

**BIG DATA'S BIG FAILURE:**

# The struggles businesses face in accessing the information they need



*Great ideas, inspired people and outstanding companies can rise or fall for all kinds of reasons. Navigating these perils is the toughest job for business leaders today.*

*The right people are vital – but so are the right processes to navigate the ups and downs that regulation, economics, company culture and structure, and bureaucracy bring to every company.*

*And the right technology to produce the insight to take advantage of opportunity and leap ahead of the competition is indispensable. But finding, deploying and using it can be far from easy.*

*In this paper, we look at some of the issues frustrating businesses in Germany, the UK and France today, and propose steps they can take to structure themselves for growth and opportunity.*



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# Business Insight: The Cost of Lost Opportunity

Most of the data that companies collect today is worthless. Without the right people, the right processes and the right technology coming together at the right time, it's simply a pile of mouldering bits and bytes gently decaying on tapes and hard drives, contributing nothing.

Big Data, as George Dyson once explained, "...is what happened when the cost of keeping information became less than the cost of throwing it away."

The problem is that, once extracted, most companies aren't structured in the right way to use it. It's no surprise that Big Data is a term met with scepticism and cynicism.

Yet we're beginning to see the benefits of large Big Data projects among larger enterprises; the high cost and complexity of such implementations has hampered wider effective use. And as more and more effective analytics enters the mainstream, it will begin to divide the haves from the have-nots.



While Big Data may be seen as the answer to a lot of problems faced by organisations, it should not be viewed as a panacea. Plenty of other irritants exist – from lack of capital, through excessive regulation, to a shortage of skilled employees. A lack of timely insight is one issue – but how does it fit into the wider picture?

We asked businesses in the UK, France and Germany about what they thought held them back – the irritating snags, inhibitors and complications stopping them from performing at their best.

We found that over half of businesses lost an opportunity they didn't see coming because they lacked accurate information at a time when they really needed it. Nearly a third – 31% - had it happen more than once a year, and 19% - nearly a fifth – saw it happen a few times a week. For companies, this represents millions of pounds in lost income.



24% of businesses earning more than £1 billion per year lose from two to five days a year. With approximate earnings of £4 million per day, such a delay in getting the business insight can lead to a loss equal to £20 million.



33% of businesses earning from £100 million to £500 million per year lose up to two days a year. With approximate earnings of £1 million per day, such a delay in getting business insight can lead to a loss equal to £2 million.

But the problem can't be solved by the application of new technology – it's more complicated than that.

Companies are held back from making best use of their resources by all kinds of inhibitors, including the readiness of their workforce, the nature of their business, internal cultures, attitudes and politics, regulatory requirements and more. Understanding how best to negotiate this can be difficult, and there's no quick, universal fix.

### What would you need to change in order for the right people to have access to the right information?

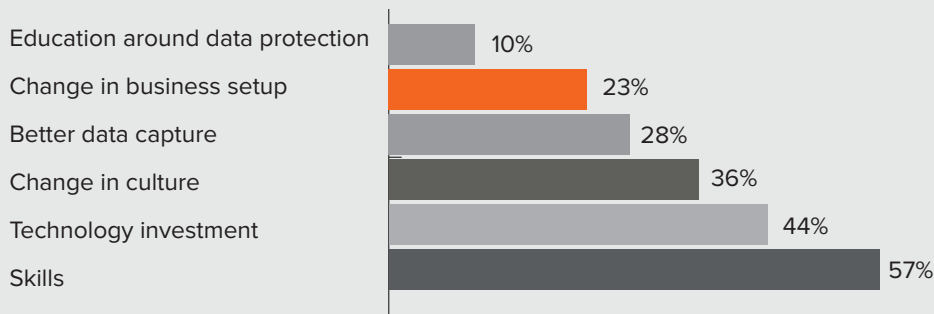


Fig. 1: Delays in accessing data. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015

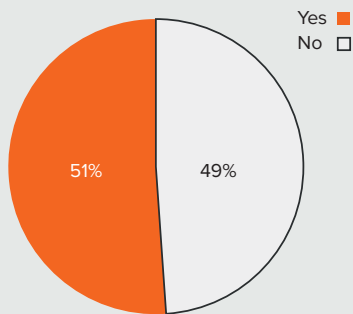
In this paper, we'll look at the problems companies face, and look at the role of rapid business insight in overcoming some of these. There are three key factors in conquering the problems our research has identified: people, process and technology. Of these, the first two are the priorities, and getting these right is the first giant step of business transformation.

