

HOW TO DEFEAT
THE TOP



BI VILLAINS

AT YOUR COMPANY

INTRODUCTION



It's no secret - getting the right information at the right time can be a game changer for any company. Yet despite the explosion of data and the growth in the BI marketplace, the average business user still struggles to get access to the insights she needs to make timely decisions and move the business forward.

This is because most companies are still relying on analytics software built decades ago and designed for coders, not the business. As a result, most employees are left empty-handed.

In this book, we present five common BI "villains" - Waiting Widow, Timeout Terror, Backlog Blob, Model Mayhem, and Dr. Cube - and the best ways to defeat them, so that any company can put key insights in the hands of every employee.



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WAITING WIDOW

Cut the Reporting Queue

2

TIMEOUT TERROR

Never Wait for Reports to Load

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BACKLOG BLOB

Eliminate Your BI Backlog

4

MODEL MAYHEM

Minimize Complexity & Professional Services

5

DR. CUBE

Deliver Value Faster to the Business

1

WAITING WIDOW VS. SPOTGIRL



THOUSANDS OF BUSINESS USERS WERE LULLED INTO WAITING FOR REPORTS BY THE WIDOW'S ANCIENT SPELL.



THE WORKERS WAITING FOR ANSWERS IN ZOMBIE SLUMBER WERE INSTANTLY AWAKENED BY SPOTGIRL'S BLAZING SEARCH LIGHT!



THE POWER OF SEARCH-DRIVEN ANALYTICS REVIVED THE DISORIENTED BI USERS, AND RETURNED THEM TO PRODUCTIVITY.

Have you ever been told the report you need will take three weeks to build? Most business users are familiar with this pain. In fact, 57% of them routinely wait over a week for a simple report.

The problem isn't that enterprises aren't empowered by their data – it's that they're held captive by it. The very tools that promised to give them an edge are now slowing them down as they wait for answers from their BI team and become complacent.

Time is limited for every business, and getting answers promptly is paramount to stay ahead of the competition. Enterprises need a solution that gives them actionable data in a timely fashion.

44%

of C-suite execs note business delays while waiting on reports to be built.

1 DEFEAT WAITING WIDOW

Cut the Reporting Queue

Stop making business users wait in line for answers. Free them to make smarter decisions as quickly as they can think up questions.

When you spend days waiting for reports, sitting through lengthy training sessions, or standing-by as a dashboard updates, you're wasting the most valuable thing you own: your time. With the newest search-driven analytics engines, non-technical users (i.e., the rest of us) can finally blur the line between content creation and consumption by building personal reports with zero training.

Once a business user asks a question, a search-driven application can wade through all underlying raw data, compute results, and instantly present charts based on those real-time calculations. Offering ad-hoc data discovery to everyone at your company puts the people who know your business best in the driver's seat.

Trusting the answers you come up with is also critical. A smart search-driven analytics engine lets business users easily analyze results at different time intervals without waiting for analysts to create new cubes, build aggregate tables, or translate complex column names to plain English. With data-empowered employees, your business can say goodbye to Waiting Widow.



With ThoughtSpot, our scientists can now search to analyze trial results and identify outliers in minutes rather than months.

- Head of Research

FORTUNE 200
PHARMA COMPANY



2

TIMEOUT TERROR VS. SPOTGIRL



BI TEAMS EVERYWHERE WERE DROWNING IN THE SANDS OF WASTED TIME CREATED BY TIMEOUT TERROR.



BEFORE GETTING BURIED IN TERROR'S SANDY CLUTCHES OF ETERNAL WAIT, SPOTGIRL SAVED THE DAY WITH SEARCH-DRIVEN ANALYTICS.



NO LONGER WAITING FOR QUERIES TO LOAD, USERS COULD NOW GET INSTANT INSIGHTS AND DRIVE THE BUSINESS FORWARD.

