

## The Secret Sauce for Embedded BI and Analytics

by [Ron Powell](#)

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**This BeyeNETWORK article features Ron Powell's interview with Lee Nagel. Lee is the vice president of marketing at [Izenda](#), and Ron is an independent analyst and expert who works with the BeyeNETWORK and the Business Analytics Collaborative. Lee and Ron discuss why embedded business intelligence and analytics is critical for accelerating application adoption.**

**At the most recent Gartner Business Intelligence and Analytics Summit, Gartner stated that analytics has been a number one area of investment by business for the past five years and is accelerating. How does Izenda help enterprises and independent software vendors (ISVs) make the most of their investment?**

**Lee Nagel:** It begins with delivering a platform that is robust in its functionality and also is easily and seamlessly integrated inside the application that business users leverage every day. Whenever you look at an [embedded business intelligence](#) (BI) project, you'll see that you are really meeting the needs of a variety of stakeholders. You have the person who develops and owns the application. In a lot of cases with our clients, those are the independent software vendors that are trying to improve the analytics capability in their application. And then you have end-user stakeholders. You have continuous pressure to improve the number of people inside any organization that are making decisions using real-time data. They want to have current information. They want to be able to do what we call the three Cs. That is, they want to create, customize and consume analytics in real time in the applications they use every day. With Izenda, because of the way we deliver our platform and the way that it has been designed, the total cost of ownership for the independent software vendor is very attractive. For their end users, it is something the users can easily understand and use. It's in the application that they know and love. Adoption rates are significantly higher than other stand-alone BI applications.

**What companies have benefited the most from embedding Izenda?**

**Lee Nagel:** It's really a broad range of companies. Typically, we work with independent software vendors, solution providers and enterprises that are looking to develop an application. We've had software companies in the ERP space, human capital management, logistics, supply chain, medical, healthcare and government – any type of application where you are doing reporting and there is a need for ad hoc reporting. Whether that application is an on-premises application because of security requirements or it's in the cloud or has some type of hybrid infrastructure, Izenda can seamlessly embed inside of that application quickly. Because of the way we have architected our platform, we can inherit the existing security model so those user roles and access rights that are so paramount to who can do what and how they use the application appropriately are maintained. Our platform is architected to make that adoption and incorporation in the host application easy.

**I find Izenda to be very unique in its focus on embedded BI. What was the major driver for Izenda to take that focus?**

**Lee Nagel:** The market is underserved. If you look at what a lot of BI platforms on the market really offer, their offering doesn't always align with the needs of organizations that are developing applications. Their needs center on how easily they can be implemented, the licensing that's involved in getting the product, and how efficiently and effectively it helps them scale their application. Speed to market is another key for them.

**Obviously a lot of ISVs want to white label products. They don't want to have other branding because they have their own message for going to market. How easy is it for an ISV to white label Izenda?**

**Lee Nagel:** I think easy is one part of it. The other question is how completely can it be white labeled. With a lot of applications on the market, you can [white label](#) some of the output or portions of it. Izenda can be completely white labeled. For the vast majority of our clients, their end users don't know they're leveraging Izenda. On a daily basis, those end users adopt and use the real-time BI and analytics capabilities that Izenda provides but they believe they're using the host application. For the ISV, that is absolutely paramount. They want to build their brand and have their users thinking about their application. Other applications on the market retain the BI software's branding in several key places.

When you talk about embedding, it's really important to look at what is really being embedded. Are you embedding the ability to create those reports? With other solutions that are out there, a lot of times you're only embedding the output of reports or dashboards or visualizations. Do you have the ability to create and customize reports inside of the application or do you have to create a separate designer instance to develop a new report? With other solutions that are on the market, you have to look at going back to a technical user who is administering a desktop version of that application to create a new report. If you're building a web-based application, it's a tall order to ask someone who is using that web-based application to go out and request that a new report be built in a designer instance that's not inside the application that they use every day. So a lot of other solutions on the market that provide an embedded solution are really only embedding output. They're not embedding that ability to create and customize. It's sort of a design to publish mentality.

