IBM White Glove Events

Moderator: Tim O'Brien
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Operator: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to today's Web conference. During today's event all participant lines have been muted to prevent background noise. If you require technical support at any time during the conference please press star then zero on your touch tone phone and an operator will assist you.

This event is being recorded. There will be a survey at the end of today's presentation. In order to participate you must disable your pop up blocker in your internet browser.

I'm now going to put everyone into full screen mode for an optimum view of today's presentation.

There will be a question and answer session during today's presentation. You can submit questions electronically by using the question and answer feature on the Web. To do so first you'll need to exit full screen view by pressing the escape key on your keyboard. Next go to the question/answer feature located to the left of your screen under meeting features. Then simply type your question into the area provided and click submit.

Please note your Web questions are private and only the presenters will see them. When you are ready to return to full screen view press F11 on your keyboard. We will gather your questions throughout the presentation and address them as time permits.

Again today's session is being recorded; we'll pause for a moment to initialize the recording. Please stand by.

We will be application sharing the portion of today's presentation so you might have to use the scale view in order to see it.

At this time I would like to welcome everyone to today's Web event titled BI Strategies Webcast. It is my pleasure to introduce Tim O'Brien, IBM Cognos Innovation Center. Tim, welcome.

Tim O'Brien: Thank you and welcome, everyone to this installment of the Business Intelligence Strategy Webcast series featuring Don't Trust Trusting your Gut, presented by (Robert Lewis) from IT Catalyst. This Webcast series is being brought to you by the IBM Cognos Innovation Center. The IBM Cognos Innovation Center is a global membership organization within the IBM Business Analytic Group.

We have currently over 6,000 members, we partner with third party font leaders, we bring together some of the leading organizations, leveraging business analytic technologies including SPFS and IBM Cognos Solutions.

We put on Webcasts such as you're participating in today, many others as well on a month to month basis; we also deliver a number of different workshops literally around the globe. We've got customer success podcasts, we've got a monthly newsletter, we've got an online community, we've got customer advisory boards and benchmarking tools, and many other great tools and solutions including our IBM Cognos Performance Blueprints that can be leveraged by our community which can be made available to yourselves as well by simply becoming a member of the Innovation Center.

By going to that URL you can see right there at IBM.com/cognos/innovation-center. We've also got what we call an IBM Cognos Innovation Center widget which brings all of this information via a little multimedia application that can sit on your desktop, and it's filterable by all of these different content types to bring, as I mentioned, bring all this information to you kind of on demand, if you will.

We've got a LinkedIn group, a Twitter group and easy ways to search for this information right at your fingertips.

When we talk about the Innovation Center and what's happening within our community, we talk about the changing face of basically the business climate around the globe, and the world's smarter and flatter, it's riskier and smarter.

Smarter and flatter; in the sense of there's pervasive connections and communications in emerging markets in open trade; riskier in the sense of system's level complexity of viral spread of information. Widening gap between information available and the information needs to be effectively managed. And then smarter; instrumented, intra connected and intelligent.

And as a result when we think about business analytics and how these solutions can help your organization keep up with the competition, with the velocity of business today, we talk about business analytic software. And we think of it as four different components working seamlessly together and these components are business intelligence advance analytics, financial performance and strategy management and analytic applications.

When we talk about business intelligence we mean query reporting, analysis scorecards and dashboards to enable decision makers across the organization to easily find, analyze and share the information they need to improve decision making.

When we talk about advanced analytics we're talking about data mining, predictive modeling, what if simulations, statistics and text analytics to identify meaningful patterns and correlations and data sets to predict future events and assess the attractiveness of various courses of action.

In financial performance and strategy management we're talking about budgeting and planning, financial consolidation. Score carding and strategy management, financial analytics and related reporting capabilities to help simplify structure and automate dynamic and sustainable financial performance and strategy management practices.

Lastly analytic applications, we're talking about applications that package business analytics capabilities, data models, process work flows and reports to address a particular domain of business problems. For example customer work force, supply chain and financial performance management.

And IBM helps our clients optimize business performance through actual insights for decision makers, consistent, accurate and trusted information and rich industry solutions, proven practices and professional services.

And let me just have you look at it a little differently in the sense of when we talk about business analytics we're really talking about what it takes to add, to make a decision. And you're effectively just answering three questions, three simple questions. You need to answer before you can make a decision.

The first question you're going to ask is what's happening? What's going on here? And you're typically measuring and monitoring something. Like a key performance indicator. And that's typically done through a score card or a dashboard, through a report or through real time monitoring and it's for immediate insights to business performance.

Once you understand what's happening then you want to look deeper into it. You want to drill through in context to understand why. And this is done through ad hoc query, trend and statistical analysis, and content analytics.

Again you want to be able to do this through context. You don't want to go into and out of different applications, a Microsoft access database, a data warehouse over there in different spots because you're probably going to end up with different data sets and probably come up with different answers and probably end up having no confidence in the numbers.

