

TechBridge



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C-Suite Leaders: Healthcare Analytics

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The C-suite, or executive managers, of an organization (CEO, CFO, COO, etc.) are responsible for the company's overall direction and making sure day-to-day operations align with overarching strategic goals. With the company's success resting on their shoulders, executives need timely and accurate information that enables them to make critical business decisions. In the modern age where data permeates all areas of society, it's of particular importance that a company's top leadership embraces and advocates for advanced business intelligence tools.

In a recent webinar sponsored by Dimensional Insight, healthcare industry executives discuss the role that data analytics plays in facilitating upper-management decisions and how the C-suite can best implement analytics strategies within their organizations. Here are some of the key takeaways from the panelists.





Data analytics permeates all business operations

The use of data has gone beyond just its role in identifying hidden trends, now forming the backbone of many organizations and allowing management to implement meaningful company-wide changes. It has become a key player in developing and realizing business objectives across all industries, and healthcare is no exception.

In the modern age, every area of an organization's success can be reduced to how and where they apply data in their decision making. Outside of the traditional applications like managing finances and evaluating staff performance, the healthcare industry relies on

analytics to provide patients with best-possible care and enable long-term treatment plans. In an industry where making the right decision can be a matter of life or death, clinical professionals need to have access to timely and accurate information. This can be anything from evaluating possible treatments for a patient based off genomic sequencing, to managing emergency room volumes to increase throughput.

Analytics have also been seeing more use in establishing population health strategies that work to provide proactive measures instead of waiting to respond to complications as they emerge. This entails preemptive treatments, tracking immunizations, managing chronic care, and making clinical predictions for those with genetic predispositions. Additionally, analytics goes beyond the hospital and physician's office with providers now using data to track post-discharge metrics and schedule necessary follow up appointments.

COVID-19 transformed the role of analytics in healthcare

Responsible for holding the front-line against COVID-19, no industry saw quite as severe a shift in operations and methodology during the pandemic as healthcare. The sudden and extreme changes in patient volumes, supply chain infrastructure, and method of care delivery overwhelmed many systems. Almost overnight, COVID-19 produced a demand for sets of data that many providers and companies hadn't even considered collecting before. Additionally, success in battling the pandemic required a combined front and competitors were forced to cooperate in developing and implementing effective solutions.



Analytics formed the backbone of the healthcare system's defense against COVID-19, allowing providers to track data related to positive test results and outbreaks and plan accordingly. Additionally, the sudden surge in patient volume and demand for necessary equipment meant that organizations had to rely on data tools to maximize their resource efficiency.

Following the initial outbreak, various organizations came together to comprise a massive central repository of data to enable research and answer important questions. Recent advances in analytics allowed the enrollment of huge numbers of patients in potential treatment trials at a far faster rate than many organizations were accustomed to. Once the vaccine was finally developed, data become critical to evaluating efficacy, side effects, and supply and demand. By combining data from multiple sources (at both local and federal levels), organizations were able to determine when demand would fall in certain regions. Now, that same data is being used in evaluating strategies for child vaccine approval and booster shots.



Healthcare analytics is constantly evolving

As the world grows and evolves, so do analytics tools and how healthcare organizations use them. Currently, one of the biggest areas in need of renovation is garnering support for data in departments that have traditionally gone without. Financial departments and upper-level management have been well acquainted with data for quite some time—the challenge now is getting people who actually work on the floor to adopt its usage. Frontline managers and other hands-on staff need to develop an appreciation for what the data means, along with user-friendly access to the visualizations tools they need to guide their decisions. Additionally, the burden of data collection needs to be reduced through a greater commitment to human-centered design and task automation in order to curb the risk of burnout.

Not only does the internal culture surrounding analytics need to be reformed, but so does the mentality regarding its applications. In past years, data was often used in retrospective evaluations such as "what went wrong." However, the recent pandemic reinforced the value in proactive measures and using data in strategic planning. The use of predictive analytics can benefit healthcare operations of any size from pandemic-prevention to streamlining how primary care physicians process their patients. Many upper-level management teams are also hoping for increased interoperability as organizations run into obstacles in transitioning to new platforms and merging with other companies.