It's a common concern for any IT team. Despite their best intentions, users create "runaway queries" (i.e., someone starts a query without filtering and ultimately ends up with a timed-out tool). Mass frustration ensues and users stop using the tool. IT teams try to prevent this from happening by spending hours setting up restrictions. It's a tiresome loop for everyone. Restrictions limit end users, and setting up restrictions is valuable time lost for the IT team. Your company is truly stuck between a rock and a hard place.

BI teams need an analytics solution that frees them from hand-holding business users each time they are blindsided by timeouts. On top of all this, the solution needs to deliver answers quickly. Can one product offer both?

22%

BI industry adoption rate due to query delays and interface complexity.

2 DEFEAT TIMEOUT TERROR

Never Again Wait for a Report to Load

It's time to bring those BI adoption numbers up. A scalable, reliable analytics solution will enable everyone in your organization to make the right decision at the right moment.

Studies have shown that if Google search results fail to load in less than three seconds, most users will abandon the page. You should hold your analytics tool to a similar standard at work. A solution that delivers sub-second response times at scale can eliminate the possibility of "runaway queries" and keep operations running smoothly.

But it's difficult to keep the train moving forward without in-memory data caching and enough safeguards in place to keep the system alive at all times. It's really no wonder Timeout Terror strikes so often - most traditional BI systems can't handle so much data. A search-driven solution that scales to hundreds of terabytes of data will ensure that the system always responds right away.

It's also wise to look for a BI system architected with high availability so that no one query will lock up the system - multiple people should be able to query at the same time. With this kind of failover redundancy in place, your BI team won't be locked into hours of extra work to keep the system chugging for all employees.



I used to wait 30 minutes for our legacy BI solution to query a billion transactions. With ThoughtSpot, I get answers in under a second.



3

BACKLOG BLOB VS. SPOTGIRL



BUSINESS ANALYSTS RAN TO ESCAPE THE BACKLOG BLOB. WITH EVERY REPORT EATEN, HE GREW LARGER AND MORE POWERFUL.



WITH A BLAST FROM HER SEARCH LIGHT, SPOTGIRL FREED THE REPORTS AND DASHBOARDS SWALLOWED BY THE BLOB!



AT LAST, BUSINESS LEADERS COULD GET THEIR OWN INSIGHTS, FREEING THE BI TEAM TO FOCUS ON MORE COMPLEX ANALYSES.

Backlogs are a universal frustration for BI teams. With an ongoing need to produce basic reports for business users, it's all-too-common for technical teams to lack the bandwidth to focus on challenging analyses. In fact, only 24% of BI leaders believe their current solution will scale with demand.

But cutting the backlog isn't so easy. Right now, the annual spend on BI software and services is approaching \$70 billion. While 83% of organizations will focus on data initiatives this year, less than half will have the budget to maintain it. Devoting even more funds to build out a deeper BI team is rarely an option.

The best move? Remove the data analyst as the middleman for simple reporting requests. A self-service, data discovery tool is the key to putting the power in the user's hands so you can get back to the complex data wrangling you were hired to do.

40%

of companies require multiple days to build a simple report.

3 DEFEAT BACKLOG BLOB

Eliminate Your BI Backlog

Freedom from backlogs is freedom to work on higher-class problems, stay productive, and deliver more value to the business.

If the road to eliminating backlogs is through empowered end users, businesses should consider self-service analytics. But “self-service” means nothing if the product isn’t intuitive, quick, and scalable to non-technical business users. Business leaders don’t have time for training classes and need a tool that will translate their searches into SQL on-the-fly and behind the scenes.

To get to this degree of ease of use, BI teams should look for tools that offer guard rails for non-technical users. For example, instant visualizations and one-click add to dashboards make data consumable. Simple inspection tools can reveal exactly how a user’s query was computed so a BI team can verify the results. Allowing each user to directly access raw data at any time granularity eliminates the need for technical teams to spend time building complex cubes.

This kind of search-driven analytics solution will ensure business users get the technical support they need as they generate their own insights. With true self-service BI, time spent solving ever-changing business requirements gets cut significantly, leaving the BI team with ample time to focus on complex analytical questions.