But again, drilling through and context you want to answer that second question of why. And then lastly you want to ask yourself what's likely to happen and that's through what if analysis, predictive modeling and planning and budgeting.

And that's just another way of looking at what is business analytics. So wanted to give you a quick explanation of that so you're all, at least given

some kind of context around business analytics. There's a lot more information out at IBM.com/cognos, certainly out at the innovation center if you go IBM.com/cognos/innovation-center.

We'll make sure you get more information after this Webcast. But for now just real quickly we want to push it up to all of you two quick polling questions. The first one simply is what products are you all using? So (Jen), if you could push that first one out there, that'd be fantastic.

If you guys could quickly respond, that'd be super. OK. All right and let's put that second one out there if that's all right.

In this next one, and there's everyone's answer. Probably not to surprising there given the topic of the Webcast today.

And this next one is around decision making, whether it's intuition based mostly or intuition or gut based decision making versus fact based, or information based decision making. And if you're faced with a conflict between what the evidence seems to show, information seems to show, and what your gut tells you, intuition, is the right answer, do you, A, trust your gut, go with the evidence; C, pick apart the evidence to figure out what's wrong with it; D, ask for more analysis or E, do something else.

And I think it's going to be interesting to get your feedback and then hear what (Bob) has to say to you all.

If we can display the results there I think it'd be really great to see what those answers are and I'm sure (Bob's) going to have some insights based on your responses too.

So while we're pulling that up, (Bob), why don't I introduce (Bob Lewis)? (Bob), you have the floor from IT Catalyst.

(Bob Lewis):   Thank you. All right, well, it appears that if there's a conflict between your gut and the evidence you'll either pick apart the evidence or ask for more analysis. That seems to be the popular strategy.

So let's talk about what this means. Now the presentation I'm about to give has nothing directly to do with the use of business intelligence tools. So if you're looking for a here's how to make Cognos work and integrate with your data warehouse you're probably in the wrong place.

Here's what we're going to be doing today. In order for business intelligence to work people in the business need to want to be intelligent. In other words if what you're doing is putting evidence in front of people who have no interest in using evidence to make decisions, you could have the best BI implementation in the world in terms of producing wonderful dashboards, deep analytics and all the rest of it and nothing useful will come of it.

Because nobody is going to care, nobody is going to have their decision making activities built around the use of this stuff. In fact what's going to happen is you are going to be entirely frustrated because nobody is going to use the tool.

So this is a presentation on how to create an organization that wants the tool. Once they want it, everything else is straightforward.

If nobody wants it, you're going to find yourself pushing a tool on folks who have many more important things to do with their week.

So welcome to Don't Trust Trusting your Gut. And what we're going to talk about is, are one, what's wrong with trusting your gut and related subject you might call intellectual relativism. Most important how to go about curing it and how to get started.

So let's start with a little bit of history.

Trusting your gut. Way back when everyone could tell they trusted their gut clearly the sun orbited the earth.

I don't know how many people, how many of you know this but when somebody invented the steel plow, a couple of centuries ago, everybody knew it would poison the soil. It actually worked much better. There's no evidence at all that it poisoned the soil but everybody knew it was a problem.

Everyone knew that it will never fly, Wilbur. You couldn't build a heavier than air machine that could fly and that's even when everybody saw heavier than air birds flying every day.

Henry Ford, this is very instructive, Henry Ford trusted his gut, he didn't believe the naysayers, he trusted his gut when it told him people would buy a cheap reliable automobile. And he made millions by ignoring the experts.

He then trusted his gut when it told him people only wanted the Model T. Ford nearly went bankrupt because Henry Ford would not listen to the evidence and his experts.

So there's kind of – that gives you a bit of a challenge in trying to figure out how to deal with evidence. And by the way last year everybody finally discovered their guts were wrong, real estate values don't only go up.

We are surrounded by pop culture that tells us that thinking is an unnecessary waste of time. So those of you who go back to Star Wars, trust in the force, Luke.

Forrest Gump, a wonderful picture that showed that people who are simple are smarter than people who are smart.

A recent book, Trust Your Gut, how the power of intuition can grow your business, and the ever popular Blink, Malcolm Gladwell's book subtitled The Power of Thinking without Thinking.

So we're surrounded by forces that tell us that smartness happens down there around your navel and up there inside your skull nothing important happens.

And speaking of Blink, if we're supposed to blink instead of think, why was the book 267 pages long and chock full of evidence, and by the way, if you got past about page 70 the rest of the book was all about situations where blinking didn't work. So it's an odd book. The dust jacket and the contents have very little to do with each other.

One more question, if Max, pardon me it's Mac, if Luke's targeting computer had been a Macintosh would Obi Won still have told him to turn it off? But that has nothing to do with anything.