And of course, the data tools themselves always have room for improvement. Advancements in AI can assist clinicians in making better decisions for patients by providing recommendations and identifying trends that may otherwise go unnoticed. In the future, many providers are hoping that AI will be able to provide personalized solutions based off individual variables such as genetic predispositions, prior illnesses, and lifestyle habits. Newer and more comprehensive algorithms mean deeper and more thorough data for clinicians to use in their decision-making.



Success with business intelligence starts and ends with upper-level leadership

At the end of the day, an organization's success with analytics depends on the advocacy and support of their executives. As the head of their company, it's up to the top-level leadership to both establish a culture that recognizes data as a critical business feature, and to guide its success.

One of the most prolific causes behind organizations failing to make the most of their data is a lack of clear-cut objectives and well-defined pathways for achieving them. Realizing the potential of data analytics requires a manageable plan that incorporates explicit goals and reasonable benchmarks for success. Analytics tools are a waste of resources if they're not being used to develop actionable and meaningful results that align with the company's priorities.

By providing operational teams with data useful to their positions, executives are better able to keep the rest of the company engaged with the organization's central overarching plans. Businesses must adopt the mindset that literacy with analytics is an integral criterion for a position, not a preference. However, this mentality starts at the top. Mid-level managers and front-line workers need to be inspired by their leadership in implementing data outcomes as part of their continuing day-to-day operations.

As the core decision-makers for their organization, it's critical that executives develop a strong grasp of what different solutions provide and how they will aid the company in realizing its long-term goals. There is no one correct answer for how an organization gets their analytics—finding the correct solution requires knowledge of both the company's needs and the services that different platforms deliver. Executives must evaluate how they intend to organize their internal and external data management—do they want one comprehensive end-to-end solution like Dimensional Insight's Diver Platform®, or do they want to customize their approach with an assembly of individual software tools? The answer to this lies in understanding how staff throughout the organization would best utilize analytics in accordance with the company's broader plans.

Conclusion

With the emergence of new and advanced challenges comes the need for new and advanced solutions. In order to fully realize their company's potential and pursue new frontiers for growth, C-suite executives must continue to establish best-practices for analytics within their organization. To learn more about recent trends and how healthcare leaders can make the most of their data, watch our full webinar, "Analytics for the C-Suite."

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WATCH NOW

Impact of Supply Chain Snarls

For a while now, the difficulties the supply chain has been facing have been at a higher level than the average American might be paying attention to. After initial shortages, the grocery store shelves looked re-stocked, appliances seemed more readily available, and construction projects that were paused picked back up. Everything seemed to be normal again, though maybe at a higher price to cover rising costs.

But as manufacturers know, critical issues throughout the pandemic impacted the availability of certain parts and slowed production, while the flow of shipping has been interrupted by backups at ports around the world. And those disruptions are starting to be felt by everyone—especially children.

School lunch shortages

During the pandemic, many families relied on lunches—and in many cases breakfasts—provided by school districts, even when children weren't physically in the school buildings. The students are now making their way back into the buildings, but some of the food is not.

Labor shortages—from truck drivers to those who work in warehouses or on assembly lines—are forcing some food distributors to cancel contracts with schools. On top of that, the supply chain issues have affected the availability of certain food products as well as other cafeteria items like plastic cutlery.

The government has relaxed some of its enforcement around meeting federal nutrition guidelines, and in some cases is increasing its rate of reimbursement for schools spending more to overcome the shortages. But it's not enough in some places to prevent some cafeteria worker shortages, where the extra pressure of the job has become too much to handle.





by **John Sucich,** Contributing Writer



Not home for the holidays

Experts are cautioning that the current situation could stretch on for an unforeseen amount of time—meaning that certain food items may be unavailable for holiday celebrations...or certain gift items may not arrive in time or, at least, not without significant cost increase.