Before ThoughtSpot, it was impossible for our BI team to focus on strategic projects thanks to the endless backlog of simple report requests. Now we’re back to the challenging work we love.



4

MODEL MAYHEM VS. SPOTGIRL



IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE DATABASE. THE BI TEAM WAS BUSY MODELING TO ENSURE THAT THE BUSINESS HAD THE DATA IT NEEDED.



THEN SUDDENLY, MODEL MAYHEM APPEARED AND BEGAN DESTROYING ALL OF THE DATA CONNECTIONS!



WITH HER SEARCH LIGHT, SPOTGIRL EXTINGUISHED MAYHEM'S FIRE, AND REMOVED THE DATA MODEL COMPLEXITY.

Is your BI team struggling to find the best way to reduce time from modeling to analysis? You're not alone. With an ongoing need to maintain aggregate tables and create connections between various data sources, modeling can easily become mayhem.

It takes even the most experienced teams months to prepare a traditional BI environment for analysis. Add billions of dollars spent on professional software services, and you've got a resource-draining obstacle on your hands. Then once business requirements change - as they often do - the modeling becomes obsolete, and your team is back to square one. Regular database maintenance, care, and tuning swallows the remaining bandwidth and budget.

True search-driven analytics solutions combine the familiarity and simplicity of search with an understanding of the complex relationships between data.

80%

of a data scientist's time is spent modeling and preparing data for analysis.

4 DEFEAT MODEL MAYHEM

Minimize Complexity and Reduce Professional Services

A rapid time-to-value BI solution will free BI teams to become the data heroes they were hired to be.

Rather than focusing on data governance and data quality, IT teams spend the majority of their time on messy and mundane modeling tasks to make their BI tools usable for the business. An effective way out of this chaos is through search-driven analytics.

Search-driven analytics introduces schema awareness, automatic modeling, and easy data loading. This product should understand the underlying schema that links together different tables so you don't have to. An automatic modeling feature ensures that end users can get started searching without any backend work required by the BI team. Finally, the option to load data from any source eliminates the complicated workflows involved in connecting disparate data sources that most BI teams struggle with today.

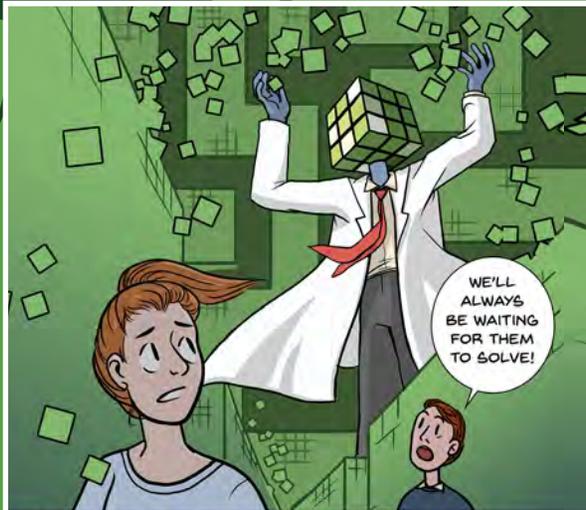
With search-driven analytics, your data analyst no longer has to spend hours on complex modeling and modifying for each report request. He can simply discuss the data needs with the business and load data into the product.



Every marketing manager now gets instant insights into customer churn by connecting billions of rows of usage data to our point of sale data and campaign data.

5

DR. CUBE VS. SPOTGIRL



THE BI TEAM WAS HELPLESS AS DR. CUBE TRAPPED THEM IN THE COMPLEXITY OF BIGGER AND BIGGER CUBES.



THEN IN AN INSTANT, DR. CUBE'S EVIL MAZE CAME CRUMBLING DOWN UNDER THE SIMPLICITY OF SPOTGIRL'S SEARCH LIGHT!



WITH HIS CUBES IN SHATTERS, SPOTGIRL FREED THE BI TEAM TO FOCUS ON ANALYSES WITH HIGHER BUSINESS IMPACT.