# When timely information is delayed

## LOSS DUE TO LACK OF INFORMATION

Half of respondents indicated they have lost a business opportunity due to the lack of necessary information. This situation occurs a few times a year for 31% of organisations and on at least a weekly basis for another one third of companies.

Has your business ever lost an opportunity because you couldn't see it coming as you didn't have enough information?



If yes, on average how often does it happen in your business?

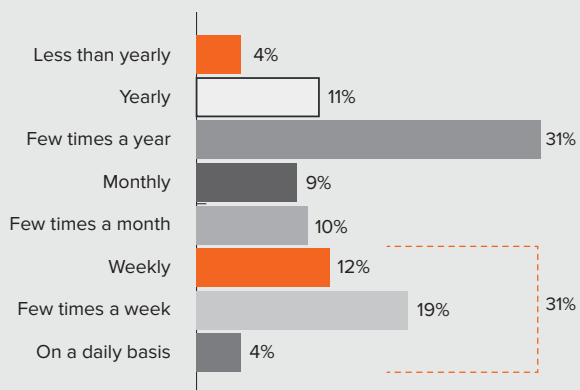


Fig. 2: Loss due to lack of information. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015

When we compare this with the benefits attributed to timely business insight, things become more marked – and begin to suggest a significant opportunity for those companies that can get access to data on time: generally, respondents to our survey thought their company's performance could be improved by a staggering 21% per cent.

## ACCESSING INSIGHTS ON TIME

78% of businesses believe they can boost business performance by 21% if they could access insights in a timely manner; only 6% of businesses already have access to insights in a timely manner.

Respondents indicate their business is hindered by a lack of timely business insight mostly a few times a year (23%), and some even a few times a month (16%) and a week (15%).

How often is your business hindered because you can't access business insight on time?

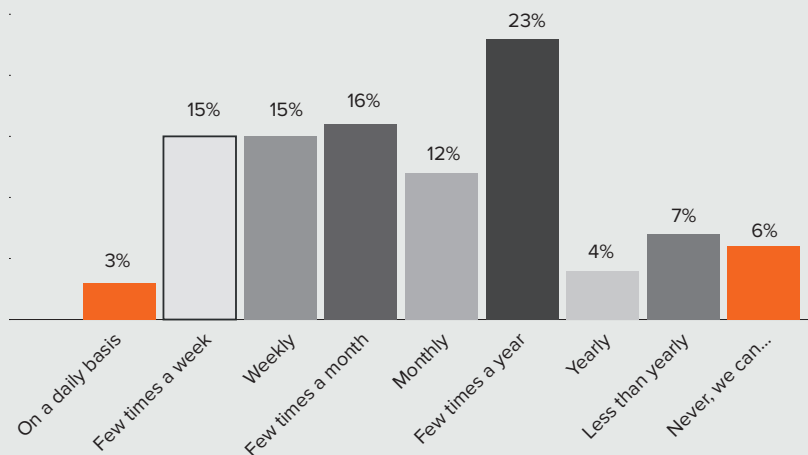


Fig. 3: Accessing insights on time. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015  
Note: This question allowed participants to select multiple answers

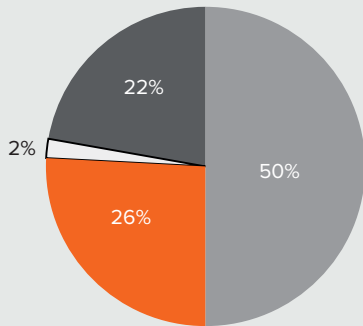


Accessing data on time would improve business performance by an average of 21%

## UNUSED INSIGHT DATA

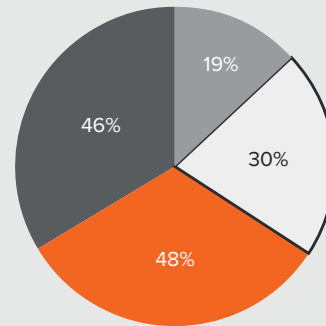
72% of organisations indicate that they have gathered data that was not used later on. The main reasons were time it takes to process the data (especially prevalent in the UK, scoring 70%) and lack of internal skills (46%).