Why the increase in cost? According to one shipping estimate from a board game shipper, before the pandemic it might cost at most \$7,000 to ship a 40-foot container of games from Shanghai to a warehouse in Michigan. That price is currently up to at least \$26,000, and could get to as high as \$35,000.

But that's if the shipping container becomes available in the first place. Because of the virus, dockworker shortages led to a slower unloading of containers at ports, which has led to fewer containers being loaded elsewhere, and ships unable to dock to unload. And, in some situations, shortages of items like computer chips or other small parts have prevented certain products from being made in the first place.

What you can do

Solutions are hard to come by. For some businesses, the best they can do is avoid putting prices in their holiday catalogs because prices have been fluctuating so much. Experts caution it might still be a while before the supply chain stabilizes.

The best approach is to use data to take advantage of what's in your control. You can't do anything about a ship that's idling and preventing goods from being unloaded... but you can manage the efficiency of how you store goods waiting to be shipped. You can't speed the traffic on the seas, but you can take advantage of the time where nothing is happening to maximize efficiency in your supply chain. That in and of itself is a better use of time than sitting and worrying about aspects that are out of your control.

There are other pending complications that aren't helping the global view. Economic complications in the United States and China could have a negative effect on markets, which could impact spending heading into the holiday season. Then there's the risk of variants, and the unknown of when the pandemic's impact on the economy will be over. Unfortunately, there is no amount of data yet that can help predict that timing. \square



KLAS: Data and Analytics Platforms 2021



KLAS Research recently released its Data and Analytics Platforms 2021 report, which provides insight into how deep platform adopters in hospitals and health systems are using both basic and advanced analytics capabilities.

As healthcare organizations require broader and deeper analytics for more sophisticated decision-making, they need an end-to-end analytics platform that meets their needs. The KLAS report evaluated vendors on user adoption across KLAS' five pillars of a data and analytics platform, and also included customer experience data so users can see how vendors perform in real-life deployments. Let's examine some of the takeaways from the report.



The framework below outlines the five pillars of adata and analytics platform as well as the basic and advanced capabilities included within each pillar. See the full report for a detailed definition of each capability as well as a vendor-specific look at validated adoption. Prevent of deep adopters leveraging capability Basic capabilities — Advanced capabilities — Advanced capabilities Data ingestion — Incurciously for compiling data from disparate sources. — Place and revenues — Compiling datas data — Compiling datas from disparates sources. — Place and revenues — Compiling datas data — Compiling datas datas — Compiling datas

1. Hospitals are using most basic analytics capabilities, but there is room for improvement

The KLAS report outlines the five pillars of a data and analytics platform: data ingestion, data management, analytics, advanced analytics, and underlying components. The report shows that when it comes to the basic capabilities in these areas, deep adopters have implemented most of them.

However, there are some basic capabilities that are only used by less than 60% of these deep adopter hospitals, and they are all in the "underlying components" pillar. Between 41% and 60% of hospitals are using "API enabled" and "Interoperability" capabilities, and 21% to 40% of hospitals are using "FHIR enabled" capabilities. This shows that there is room for improvement when it comes to sharing and integrating data from different sources.

2. Despite the hype, hospitals are slow to adopt advanced analytics

We've all heard a lot about advanced analytics, particularly around artificial intelligence and machine learning. However, the KLAS report shows that even the hospitals that are considered the deepest adopters are slow to implement some of these technologies, showing we are still in early days with advanced functionality.

The highest implemented "advanced analytics" technology is predictive analytics, with 61% to 80% of deep adopters using it. Technologies such as unsupervised machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) are being used by less than 20% of deep adopter hospitals.



3. Dimensional Insight continues to lead the pack in outcomes and functionality

Part of the KLAS report includes vendor ratings and customer feedback so users can understand how vendors perform in actual customer deployments. Of rated vendors, Dimensional Insight leads with high scores in both "drives tangible outcomes" and "product has needed functionality." According to KLAS, Dimensional Insight, "Generates high loyalty and excitement with customer-centric approach; all respondents are satisfied or highly satisfied. Seen as a partner who keeps promises and seeks to understand customer needs."