If you're going to use pop culture for guidance use CSI. Go where the evidence takes you. It's a better pop culture role model. My point is we are surrounded by supposed experts telling us that thinking isn't necessary. And since thinking is hard, painful work that's a problem for anybody trying to implement business intelligence. Which is all about thinking very deeply and peeling the onion a few layers to understand what's really going on.

Here's how it works, here's why it doesn't work so well.

The way that trusting your gut works, the way that intuition works, it isn't really intuition, what it is, is you're working off of your experience. So throughout your life you observe, you participate in the world. You get this little personal data base and now when a situation happens you find the most relevant matches out of your experience and then you choose a course of action based on that.

Now that's a perfectly reasonable way to operate up to a point. And the problem is and I'm not going to go through these in great detail, it doesn't work perfectly. Because what you're doing is a form of business intelligence. It's a form of analytics but it's based on a bad database, or at least a limited and biased one. It's based on instead of formal mathematical correlation, heuristic pattern matching.

And we humans really aren't that good unless we have a great deal of training. We think correlation equation to causation. There are a wide variety of arguments that all form of the foremost, why would you believe that person because you know what they're like and anything that we want to be true, is almost certainly true whether or not it really is true.

One more problem, how do you persuade somebody else because if you trust your gut and it's just a decision for you, that's fine? Among other advantages nobody else gets hurt. But if you're trying to persuade somebody else that your position is the right position and you say well I think so because I trust

my gut, if your gut and their gut disagree, you don't even have a basis for a conversation.

Here's how bad it is. If you asked a bunch of people who never took a physics course what happens when you roll a ball on a string, and by the way I hope you appreciate the serious PowerPoint abuse, they will predict that the ball will fly in a curved path.

Newton told us centuries ago that that's not the case. You let go of the ball it flies straight. So if you can't trust your gut to tell you how a ball on a string will fly, why would you trust it for something important?

None the less we're all told we should trust our guts?

Then there's this related thing called intellectual relativism which preaches that all propositions are equally valid so long as each appears somewhere on the internet. And, now this is very important, the way it works isn't I have a blog so that makes me an expert you should read my blog and believe what I say. That doesn't work.

If, however, you're talking to Tim and Tim said there's this expert named (Bob Lewis) who has a blog, you should believe it, because there's this cut out in the middle that makes me an expert.

So I can't make myself an expert, Tim makes me an expert. And Tim, I trust you're going to make me an expert.

Anyway, so as long as one individual who's somebody else says is an expert says something, tracking down the facts is just too much trouble.

Deconstructing the logic is too much trouble, and so the conclusion is the experts don't agree so I might as well trust my gut. And by the way, propagandas are alive and well and using this all the time creating these big internet echo chambers of phony Web sites that link to each other reinforcing points that don't necessarily have any real facts in logic behind them.

I'm not going to get into examples because everyone that occurs to me is something that shouldn't be political but it has been heavily politicalized and I'm sure everybody on this call can come up with examples all on your own.

Here's what you want instead because fun as it is to gripe about problems at some point we need solutions and in your organizations what you want instead is evidence based decision making. Now if you take logic 101 and you go through everything that's required it's a fairly complicated rigorous proposition. And it works and I'm not going to go through all of this, the thing is one, it's hard work and two, you'll never get an organization all the way to the kind of conversations you need to make sure the goals, definitions, premises, evidence, assumptions, logic, decisions and the path of action are all absolutely clear. That is too analytical even for most people whose psychological profile says that they are analytic.

So let's go to something that's a little bit more practical. The first thing and this is very important, make sure everybody understands what you're asking them to do. Are you delegating a decision, are you asking them to recommend alternatives, are you asking for a summary of the information. Because if it isn't clear what somebody's supposed to do, no tools in the world and no brilliance on the part of your employees will ever get them to a satisfactory result.

Two, what's the goal? What are you trying to accomplish? Are you trying to fix an immediate problem, are you trying to identify a root cause of a problem, are you trying to find someone to blame. Now of course we all know it's always really finding someone to blame. So what are we pretending that we want, the root cause analysis fixing the immediate problem.

Clarify the decision process. How are we going to make this decision? This is probably the most important step. Ben Franklin's how to make a yes/no decision or go/no go decision comparison matrix is how to choose among alternatives there are other facts here, ones more complicated ones.

I'm not saying it's just these two the key thing is this. Whatever you do, don't start by gathering evidence. If you start by gathering evidence what you're

going to do is have arguments because if everybody starts by gathering evidence what they're really doing is searching for ammunition.

They're going to find selective evidence that reinforces their predefined conclusion and fire the ammo at each other, it gets you nowhere. What you should do first isn't start with any evidence you should start by clarifying what decision process everybody is going to use and if everybody commits to the decision process you have a chance of using evidence to drive your reasonable conclusion.