Have you ever gathered data (e.g. financial information, HR stats, customer insights etc.) that you haven't used?



- Yes, often happens
- Yes, it happens occasionally
- No, we always use the data that we acquire
- I don't know

Why don't you fully process the data you have?



- Lack of internal skills to do so
- Because it's too expensive to process data
- Because data processing is too time consuming
- Because we don't have the proper data processing tools

Fig. 4: Unused insight data. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015  
Note: This question allowed participants to select multiple answers

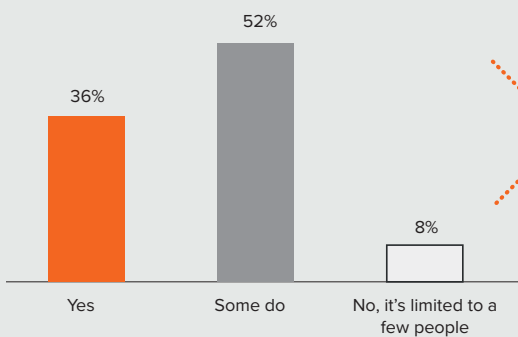
Attitudes to the use of such data tend to vary between the three countries we looked at; UK businesses are the most likely to possess the information they need to make decisions. A fifth of businesses are considered too compartmentalised to benefit, but over two fifths of respondents said they didn't believe giving access to all of the people in the organisation would actually be of use. More than a quarter reckoned on a lack of technological ability as a factor.



## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

UK organisations are most likely to possess the information necessary to make a right decision. On average, 8% of employees do not have access to the information they need. The main reasons for this are doubts on use and value of data (58% and 67% for Germany and UK, respectively), lack of technological ability (27%), and the fact that business is siloed (33% UK and 27% France).

Does everyone within the company have access to the information they need to make the right decisions?



If not, why not?

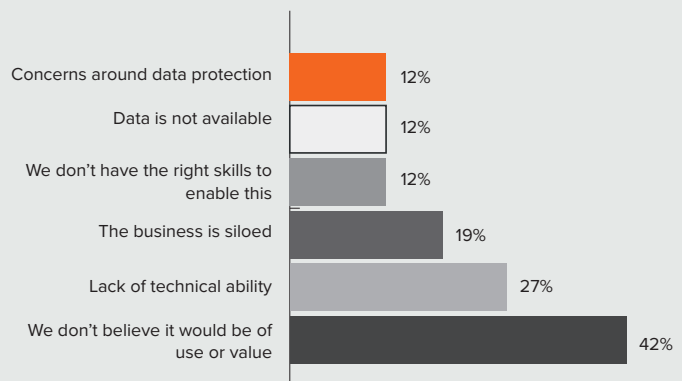


Fig. 5: Access to information. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015

