

As seen in **fashLon** **MANNUSCRIPT****BAM**

By Paul Magel, Senior Vice President

BlueCherry Application Solutions at Computer Generated Solutions, Inc.



Paul Magel

Regardless of the name, in all cases these terms refer to the same fundamental concept—an information delivery system geared to high-level executives who can see at a glance how the company is performing.

BlueCherry's Executive Dashboard module is a good example of such a tool. It is a Web-based program that allows the user to select various so-called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be presented either numerically or in graphical format. The underlying concept is that a C level executive does not need to see every detail of day-to-day activities, but rather wants a general overview of the company's status with regard to certain areas.

To make this type of tool effective, it is necessary to make it flexible. That is, since the CFO typically has different information requirements than, say, the VP of Operations, each should be allowed to select which KPIs he or she would like to view. For that matter, each user will typically have preferences as to how the information is presented (pie chart, bar chart, etc.) and how often the data is refreshed. In some cases, a daily or twice-daily update might be appropriate, where in others something closer to real-time updates could be desired.

As for what kinds of information should be displayed, the answer is potentially anything that is happening throughout the organization. Tools like Executive Dashboard are designed to access all manners of database, not just those within the ERP system. That is, KPIs can pull data from a Warehouse Management System, a Payroll system, or virtually any other business system running in the company.

The reason for making Executive Dashboard Web-based is to ensure that executives have access to it regardless of their location. The VP traveling in Europe can still log into her company's

No, you have not stumbled on a guest column by a certain Louisiana chef...BAM is yet another three letter acronym; short for Business Activity Monitoring. In fact, there are multiple terms used today for what is essentially the same concept: CPM (Corporate Performance Management), BPM (Business Performance or Process Measurement) and Digital Dashboards or Portals (for which, surprisingly, there is not a TLA).

secure website and at a glance have a view of the key metrics she needs to see. Of course, she could also well have the Dashboard displayed on the credenza behind her desk in the office, there to be viewed at a glance whenever she turns around. (Security note: while it can look cool to have a screenful of graphs and charts showing your company's health sitting behind your desk, you might want to position the monitor so that visitors are not able to see that same possibly sensitive information.)

Still, there are occasions where the Web is just not accessible to the executive in question. It is for this reason that Executive Dashboard offers an alternative delivery method—messages sent to either e-mail or a SMS (Short Message System) device, such as an appropriate model of cellular telephone.

In short, BAM systems like the BlueCherry Executive Dashboard are easy to use data delivery mechanisms designed to feed appropriate information to key executives in the organization, either directly on screen or in a message format to e-mail or SMS. Their value, of course, resides in their immediacy and simplicity—even techno phobic managers can get a sense of how the company is doing and possibly head off a problem thanks to timely updating.

Like the dashboard of your car after which they're named, BAM systems give executives a view of the organization's health in an uncluttered easy to read presentation. And with that kind of information available to them, those same executives can react and pro-act as quickly as possible to the ever-changing environment in which their business exists.

*Paul Magel is Senior Vice President for BlueCherry Application Solutions at Computer Generated Solutions, Inc. (CGS). BlueCherry is a suite of technically superior solutions encompassing Enterprise Resource Planning, Supply Chain Management, Sales Force Automation and Customer Relationship Management.*

*CGS provides innovative solutions that fulfill the information technology and business needs of apparel and footwear manufacturers, importers and retailers. For 20 years, CGS solutions have provided dramatic and rapid return on investment along with the tangible benefits of streamlining business processes and escalating sales efficiencies while offering superior training and customer support. For more information, visit [www.cgsinc.com](http://www.cgsinc.com).*

*Special thanks to Bob Fately at CGS for his contributions to this article.*