So I think that everybody knows that Ben Franklin that's for yes/no go/no go decisions advantages, disadvantages, total it all up and you're good to go. I think everybody on this call is probably familiar with a comparison matrix. If that's where you have evaluation criteria you weight the terms of importance you evaluate them for each of your options, total up those results. Anybody who's not familiar with these tools feel free to e-mail me afterwards I'll be happy to walk you through how to use these things.

So the point isn't, so the specifics of their execution the key thing is if everybody agrees to what the decision process is, then you can exercise the process and have some chance of reaching a conclusion everybody will buy into and agree to.

By the way, one more definition, in business we use the term decision a lot, decision is either committing or refusing to time, staff and budget. If you're not committing or refusing, time, staff and budget all you're doing is talking about it. So at the end of the day all of the BI, all of the analytics, the results of Ben Franklin or a comparison matrix, your goal is always to commit or refuse time, staff and budget. If none of that's available you're just wasting your time and becoming arbitrarily smarter about something that doesn't matter.

Look out for, I'm a big proponent of evidenced based decision making and I will also tell you there are plenty of pitfalls involved. So be alert to them otherwise your attempts at making them work could get you into trouble and discredit the whole concept.

For example, there is deliberate distortion of the evidence which also goes by the name of marketing. So I think we all know that just because it appears on the brochure or the Web site it doesn't make it deliberately true. There's sample bias, anybody who's ever called anybody's references knows they're not giving you a random sample of everybody who understands their performance. They're giving you a very and deliberately bias sample.

Subject that doesn't get as much discussion, if you create a data warehouse and you use that data warehouse for analytics, statisticians will tell you that when you use data to perform an analysis that wasn't why the data were collected in the first place than there's a lot of potential for drawing the wrong conclusions based on sample bias, and other evidentiary problems that go with names like non stationary the (in-hetero synchronicity) I'm just trying to impress you, I don't actually know what those mean. I just know that their problems. You can look them up on Wikipedia.

Sample size, I think most of us have seen some of these nonsense surveys where they get seven respondents, give you the percentage and try and persuade you that it means something. So look for over confidence in the evidence. Some evidence isn't good enough to pay attention to.

Facts by the way are different from evidence. You can challenge evidence, you can reinterpret, you can figure out what it means. A fact is a fact. It is not open to challenge. If for example IBM has a license, a software license and it says something, it says it, that's a fact.

The conclusion all software vendors have admirable licensing terms, that's open to challenge. Anyway, OK also look out for false precision. Anybody watch football? Big pile of people on top of a football, everybody's trying to move it around, the officials grab it, spot it someplace and then they use a micrometer to decide whether there's a first down.

That's my favorite example. There are plenty of examples of carrying calculations out to many more decimal places than they deserve. So when you use data to evaluate something, recognize a tie when you have one. Know

what your error bar looks like so that you know it's not 86.5 percent, it's somewhere around 85 percent.

Here's one that will get you into trouble all of the time. Remember one of the rules of this is get everybody to agree to the process before you start gathering evidence. Not all consensus is created equal sometimes people will commit to the process until it gives them the results they don't want.

So agree to the process, you'll gather data, you'll score the criteria, you'll discover the answer and then and only then you'll get a dissenter. I think we did something wrong, we have the wrong answer.

Now what do you do? Well, the answer is this is an old piece of advice, plan the work and work the plan. Everybody agreed to the process and you now have a dissenter. The dissenter has to have that reason for the dissent. The reason for the dissent can really only be one thing. And what that one thing is is we left something out of the analysis.

So what's the new factor? What did we leave out, this will give it a weighting, evaluate it, score it, and then by the way as long as you're accepting new factors ask everybody else what else they missed, build it in, discover the answer again, don't go outside the process everybody's agreed to simply apply it to whatever it is that you missed. That doesn't, what that does is it keeps whoever your dissenter is on the hook, they've already committed to the process and their only alternatives now are to continue to accept it or say I'm only accepting the process if it reaches the answer I want which of course completely discredits them.

So if you get somebody who dissents because it's the wrong answer, this is how you can work them through it. Look out for regret. Anybody on this call who's ever done a software evaluation understands, the path you took is always the wrong decision.

The alternatives are always a lot snazzier because the path you took reveals the complicated messiness of the world as it is, the alternatives are always live in the idealized beauty of brochure world. I know of a company that went

through four ERP systems before finally deciding to take the one they had and make it work properly.

The problem was always their ERP solution, it was never their implementation. And so regret is a huge, huge issue for folks who aren't expecting to be disappointed with whatever they choose. Bottom line here, your goal as a business leader is create a culture of honest inquiry. Now a culture of honest inquiry is a bias towards making decisions based on evidence and logic. It's a cultural change.

Now before we go into the specifics, if you've never been involved in a conscious designed culture change prepare yourself for frustration, prepare yourself for high blood pressure. Prepare yourself for if you have any hair left, which some of us don't, tearing it out on a regular basis because it is a long, slow arduous process where you put in the work every day and you probably won't see any progress for six months. You won't see serious progress for years.