In addition, KLAS publishes grades that go along with its six customer experience pillars. Based on customer feedback, Dimensional Insight was the only vendor to receive all "A's" in the six pillars, with the following grades:

- > A+ in Culture
- > A in Loyalty
- > A in Operations
- > A in Product
- > A in Relationship
- > A+ in Value



KLAS subscribers can learn more about the data and analytics category by going to the KLAS website. You can also learn more about Dimensional Insight and its performance in the annual Best in KLAS report by visiting this web page:

LEARN MORE

Simplify Frequent Report Emails

There are times when people at your company—managers or peers—may ask you for a single report or two based on your company's data. And then, there are times when you must deliver those reports frequently. Creating and emailing reports isn't time-consuming when you are called upon to do it, say, once a year. But what if you must email them monthly, weekly, or even daily? The task is repetitive and tedious and could become a nuisance. That's when setting up a way to email these reports automatically makes sense. And that is what we will show you how to do in this article.



How DIAL can help

Within Diver Platform, you can email reports from Workbench using DIAL scripts. DIAL is the acronym for Dimensional Insight Access Language. It is a powerful Java programming language designed to process, analyze, and distribute information contained in Dimensional Insight files.

DIAL scripts can process Diver files such as Markers, DivePlans, cBases, and Models to search and dive on data values by accessing and evaluating summary information. DIAL then sends the result as an email or saves the results in files. In the test case that we have set up for this article, Workbench will do and show you exactly that. But we want to emphasize that you can use DIAL for much more than just emailing reports. For instance, DIAL can grab information, results, and summary values and feed them into Integrator scripts and other systems throughout the Dive process.

For this article, we are showing how we can send a simple Diver report with DIAL. Let's get started.

Figure 1. A simple DIAL script

Figure 1 shows a simple DIAL script, indicated by the file name, ending with ".dial" in Workbench. Please note that in version 7.1(15) and later, you can run this in server mode, which allows you to use project pathing. Project pathing is handy as it will enable you to avoid having to use full pathing. Figure 1 shows this path commented out in the first line. Of course, you don't have to use these configuration functions, so we have commented them out for that purpose.

Line 3, below the comments, gives instructions to connect to our server, which we have defined as «local host.» The following function on that line spells out the user as «luke». (Please note that to run DIAL, the user must have ProDiver access.)

Line 4 sets the project's name where the DIAL script will run and access Diver files, markers, et cetera. In this case, the name of the project is «dipa».

Line 5 designates the name of the email server. DIAL sends the email out from this server. In this case, it's «smtp.dimins.com».

Line 6 designates the sender's email address. In this case, it's coming from «Alerts@KFdemo.com».

All DIAL scripts for emailing must have these four lines (3, 4, 5, and 6) at the beginning of the script file.

Line 8 gives the function to open up a saved marker with «marker.open». The first part of the «marker.open» function defines the variable's name for this function using «mrk». The next part of this line defines the location of the marker.

In this case, since we are on a later version of Workbench after 7.1(15), we can use project the pathing: «/markers/Ad-Hoc/Goal Summary Report tier 1.mrk».

Line 9 indicates to save the report as a PDF into the DIAL folder, «Results».

Line 11 instructs to email the PDF to an email address.

Figure 2. Snippet of information about the function

One helpful feature of Workbench is that users can roll their mouse pointer over script segments and get a little snippet of information about the function. You should enter parameters and use the syntax outlined in these snippets. In this example, there are four variables we must enter:

- 1. The recipient's email address.
- 2. The subject of the email.
- 3. The path to the attachment.
- 4. The email body.

In this example, the recipient's email address is a single email address, luke@dimins.com. However, you can also specify several email addresses, an email group, or a file containing a list of user emails.

The second variable is the subject line. In this example, we have used the phrase, "Knowledge Forum DIAL demo."

The third variable for this function is the path to our PDF that we output earlier in this article. By supplying the path for this variable, the function acts to attach our PDF to the outgoing email.