Data cubing has always been necessary to bring insights to the business. With prebuilt cubes, business users can perform their own analyses by asking a canned set of questions against the data. Without this step, most BI solutions could not meet performance metrics to keep up with the business.

So what's the issue? More often than not, the business user's original question has changed or the data has become stale in the time it takes to cube.

Trying to edit or amend these cubes can take over a week. Without the BI bandwidth to deliver new cubes at a faster rate, these cubes end up trapping data rather than making it accessible. It's no surprise that most companies spend more time and money maintaining systems than they do purchasing one. The introduction of search-driven analytics solutions can help businesses achieve a rapid time to value from their BI environment.

90%

of BI team bandwidth is spent building one-off reports.

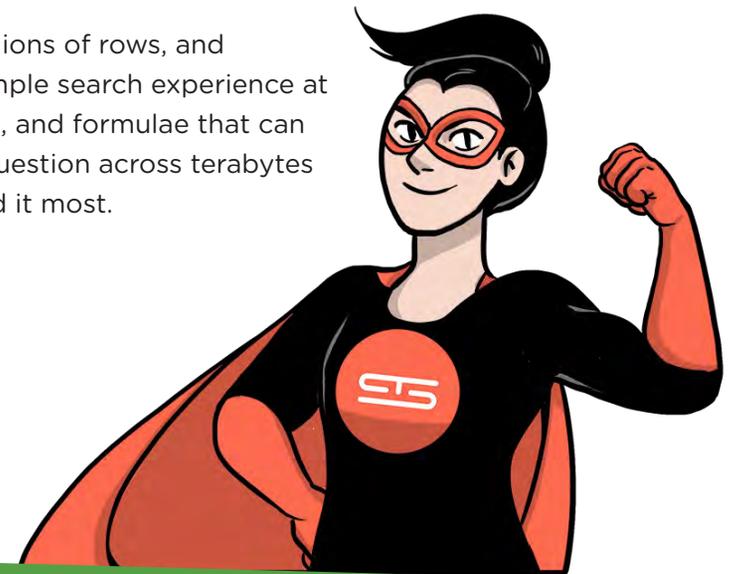
5 DEFEAT DR. CUBE

Empower End Users with Search

With a search-based analytics solution, end users can access the information they need without waiting for a cube to be built or updated.

Creating cubes and aggregate tables for individual lines of business is not the best use of time for BI teams, especially when tactical dashboards may not have the answer an end user needs. Search-driven analytics can shatter the concept of the cube, empower non-technical users, and free up the BI team to focus on higher-value problems.

Because mid-to-large size enterprises have hundreds of tables, billions of rows, and thousands of users, the key to providing insights is delivering a simple search experience at scale and at lightning speed. Features like time slicing, aggregates, and formulae that can be supported and updated on-the-fly will allow users to ask any question across terabytes of data, and receive an answer immediately - right when they need it most.



We analyzed 18 different data sources to determine our Greek credit crisis exposure in less than three minutes. That would have taken two months before ThoughtSpot.

CONCLUSION



In a world where data is king, an analytics setup that can defeat all five BI villains will give companies the competitive edge they need to succeed now and in the future.

With a search-based analytics solution, BI teams finally have the freedom to work on meaningful analyses, as business users become their own data analysts. Simple reports and dashboards no longer have to become stale in an endless queue.

If you're not getting the most out of your enterprise data, you're falling behind. Is your BI environment future-proof?

ABOUT THOUGHTSPOT

ThoughtSpot has built the world's first search-driven analytics solution for the enterprise. Anyone can use ThoughtSpot with zero training to ask questions, analyze company data, and build reports and dashboards - all in seconds - using a browser-based search interface. ThoughtSpot's Analytical Search Appliance combines data from on-premise, cloud and desktop data sources, can scale up to terabytes of data, and can be deployed in under an hour. The company's founding team has previously built market-defining search and analytics technologies at Google, Amazon, Oracle, and Microsoft.

For more information,
visit thoughtspot.com





DON'T BI. JUST SEARCH.