**What does it mean to truly white label and embed a business intelligence platform?**

**Lee Nagel:** When you're talking about embedded, one thing is often overlooked. There are lots of people who will provide embedded capabilities, but a lot of times what they're embedding is output. They're not really embedding the ability to create and customize reports. Our solution is designed to be embedded inside of the host application to empower non-technical end users with the ability to create reports from scratch. That whole workflow capability – to be able to quickly and easily generate reports, dashboards and visualizations, share those and create pixel-perfect forms – can be seamlessly integrated in the workflow of the host application. And, end users can be empowered to do the creation, customization and consumption of reporting, whereas a lot of other solutions on the market are really only embedding the output. When reports from that solution need to be generated, a technical user needs to get involved and go back to a report design, oftentimes using code to produce those reports. They may embed output or views or something that the user can set up, but the end users are not truly empowered to create whatever types of ad hoc reports they need or, for that matter, to do what is of paramount importance – make better business decisions with effective self-service throughout the entire life cycle of doing analytics.

**The majority of your customers are white labeling Izenda. How many end users are using Izenda?**

**Lee Nagel:** We've been successfully deployed in more than a thousand applications. Those applications are in use by more than 10,000 organizations and more than a million end users.

As a marketer, it's a bit of a challenge because Izenda users don't really know that they're actually using Izenda. So it's a little tough to build that groundswell since we're – as was mentioned in a recent press release – kind of the secret sauce of many successful applications that are on the market.

That ability to white label is a key point for ISVs when they're deciding on a partner. Cost is important to them, obviously, but they also assess if the partner will build their brand and be committed and focused on the needs of organizations developing applications.

**What other challenges does Izenda address for ISVs?**

**Lee Nagel:** Total cost of ownership through the licensing model we offer. A lot of competitive products on the market may have per user or per core licensing requirements. We have an unlimited use license based on the value that we bring to the host application. They are able to use it. There are no fees for specific modules, for development instances – they definitely know what Izenda is going to cost. They're able to encourage adoption across the board and to promote it highly.

ISVs are looking for a solution that really meets their business needs. As I mentioned earlier, that goes beyond feature and function. They're looking for a solution that can increase speed to market. We've got a complete solution that is designed to be embedded in as quickly as 30 to 60 days. The solution is really designed to be embedded that quickly. When you're trying to advance another generation of your product or move your application to another environment – maybe the cloud – that speed to market is key.

I also think the ability to focus resources is important. ISVs are in a competitive landscape. Their core products and the software that they develop face a lot of competitive challenges and constant demands. Whether you're doing coding in house or you're working for an ISV, the request for features and functions is never-ending. The ability for an ISV to focus developers on the core application and buy a solution that can be seamlessly embedded and promote the ISV's brand is really key.

End-user adoption is another key area. There are plenty of stories of people implementing solutions that they felt were going to provide their users that holy grail or the ability to make better data-driven decisions, but the solutions never get embraced or adopted by their user community because it's too complex or lacks the functionality they're looking for. Our solution – because it is designed to be embedded and complement the workflow of the host application – drives user adoption.

### **What are the advantages of embedding Izenda's BI and analytics capabilities over building a solution or buying another platform?**

**Lee Nagel:** Our platform was built to meet the needs of those organizations that are looking for an embedded solution. When you look at reporting inside of applications, a lot of companies start out with a reporting solution or some reporting capabilities they may have inherited with the database that they bought, or they may have an instance of Microsoft SSRS, some legacy Crystal Reports or maybe some handwritten SQL or Excel. They may start looking at bringing in developer toolkits or charting libraries or other materials as they try to develop a more robust homegrown solution. But ultimately, the resource limitations come back to complicate it. They are going to face challenges in constantly iterating and developing more functionality. As we talked about earlier, that is a distraction from their core competency. They want to build the best application they can, and if you're constantly pulling developers toward keeping up with the BI and analytics product development life cycle, you're straining those scarce resources and your users are constantly pushing you for more self-service or more ad hoc capability. So at some point in the life of every application, people have to look at something beyond the legacy, homegrown solutions they may have, and they start looking at what they can buy and what they can embed.

### **Lee, it's been a pleasure talking to you and learning about Izenda's unique approach for providing ISVs with embedded BI and analytics capabilities so that they can focus on their core value proposition.**

#### **About the Author**

Ron Powell is an independent analyst and consultant, has an extensive technology background in business intelligence, analytics and data warehousing. In 2005, Ron founded the BeyeNETWORK, which was acquired by Tech Target in 2010. Prior to the founding of the BeyeNETWORK, Ron was cofounder, publisher and editorial director of DM Review (now Information Management). Ron also has a wealth of consulting expertise in business intelligence, business management and marketing. He may be contacted by email at [rpowell@wi.rr.com](mailto:rpowell@wi.rr.com).