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The Buyers Guide to SaaS embedded analytics & business intelligence



Why embed analytics & business intelligence into your SaaS application?



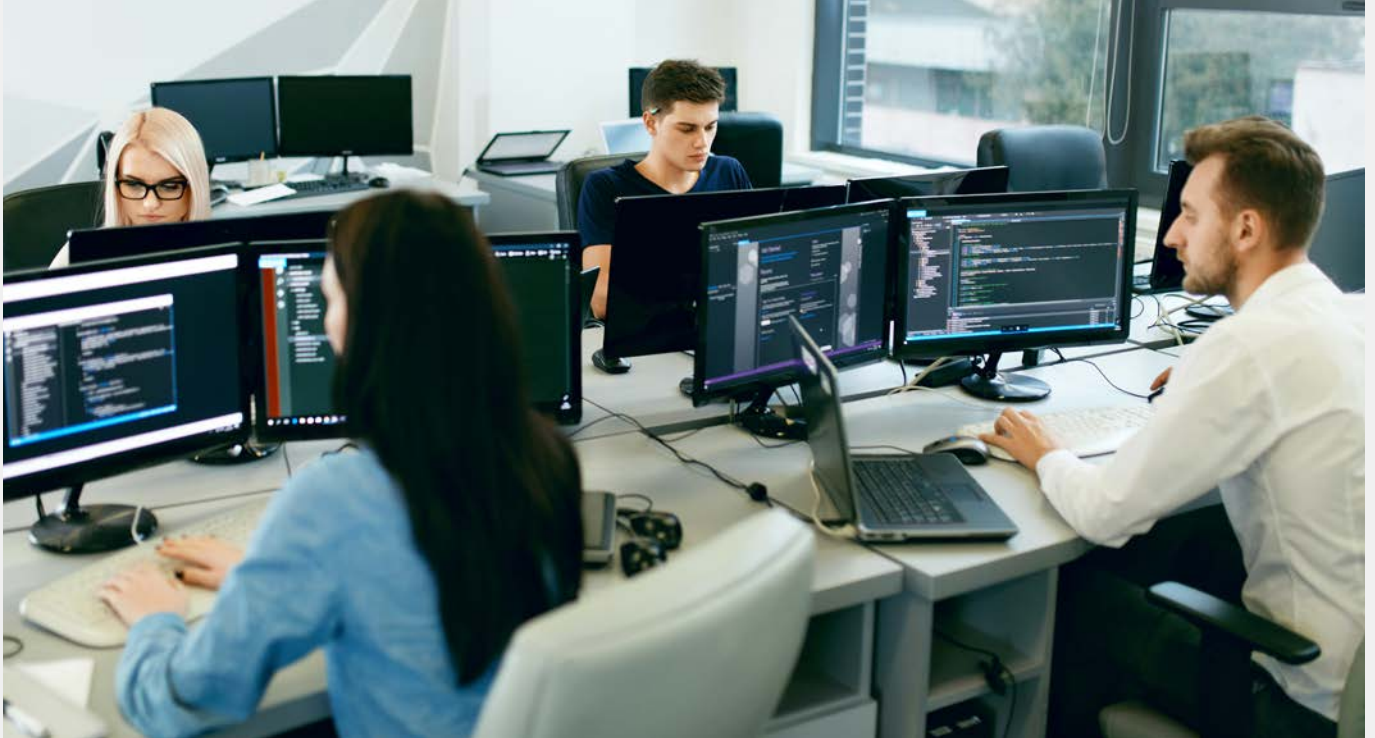
Many SaaS vendors see embedding analytics into their application as one of the main priorities in their product roadmap.

But why is this?

This guide explains why this trend is growing amongst SaaS vendors and why most are actively engaging and partnering with an embedded analytics vendor rather than attempting to build themselves.



Why embed analytics into your SaaS application?



Giving your customers access to rich data insights at the right time is becoming increasingly important to SaaS vendors.

If vendors do not deliver these capabilities, they find their customers will try different ways to garner the data from their application and place into their own databases. And even more worrying is that they will start to look at other vendors who have embedded analytics at the heart of their application and become a flight risk, or worse they could even churn away.

Embedding analytics into the heart of an application is quickly becoming the standard. Data presented to users at the right time and with the right focus can be so powerful. By avoiding that “swivel chair” moment when they need to jump between applications, you are enabling them to get instant context of the data.



Is the buy vs build conundrum finally dead?

It feels like the question that comes up from development teams “Why don’t we just build it?” has finally been put to bed.