Culture does not change quickly. And yet in order for business intelligence to be of any value to an organization the organization has to value evidence based decision making. And this goes well beyond just business intelligence, this goes towards running a successful organization that knows how to deal with the world as it is.

So you're dealing with a culture change. So here are some steps you can take personally to start building a culture balance inquiry in your own organization. First, always thank employees for coming forward. If they say the dumbest thing in the world thank them for coming forward, it takes courage to come forward with a disagreement.

That doesn't mean you accept slipshod work. If somebody comes forward with something that isn't really very smart, after you thank them for coming forward don't argue, but don't also, don't accept it. Ask questions. If they're making assumptions when is the evidence available? Ask them to come back when they've validated their assumptions by looking at the evidence.

If there are other interpretations that equally reasonable, ask about them. Can't we conclude this other inference instead of the one that you've presented? Are there hidden premises? There are any number of things; did they use the right test?

Years ago when I was a little hidden, not really secret about my past I used to be a biologist studying animal behavior. I listened to a presentation by a guy studying monkeys, the guy was absolutely sure that those monkeys had social classes. And he told us about his intellectual journey as he tried one statistical test after another to prove that the monkeys had social classes until he finally found one that gave him the result he wanted.

The two points being scientist aren't immune from starting with their preferred answer and working backwards to "proof" really ammunition to find it. It's also, just to let you know, this there are lots of ways to misuse analytics to shop for the answer that you want.

Insist on excellence. Make it clear what excellence looks like. Very important, make sure that the employee understands that you're confident that they can achieve it so if they haven't it's within their power to improve.

One more thing, and this is one of the key things that you can do, and that is, accept suggestions, look for every opportunity you can to speak these magic words, OK, you've convinced me. Because if somebody else can convince you, that makes it OK to be convinced.

By the way, it also creates something of a quid pro quo which means that once you have let somebody convince you they owe you one episode of you convincing them. So when you acknowledge that somebody else has a better answer than you do, it's not a sign of weakness, it's actually a sign of strength that makes it OK for everybody else to behave that way too.

There are plenty of barriers to creating a culture of honest inquiry. One of the ones and this is a personal soap box, I'll try to resist the temptation to stand on it too long, there is a popular phrase which is we have to hold people accountable.

Now holding people accountable doesn't mean make it clear what they're responsible for. Hold people accountable means there is a consequence for something going wrong. Once you start holding people accountable you're lost. You will never create a culture of honest inquiry because you are creating a punishment for honest inquiry. For providing an honest answer to the question, what's going on out there?

So if what you want is only good news, hold people accountable. If what you want is no team work, hold people accountable. Destroys team work because if you hold people accountable, you'll, all you're doing is encouraging mutual finger pointing. Interferes with crisis handling, prevents root cause analysis, you have two choices, you can either hold people accountable or get an honest accounting of what's going on out there.

My teamism. My teamism is poison. When people tend to fall into a mental trap of my side your side, of us versus them. Once you allow that to happen, another phrase for this is organizational silos. All it does is create mutual finger pointing and it turns people into debaters who just argue instead of having productive discussions.

If you, people are going to fall into the trap of choosing sides, your company is one side; your competitors are the other side. Any other definition of us and them is going to be very, very destructive to creating a culture of honest inquiry for all the obvious reasons.

Arguments are about winning and losing. If there's going to be a winner and loser, nobody wants to be the loser, so your challenge is to never allow arguments. Never allow debates to happen. Discussions are different. Those are collaborations to reach a clear shared understanding of what's going on out there together and what to do about it.

I'm going to take another minute on the subject of debating because I think just about everybody I know has received the same sales pitch which is if you become an excellent debater you are in a better position to understand what's really going on out there. Now of course the folks who have persuaded us of this are all debaters so they're very good at that piece of persuasion.

I'm reaching the conclusion that it doesn't work. Don't debate; don't listen to two people with opposite points of view debating with each other in order to reach your own conclusion. Keep in mind the way formal debates work, is the judges are scoring the debaters on their ability to argue. They aren't reaching the conclusion as to which position is the better position.

Debaters find areas to disagree first and then they extenuate them. Evidence is ammunition. What they're trying to do is draw blood in order to win. Now when you collaborate, when we collaborate what we're doing is we're first of all finding where we agree and then we build on that. Evidence is what we gather together to understand how things work. And our goal is to understand how things work, not to be right.

Goal is to share solve problems. And if you aren't convinced keep this in mind, lawyer's debate, that's what they do in court. They're trying to convince a jury or a judge. Scientist collaborate. What they're trying to do is become right or become righter. Scientist don't debate with each other, they conduct experiments, they create models, they analyze those together and everybody's goal is to have a better understanding than they had before. It's a very, very different thought process.

So, let's get to the end of this. Listen to your gut. I'm not saying you should ignore it. You should listen to your gut it's the voice of your experience. Your experience isn't worthless, it has limitations, that's the point of this but it certainly isn't worthless. When it speaks you have some thinking to do. You got to figure out what it's telling you.

