squandered, or roughly \$250 million in wages.**



For senior management, there are three types of decisions that heavily play into business success:



#### **Big-bet decisions:**

High-risk decisions that can shape the future of your business made by the top team and boards, such as an acquisition.



#### **Cross-cutting decisions:**

Frequent decisions that contribute to collaborative and end-to-end processes made in cross-functional forums, such as pricing.



#### **Delegated decisions:**

Frequent and low-risk decisions that do not require a high level of input from others, and made by individuals or working teams.

For each of these types, McKinsey recommends the following fixes.



#### **Big-Bet Decisions: Facilitating Productive Debates**

In typical boardroom discussions, a "conspiracy of approval" exists, where results are pre-formed well before the events take place. However, better results can be achieved through encouraging interactive debates that are inclusive and balanced. When decision dynamics are opened, subsequent decisions can be reframed to find the best possible alternatives.



#### **Cross-Cutting Decisions: Committing to Processes**

One of the biggest roadblocks to making effective cross-cutting decisions is the lack of visibility into the specifics of the decision-making process. That can be remedied by establishing an organized process that clearly defines objectives, measures, targets, and roles.



#### **Delegated Decisions: Empowering Employees**

While delegated decisions are low-risk and don't have significant and immediate consequences to the business, when they are not executed well, they can hold up cost efficiency and productivity. To improve this type of decision, empower employees with the training that they need to make high quality and speedy decisions.

## The Rewards of Data-Driven Decision Making

To succeed in the digital age as a business, data-driven decision making is an integral tool. A survey of more than 1,000 senior executives found that data-driven organizations are three times more likely improve the results of their decision making, and [the Harvard Business School](#) lists the following benefits off of that:



### More Confidence

Data functions in many ways, and it can be vetted, measured, evaluated, monitored, and quantified. This makes it less susceptible to contributing to biases and noise, as well as helps rule out subjective factors in decision-making.



### More Proactiveness

Business demands and pressure can trigger reactive takes, but data is a good grounding tool. With information, your team can map out cases more comprehensively, and see the bigger picture more easily.



### More Cost Savings

Investing in data-driven initiatives can also drive down costs! A survey for the Harvard Business Review revealed that among Fortune 1,000 executives, 49% said that data-driven projects have decreased costs for their businesses.

The ZenOptics Business Intelligence catalog is a unified solution that delivers productivity, collaboration, manageability, and governance by granting direct access to all your analytics assets, including reports, dashboards, spreadsheets, applications, and data. It is perfect for:



**Knowledge Workers who use multiple analytic platforms daily**



**Information Stewards who govern analytics and data assets; and**



**Management Professionals who oversees the TCO of Analytic and Reporting systems**

The easy-to-use platform offers hours of savings and knowledge worker efficiency, massive risk reduction and better report governance, and millions of dollars in optimized analytics investments.

To request a demo, [visit www.zenoptics.com](http://www.zenoptics.com).

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