



## **Help Wanted!** *Overcoming the Shortage of Business Intelligence and Analytic Professionals*

### **Overview**

Many Business Intelligence (BI) and Analytics projects are in development and employment opportunities are plentiful. So, why are so few properly trained individuals available?

### **The Talent Pool Landscape**

If you ask any IT recruiter, consulting firm or IT department about how difficult it is to find good database, analytics, and business intelligence resources, you would get overwhelming agreement there is a shortage. BI and Analytics have many different facets and require different skills for proper execution. The skills needed are growing significantly and it is increasingly difficult to find a candidate with all the necessary skills.

### **Why the Shortage?**

The shortage of resources exists for several reasons.

- Lack of exposure to essential skills by college graduates entering the workforce
- Overall skills required are expanding due to new technologies and tools
- Finding talented professionals who communicate well with both technical and business staffs is difficult
- Salaries are too low for the quantity and quality of skills needed to fulfill job requirements

### **University Curriculums**

College graduates from MIS/CS departments know very little about database modeling or real-world database environments. There are few majors in the IT sciences that have classes on databases, let alone business intelligence and analytics courses. There is a lack of exposure to technology and tools found in the workplace.

### **Skill Sets are Very Broad**

As key skills multiply, it becomes nearly impossible to find someone who knows and understands all the required skills for a project. New software and hardware technologies are constantly created to make systems easier and faster and better, but

it takes time and experience to get good at these tools. With ongoing new products and updates, skills must be constantly upgraded.

### **Salaries Are Not Equal to the Skills Required**

Companies will often take their business analysts and turn them into BI and Analytics experts. There is potential to become outstanding BI and Analytics professionals as long as the aptitude is there. The company benefits by converting a lower salaried employee into someone in high demand and with highly sought after skills. However, this is often done without a comparable salary increase. Management often does not realize the compensation range for these skills.

### **Personality and Communication Skills**

Skilled BI and Analytics professionals need to converse with business staffs in simple terms in order to understand project requirements and portray solutions without getting into technology specifics. It is difficult to find a resource that can develop analytic solutions, with multiple technologies, and then conduct business meetings that are understood clearly.

### **What to do about it?**

These challenges are not solved overnight. However, there are some things to consider.

#### **Change the university curriculum.**

This is gradually taking place. The current abilities of recent graduates are not at the level needed to make an impact for most organizations, but MIS/CS Departments are improving their curriculum. Corporate IT departments need to sponsor creative BI and Analytics programs to get students involved through internships and co-op programs. Technology vendors need to offer free or deeply discounted copies of their software so that college students can learn the latest tools.

#### **Increase pay rates.**

A CIO once asked if they could find a person that could do SQL Server BI, SharePoint, data modeling, UI design and Tableau (a popular dashboarding tool) for a \$70,000 per year salary. That person at that salary does not exist. Increased pay for BI and Analytics professionals would help raise the skill levels because employees realize there is a financial reward for any extra effort to increase their skills.

#### **Find inexpensive or free formalized training.**

Search blogs and forums to gain insight and increase knowledge, in both hard and soft skills. Free and inexpensive training tools exist online and in books. Take advantage of these to broaden an understanding of BI and Analytics theories, concepts and implementation.

## **Consider outside help to validate critical concepts.**

Sometimes introducing an outside consultant is one of the best ways to put everything together when creating or expanding your BI and Analytics team.

Good consultants help bring the IT and business units together and can show by example how that bridge between the two can be overcome. Involvement between all parties will advance the skills of your staff, resulting in more meaningful projects in a shorter amount of time.

## **Summary**

There is a shortage of talent, but the good news is that the BI and Analytics market is growing and is one of the most exciting disciplines in IT. Do your part by working with universities and encouraging the expansion of their curriculum to produce students with higher levels of analytics skills. Use outside talent to bring all the pieces together and create an atmosphere where capable professionals will do everything needed to get the training and exposure they need to be that high-demand rock star. For a more detailed white paper on this topics, please visit the StatSlice Systems website ([www.statslice.com](http://www.statslice.com)).

## **By Justin Taylor, StatSlice Systems**

*Justin, a StatSlice Manager Consultant, ([www.statslice.com](http://www.statslice.com)), has been architecting, building and managing business intelligence projects since 1999, including solutions for Fortune 500 companies. When Justin joined StatSlice, he was looking for an opportunity to make a major contribution to the company and utilize his technology experience to help clients solve their business problems. He enjoys opportunities to speak at technology events, conferences and training. He holds several Microsoft certifications include MCT (trainer), MCTS and MCITP certifications in SQL Server BI, and Certified Scrum Master through ScrumAlliance.org.*

## **For More Information**

For more information about StatSlice Systems products and services, call (214) 206-9290 or email us at [info@statslice.com](mailto:info@statslice.com). Please visit us at <http://www.statslice.com>

© 2013 StatSlice Systems. All rights reserved. This article is for informational purposes only. StatSlice makes no warranties, express or implied, in this document.