And by the way, when it's a crisis? You don't have time for long analysis; trust your gut because it's a whole lot better than behaving randomly. When you have the time what your gut might be telling you, it might be warning you a verbal snow. There are less polite ways of describing verbal snow which aren't related to substances that are white and flaky.

Verbal snow is the sort of thing where you're OK you're being snowed. When your gut speaks look for and look out for unstated premises, assumptions and on and on and on.

A word about anecdotes. Anybody in marketing will tell you and anecdotes are far more powerful than statistical evidence. And the problem is this, as somebody once said the plural of anecdotes is not data. There is always an anecdote to reinforce any point that anybody wants to make. It should be completely unpersuasive but for most people most of the time, anecdotes are some of the most powerful pieces of persuasion that there are.

False dichotomies, false dichotomies are any time somebody presents two alternatives, both of which can be true at the same time as opposites. Most of us growing up were exposed to the nature/nurture controversy. The problem with the nature/nurture controversy is it's a false dichotomy. Speaking as an old animal behaviorist I'll tell you for most critters nature and nurture collaborate, if you will, to drive just about everything that there is.

Too many words, if somebody goes on and on and on and on, and especially I think most of know somebody who's mastered that fine art of speaking both inhaling and exhaling so that there's no gap to get a word in edge wise. When somebody just pounds word upon word upon word on a point there's probably a weakness that they're covering up.

Argument by assertion and a special case of argument by assertion which is the first liar wins rule. The first liar wins rule, you probably have been exposed to it without realizing what was going on. First liar wins means that there's a very, very questionable point to be made but whoever gets their view of that point made first automatically wins the day because once they say it you're stuck arguing after it' s been said.

This next one is a dirty trick. And I probably shouldn't share it because everybody on this call can go out and use this right away and use it to win some arguments. It's the overt assumption of agreement. The overt assumption of agreement works like this. Well I know everybody on this call agrees that evidence decision making is the way to go. Once I assume agreement you have to be darn impolite to disagree with me. So I'm confident nobody is that rude.

And any attempt to make you angry. Pay attention to this, this goes on in the political dialog all the time. Any time somebody tries to make you angry, especially to make you angry at somebody else, they're playing you. They are trying to get you to shut off your information inputs, to stop paying attention to what the evidence actually says and instead to only believe the evidence that reinforces your anger. Anytime somebody's trying to make you angry, my recommendation is stop paying any attention to them as a source of ideas because they're trying to manipulate you, not to help you understand things better.

And the worst enemy you have is yourself. Anything that you want to be true, the way most people are most of the time, if you want it to be true you will accept any evidence that reinforces that. Anything that disagrees with what you want to be true you will scrutinize very, very closely to find out what's wrong with it.

So mostly, what most of us do, and by the way, I'm as guilty as everybody else. We all are. Its, I use the term human nature with some hesitation because I'm not sure we all have this built in nature, that's that nature/nurture thing. Most people I know, including myself, if somebody says something that reinforces what I want to be true, I'm likely to accept it.

Its, if it disagrees with what I want to be true, I'm going to look very, very closely to find out what's wrong with it. So be alert to that.

Here's the bottom line, arguments are about winning and losing. And since nobody is every willing to lose, arguments never end and they never get you anyplace. Discussions are collaborations. They're attempts to solve shared problems together. Those are your two choices. As a business leader, as members of society, for that matter as parents as you think about if you have kids who are still impressionable, by which I mean younger than the age of three – well, OK, preteen, maybe. As you're raising your kids, as you're anticipating your community, and especially as you're running your business organization, you have two choices, you can encourage argument or you can encourage discussions. Collaboration is about solving shared problems together.

If you want to have productive discussions, your responsibility is we need to use our intestines for digestion, think with our brains.

Thanks very much, I did my best to leave time for questions/answer, objections, hurled virtual vegetables, so with that, Tim, I'm going to turn it back over to you for whatever discussion that we need.

Tim O'Brien: Super, thank you, (Bob), appreciate that. Great, great information there. You know I think as I listened to your presentation obviously beforehand you and I talked about this and in great detail and I think there is an underlying assumption that there is information within an organization that can support evidence or even fact based decision making.

Because without that inherent understanding or belief, there really isn't a reason to try and build a culture of honest inquiry. And so as a result I guess the question is, is it kind of a chicken and an egg deployment, one or the other?

I guess where I'm trying to go with this is if you're thinking about you're at ground zero and you're looking at beginning a BI initiative to go out and start deploying BI across your enterprise. And you know you've got the underlying information that exists there to support the kind of information that the decision makers need across the organization.

Is the first step to start beginning a culture of honest inquiry in maybe a selected geography or a selected functional area of the origination, or is it do you perhaps start deploying some of the BI in a functional area or in a particular geography and then work on the culture of honest inquiry within that particular department or function or geography.