The fourth and final variable of the function designates the email body, which is a text file in our example.

Once this final step is complete, save the file. Then, the saved file is ready to plug into a production script with a DIAL node.

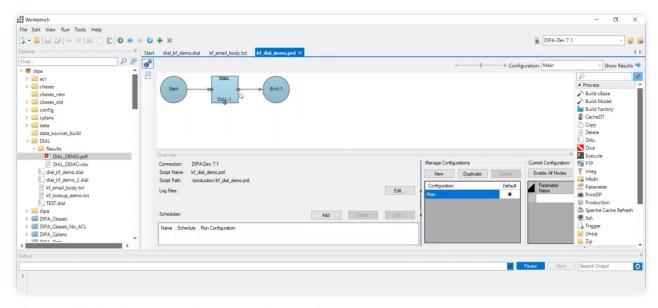


Figure 3. This is where we put the completed DIAL script

In Figure 3, we can see a node pointed towards the completed DIAL script, making it available to schedule and run however often you would like. We can run the DIAL script and check the recipient's email to confirm that our script is working correctly.

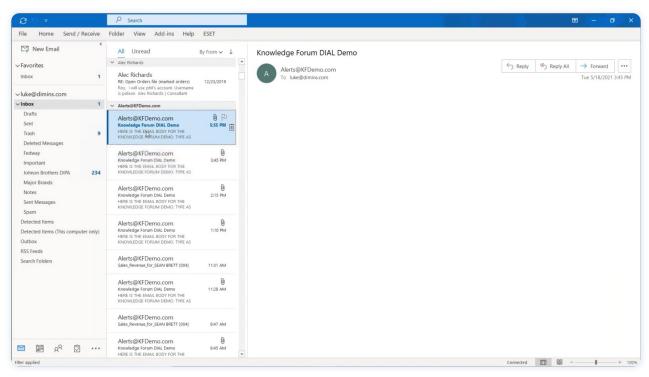


Figure 4. Check the success of the script via the recipient's InBox

Figure 4 shows the inbox for luke@dimins.com. Here, we can see the scheduled email, confirming a successful run of the script.

Learn more

This article described just a simple demonstration of what DIAL can do. As we mentioned earlier in this article, DIAL is very powerful. We can use it with Integrator. We could parameterize it to grab many different things out of cBases, Markers, and cPlans to feed into Integrator scripts. You can get more information about using DIAL on our Help website.





Top Post-Pandemic Wine Trends

Trevor Branch

Marketing Writer LinkedIn

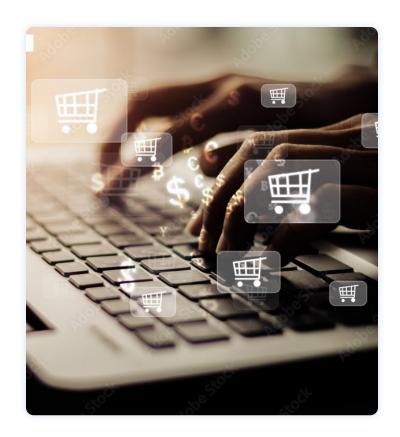


As with all industries, COVID-19 had a profound impact on the wine and spirits market. Despite the new obstacles and systemic complications presented by the pandemic, wine saw a significant surge in sales as people adapted to working remotely and social distancing. The transition to online shopping had the surprise benefit of providing wine suppliers and distributors with an increased supply of real-time data surrounding consumer buying trends. Moving forward, it appears that many of the trends identified during the pandemic could be here for the long-haul.

Ecommerce is here to stay

The onset of COVID-19 triggered such a dramatic increase in online alcohol sales and digital engagement that ecommerce is likely to persist long after the country emerges from pandemic. According to data from Nielsen, online wine sales spiked a whopping 234% during the pandemic in 2020. Although the increased demand was driven largely by social distancing and a sudden transition to drinking at home, the growth in online sales can also be attributed to many countries and states relaxing their buying and shipping laws.