Note: This question allowed participants to select multiple answers

## ANNUAL LOSS DUE TO DELAYS IN BUSINESS INSIGHT

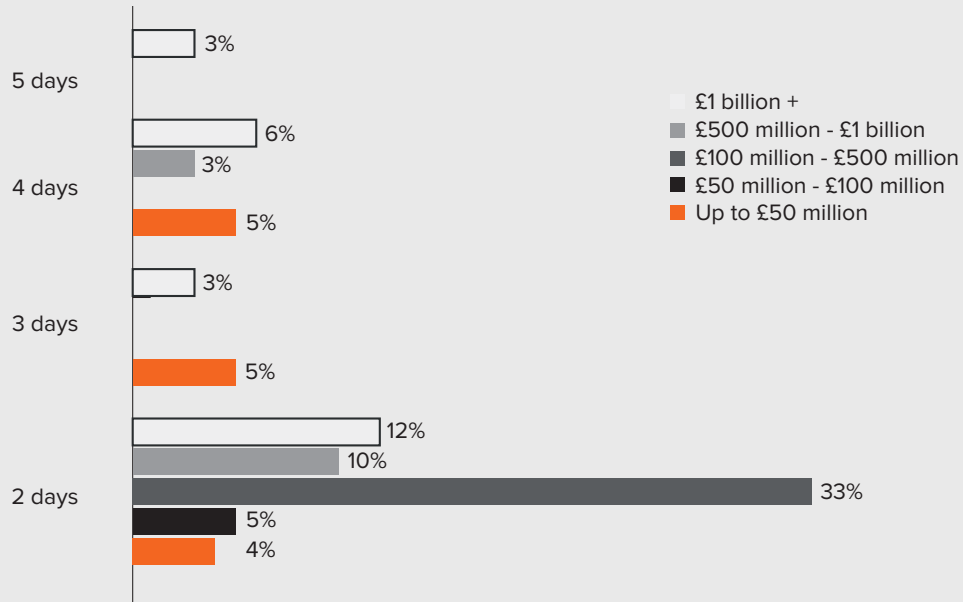


Fig. 6: Annual losses due to delays in business insight. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015

The right information at the right time is enormously beneficial: better strategies, more productive, happier employees and more sales are the anticipated results, even if the route to get there is far from direct.

## IMPORTANCE OF HAVING THE RIGHT INFORMATION

Having the right people access the right information in the right time would lead to better strategies (55%), better engaged employees (46%) and higher sales (41%).

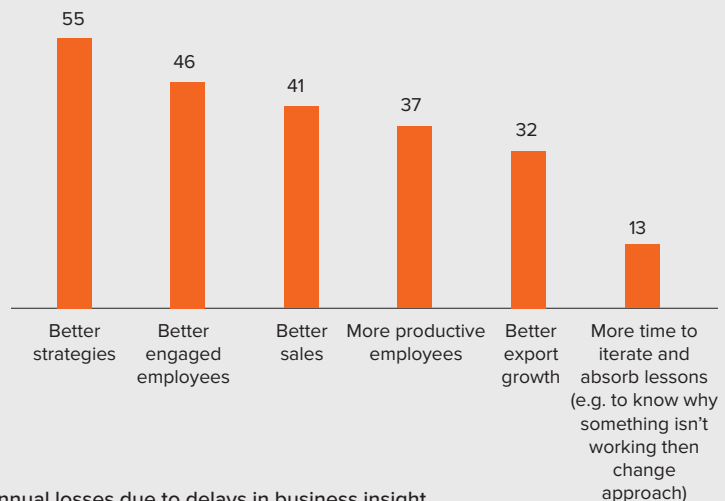


Fig. 7: Annual losses due to delays in business insight. Pure Storage / Morar Research, July 2015

# Conclusion

Companies don't suffer from single, uniform inhibitions on their business. The reality is often nuanced and indistinct. For many, the lack of usable insight is to be the key; it is this insight that often informs long-term strategy, as well as short-term approaches to opportunities and problems.

However, identifying the next steps, and understanding the environment in which the business operates – are just as vital. There is no single cure to what ails businesses in the countries we surveyed. Adaptability and combining the right information with the ability to interpret it and the initiative to act seems to be a successful approach.

Data in itself is not valuable – the way that your employees collect, process and work with the information that comes from data has to be addressed, too. Reorganising the business around rapid access to insight, and equipping employees to make best use of it, not only increases opportunity, but helps address the staff quality and morale problems many companies say they suffer from.

What is clear is that building the best company is increasingly dependent on the foundation of solid information, delivered in a timely fashion to the right people – be they the front of house staff or the CEO – to make a concrete difference.

# Methodology

The survey was conducted among 308 ITDMs in the UK, France and Germany. The interviews were conducted online by Morar in July 2015 using an email invitation and an online survey via our Crowdology panel.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 5.6 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Sample was selected from the Crowdology & Crowdology partner panels. Crowdology™ is an online panel owned and operated by Morar. The Crowdology™ panel is balanced across regional, age and gender demographic factors, and is nationally representative of the UK population. Each respondent completes 120 profiling questions before being accepted to join our panel. Panel Quality Management is carried out frequently to ensure reliable surveys.

Although Morar specializes in providing services to Marketing Communications companies (the Crowdology polling panel, for example) it has a long pedigree of full service research project execution across industry sectors. Morar is adept at executing focus groups, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, online research, desk research and statistical modeling, to mention just a few techniques.

<http://www.crowdology.co.uk/>  
<http://www.morarconsulting.com/>