How do you go about this, are they one in the same?

(Bob Lewis): Tim, that's a great question and the answer of course is the first thing you do is engage a very expensive organizational effect for this consultant and I know just the guy for an extended engagement. But never mind all of that, oh come on, that had to be said.

OK, here's the thing, if you do nothing but emphasize the culture of honest inquiry the challenge you have is that you probably won't show tangible results in a way that will give anybody a sense of progress. So focusing entirely on a culture of honest inquiry that probably too slow.

The challenge is if you just deploy the BI tool, what you're going to do is probably create some eye candy that nobody uses. A really fancy looking desk that everybody admires then goes back to what they were doing before. Because one of the keys to this, the decisions makers that you're working with, if they aren't, if they haven't already built the use of evidence into their decision process, now you're asking them to do something that is one of the most difficult things ever which is to change their routine.

Their entire week is already full and if what you do is say, OK, now on top of your full week, here's this other activity that you're going to have to do engage in, in order for the BI tool to be successful which really is to say in order to build the use of evidence analysis, analytics, what have you, in the decision process is not going to happen.

So I think the best approach is to find managers and executives who are already hungry for evidence. Who already are using evidence in their decision making only if it's really difficult and time consuming to get right now because the tools to make that routine don't exist.

So that's if you will you're looking for the field has already been plowed …

Tim O'Brien: Right.

(Bob Lewis):   Folks who are receptive to it, because with the cult, their culture is already in place. In their area and in their office they already have that culture of honest inquiry.

Tim O'Brien: Right. We can use them as testimonials too.

(Bob Lewis):   Exactly, so you can use that as a testimonial, as a success story and while you're doing that start building and encouraging that culture of honest inquiry

throughout the rest of your organization so that those areas are prepared as well.

Tim O'Brien: OK, makes sense. And (Bob), someone asked can you talk more about choosing a process first?

(Bob Lewis):   Sure, and anybody who knows me knows that I can always talk more. The challenge is getting me to talk less.

Yes, as far as, the reason I listen to Ben Franklin of comparison matrix is those are probably the two workhorses that cover 90 plus percent of all of the situations you deal with. Most business decisions fall into one of two categories; one is go/no go, we're either going to invest in this in business intelligence technology or we're not. If you, if that's what you need to do, the Ben Franklin is a way of listing advantages and disadvantages in an organized way and if you really want to get fancy about it, you apply weighting factors to each one, so each one is a weighting of one, two or three, mathematically by the way I'll three is most important, one is least important.

Then you go ahead and list the things total up what you get and wherever the weight falls you either go or you don't go. Comparison matrix is what you do if you have multiple alternatives; it's very popular for software evaluations.

That's where you list your alternatives and for each one you list all of the criteria that you're going to use to evaluate them, again put weighting factors on the criteria, score them. These can be, you can use these in unexpected areas for example we had the CIO who's trying to choose between three different future organizational charts, three different ways of organizing and he's the kind of guy that always had another thought on how to evaluate things, but they were linear and they were narrative.

So it was really hard for anybody, for him and for us to really get our arms around how to compare these things. He was comparing alternatives, we prepared a comparison matrix, so that every time he had another thought as to how to put this together, out it went and then we were able to compare them by the numbers.

It helped him get past a fairly fundamental difficulty in getting to a difficult conclusion. Because it is, as everybody knows who's ever designed an organization there's not perfect org chart, every org chard involves tradeoffs.

Those are the two work horses. More complex decisions there are tools like decision trees that do these things step wise so that you're not trying to, so you don't get drowned in the complexity. But start with those. Now in order to be polite to my host here, where does business intelligence fall into these? When you're doing a go/no go, when you're doing a comparison matrix, some of what you're trying to understand is going to be built around data that you have and what it is the BI tools are the difference between an ad hoc analysis and by the way, there's been a lot of work done in the last 30 years about the importance of business process.

One of the most important things that business process gives you is when you do something for the first time, it's error prone. So any ad hoc analysis is subject to mistakes. One of the things that the use of the BI tool and the associated business intelligence processes give you, is the opportunity to find your mistakes, fix them, find the next set of mistakes, and fix them, so that you have a lot more confidence in the data you're working with to support the decisions you have to make.

And I think that was in answer to the question that was asked but it may have been in answer to a question that just sounded like it. Either way it's the best I have.

Tim O'Brien: No I think that's great and just so everyone knows we'll certainly post, supply (Bob's) contact information. Certainly (Bob), your e-mail address …

(Bob Lewis): You bet.

Tim O'Brien: And so everyone knows this is a continuing series with (Bob). I believe the date is July 27, fourth Tuesday of July. We'll have the next installment of this series at 11 a.m. Eastern time, that's great, (Bob).

There's a number of questions coming in about slides being available and just some nice comments about your presentation, how helpful it is …

(Bob Lewis):   Oh, good.