Fueled by the unique circumstances of the pandemic, innovation in digital platforms led to a new era of convenient and user-friendly online shopping. In addition to providing customers with a safer means of acquiring their alcohol, ecommerce demonstrated society's demand for increasingly practical and labor-saving services. By allowing consumers to compare, review, and discover products from the comfort of their own homes, ecommerce readily complemented the diverse nature of the wine industry. Furthermore, the increasing complexity of alcohol distribution and retail has opened up new opportunities for innovation in other industries as well, especially in logistics and data governance.





Sustainable and ethical practices are no longer optional

Younger generations of consumers want the brands they put their money behind to share their overall values and consider the environment in their production. More sustainably minded than prior generations, millennials and Gen Z have driven a substantial surge in sustainable practices amongst alcohol suppliers and distributors. Investments in greener and more environmentally friendly operations have paid off for many organizations with an increase in sales and access to newer, younger demographics. The consumer demand for more authentic products from businesses has demonstrated that many consumers care not only about the product, but the producer as well.

Outside of the marketing and sales potential associated with greener practices, winegrowers are also taking steps to protect their livelihood as climate change increasingly threatens the long-term sustainability of their industry. With many wine regions experiencing unprecedented wildfires and droughts, vineyards have had to make serious evaluations concerning their water management. Farmers across the planet have begun investing in state-of-the-art irrigation and water conservation systems to make the most of their resources and reduce waste. Some farmers have even ditched irrigation systems entirely in favor of dry farming and employing better soil management.



Resurgence of entry-level wines

With the economic downturn and lowered incomes of the pandemic, many wine-drinkers no longer had access to the same disposable income as before. This spurred a renewed interest in entry-level wines as consumers sought to maintain their established alcohol preferences without breaking the bank. Boxed wine in particular saw significant growth during the pandemic due to its cost-effectiveness, convenient packaging, and recent improvements in quality.

This trend is likely to persist beyond the lockdown as consumers become accustomed to their more price-conscious buying habits and are forced to endure the slow recovery of the economy. Additionally, the preference for budget-friendly wines will also extend to on-premise drinking as consumer confidence lags behind the reopening of bars and restaurants.

Consumers are exploring newer formats for drinking

Driven by changes in shopping and drinking patterns during the pandemic, alcohol providers have shifted towards a more diverse selection of packaging formats like bag-in-a-box and cans. Even before the onset of COVID-19, canned wine was seeing increased acceptance across consumer markets. The success of canned and bag-in-a-box products is heavily associated with regions that already possessed a strong market for read-to-drink beverages, such as the US, UK, and Australia. Additionally, canned beverages traditionally do well with younger demographics who are drawn to the convenience, environmental friendliness, and trendy marketing strategies associated with the format.

Not only has wine itself witnessed an exploration of different styles, but so has the way its consumed. The inability to go out, excess time for meal prep, and propensity to treat oneself during the pandemic drove consumers to experiment with different at-home occasions. Sparkling wine in particular has experienced success as consumers broadened its use from celebratory events to more casual formats. Rose and lighter wines in general have also seen moderate success as consumers seek its versatility in drinking across a diverse spectrum of occasions.

Looking to the future

Although the world is still in a transitional stage due to the recent events of COVID-19, it's critical that we keep an eye on emerging trends to better understand how the wine market is evolving.



To learn more about the state of the industry following the pandemic, check out our whitepaper 5 Trends in the Beverage Alcohol Industry for 2021.

DOWNLOAD

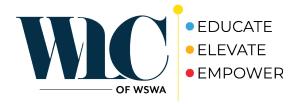
Upcoming Events

WSWA Women's Leadership Council Conference

Virtual

November 3-4, 2021

Learn more



Annual Women Leaders in Healthcare Conference

Virtual Webcast

Friday, November 12, 2021 | 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. ET





ACHE of MA Fall Conference

Virtual

November 18, 2021

Learn more



The 7th Annual Cannabis Business Summit & Expo

San Francisco, CA | December 15-17, 2021 | **Booth #1208**

Learn more



News brief