Developers have become an expensive scarce resource, who are critical to the ongoing success of a vendor’s product. SaaS vendors tend to be modern companies with modern thinking and realise that they need a stack of solutions to enable their continued success and growth. As the buy vs build barrier has finally been removed, product teams are finding it easier to partner with the right solution to embed and development teams are 100% engaged.

Although budget is one consideration, it’s build speed and time-to-market that’s even more critical to consider. Being slow to market allows competitors to gain the upper hand and can mean the difference between project success or failure.



So, what are some of the other key reasons why SaaS vendors are going down the buy route rather than initially attempting to build in house?

1) Time

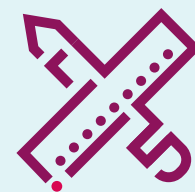
Time is one of the main reasons we hear. Things move very quickly at SaaS companies. New customers are being added at a fast pace, this generates new feature requests to be added to the existing roadmap and backlog. Your development team is flat out managing and delivering on core IP and ensuring customers remain happy on your platform, this ensures you keep your retention rate high. **So, SaaS development teams realise that it makes sense to add certain functionality into their development stack to save them time and allow focus on core development.**



A common scenario often seen from SaaS companies looking for BI tools is that they start the build process, spending valuable time and resources, before even taking stock of what is already available on the market.

2) Resources

Development resources have become scarce and highly sought after. There is a worldwide developer shortage, demand for developers is red-hot, and developers are demanding premium salaries. It's important for SaaS development teams to retain their development talent. Ensuring development teams are motivated on delivering on the product roadmap and core IP related to the vendor's USP is essential.



But it's not just development teams that get drawn into the build process. Vendor's QA teams need to test the solution, their documentation teams need to write it up, and their support team needs to support it. And of course, it's software, **so by definition it's never finished.** Bugs will need fixing, libraries updating, and customers will demand new features. So, **what started out as perhaps a three-to-six-month project expands quickly and absorbs much more resource than originally anticipated.**

3) Unified Brand Experience

Product teams want to create a seamless, consistent experience for their users. They know this drives user engagement, adoption, and ultimately retention. Key to any embedded analytics platform must be the ability to easily white label the solution to ensure a seamless experience for your customers and their users.

Ensuring a unified brand experience across your platform helps to engage your users and drives better adoption of new features. Vendors who are focused on embedded analytics tend to have low egos when it comes to embedding their products. They don't need to have their logo or colour schemes plastered all over the place. They realise how important your user adoption is and they go out of their way to ensure their product looks and feels like yours.



4) Technical Debt

All development teams are constantly looking at ways to avoid technical debt. **They try to avoid short cuts during development that they know will come back to bite them later.** Libraries need updating, security updates are important to be up to date on, and the dreaded depreciation/end of life can also loom over them.

Creating technical debt in non-core IP puts more stress on already stretched teams. SaaS vendors look to build partnerships with vendors to build their stack.



More and more, embedded analytics is being seen as an important partnership and a way to avoid technical debt around analytics. Vendors are viewing these partnerships as extensions to their development teams.



5) Data Governance & Security

When it comes to data; governance and security tends to be high on the priority list for SaaS vendors.

Development teams have designed a data strategy and typically aligned it with some form of authentication process and user based roles and permissions. The data strategy could involve a data warehouse or data lake. **The work has been done to extract, load and transform the data already so one key thing they don't want to do is move the data once again.** Firstly, it tends to break their security model which is a big no no and secondly it creates data duplication. Development teams want to be able to query the data from their location and not to have a vendor's platform move, lift or shift the data.



Always try before you buy

Running a pilot should always form part of the buying process. This allows customers to have their say and feedback to be fully evaluated before going live. Tendable advocates bringing users into pilot schemes as it finds this is the best way to check an embedded analytics tool is flexible enough and delivers the high value that customers demand.

The primary goal of testing your embedded BI platform is to maximise the level of success. Does it fit your architecture, can it be embedded quickly, can you ensure brand continuity, and most importantly do your customers find it easy to use and derive value from. If a solution isn't a good fit for the business using it, the SaaS vendor won't be able to fulfil their customer's uses. This will inevitably impact on customer retention rate and drive churn.

Ensuring you have stakeholders from all areas of your business engaged in the trial process will help to drive the implementation and development, and ultimately deliver high value for internal and external users.



Panintelligence's embedded analytics solution (pi) has been built with the flexibility to embed directly into your existing data stack and give your customers the dashboards, reports and predictive analytics they need to make data driven decisions.

It's low code for you and no code for your customers so you can deploy with ease and speed and your customers can self-serve, to visualise the data they want without technical knowhow. So you can focus your development resource on your core offering and accelerate your roadmap and growth plans.



Security is at the heart of our solution and we never move data from source.

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