Tim O'Brien: But another question is any tactics or advice to help deal with a team member is argumentative? (Inaudible). When I first read it I thought it was any tactic or advice on how to deal with a key note presenter in a Webcast that argumentative. No.

(Bob Lewis):   Well, actually that's a joke that I understand. But here's my challenge. By nature I'm argumentative. I'm constantly fighting that.

Tim O'Brien: Any tactics for this person, (Bob), you think that could be helpful right out of the gates or is that a …

(Bob Lewis):   Oh, you bet, the reason I was laughing is the first tactic for me is restrain myself. Because my instinct is always to argue and win. But you can't, it just never works.

So if somebody, yes, the starting point if somebody is being argumentative generally is to start by finding common ground. No matter how argumentative somebody is, if you as the question, the first question you ask is, I want to understand what problem are we trying to solve together right now?

So get them away from the opposite side of the negotiating table onto your side. What problem are we trying to solve right now? Second question; let's start by understanding what we all agree to. We may not agree on the final conclusion but even if the starting point is that we all agree that gravity pulls down, there's a starting point that we will all agree to and we can explore our disagreements after we build on the foundation of what we have in common.

It takes some doing because people who are inclined to argue, people whose natural recourse is debate, are filled with ammunition, and they want to fire that ammunition. And what you're trying to do instead is, I like to use a white board, because a white board you get everybody to the white board, draw it out for me. How do you think this works? And by getting everybody to stop firing ammunition, and start building models of how things work, you have a chance of turning somebody's arguments into a constructive conversation.

You weren't expecting something that short were you?

Tim O'Brien: No, I think, yes, that's probably something that's got multiple levels of unanswered to get into but that's great, a nice tactic that can be used, it sounds like, immediately.

(Bob Lewis):   Yes, the other alternative is smack them upside the back of the head and say shut up. But that's, some HR departments frown upon that.

Tim O'Brien: OK, another question, we've got a couple of minutes left and any suggestions for handling a CEO who is persuaded by anecdotes not evidence besides the obvious, for example learning to become a better story teller, so, apart from that, any suggestions for handling a CEO who is persuaded by anecdotes not evidence.

(Bob Lewis):   Oh, gee, too bad we're out of time. That's the most difficult question everybody has is how to apply this when you're managing up.

Tim O'Brien: Yes.

(Bob Lewis):   When it's your boss, your boss' boss, the CEO, who fundamentally doesn't want this stuff in the first place, I wish I had a magic formula on this, and I don't. The closest I have is to apply the same kind of techniques that you have when you're dealing with an arguer inside your organization.

And that is OK this is what your guts telling you, and I certainly don't disrespect your gut, you have you're working on a wealth of experience. So here's what I'd like to do. The data are telling us something different so if there's a problem with the evidence we probably should find out what that problem is and if there isn't a problem with the evidence I'd like some guidance, I'm kind of role playing this, on how we should figure out why the, why your experience and judgment and the evidence are getting us to two different answers. I think we'd all learn something by going there.

A head on confrontation certainly isn't going to get you there, simply acquiesce is probably the wrong answer, playing the game and playing to win,

the CEO sits where the CEO sits because he or she is better at that game than any of the rest of us. So I think nudging and influencing is probably the right answer. And it's a far from perfect one; there are limits to what you can do about a bad boss. And that's just the fact of things.

Tim O'Brien: OK. Well, thank you, (Bob Lewis), appreciate your presenting to our audience today, from IT Catalyst.

As I mentioned we will have a follow up communication for you all including (Bob's) contact information as well as information on the IBM Cognos Innovation Center, how to become a member, and access to the recorded version of this Webcast.

I believe it takes a few days to get access to that so give us a few business days before we get that to you. I don't think you'll get it much later than a week from today. Probably sooner but you will have that in hand.

And just so you all know as you'll see we really are here to talk about process, we certainly understand that successful deployment of our technologies requires people, process, and technology. But the IBM Cognos Innovation Center is really focused around the people and the process.

Technologies certainly critical, the business analytics team overall, certainly has the resources focused around that technology side but the IBM Cognos Innovation Center really gets into the people and process aspect. So you'll see all the other Webcast we deliver really get into the people and process side.

At times we have a technology aspect represented, but for the most part we're trying to help you solve that people and process side as well.

So we thank you for your time again, look to download the IBM Cognos Innovation Center Widget, that's a way to stay current on all the Webcasts, all of the live workshops, all of the customer success stories, all of the on demand Webcasts by the way as well going back in time across all different aspects of business analytics that I talked about.

Thank you very much for your time, everyone, thanks again to (Bob Lewis), enjoy the rest of your day and we'll see you soon.

(Bob Lewis):   Thanks, everybody.

This concludes today's presentation, as a reminder your browser will now be redirected to a survey, at this time I'd like to thank you for attending today's Web conference. Have a pleasant day.

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