

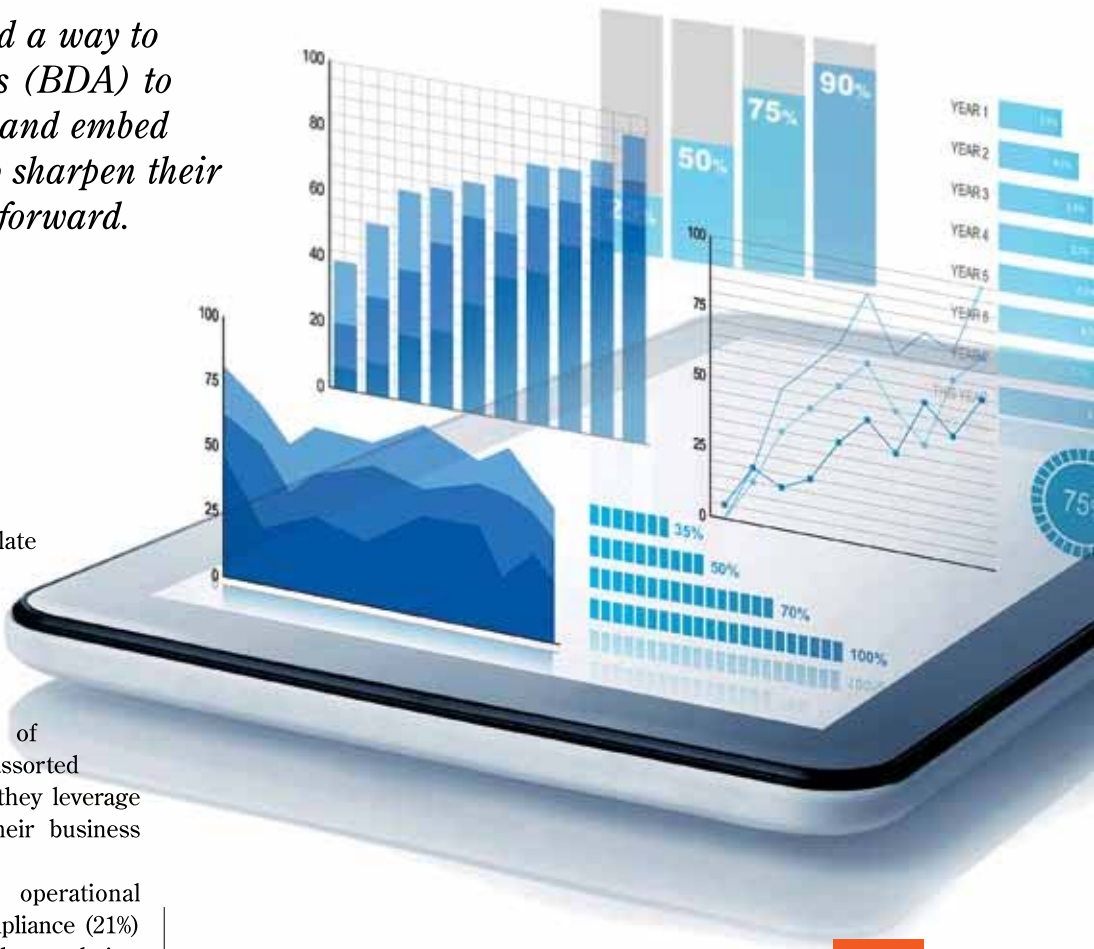
■ BY PREETHA NADARAJAH

# BIG DATA

## ANALYTICS FOR EVERYONE

**Win**  
 Businesses that begin to accept and create a culture around using big data effectively and efficiently look set to win in the end.

*Organisations must find a way to tailor big data analytics (BDA) to their specific objectives and embed BDA into their DNA to sharpen their competitive edge going forward.*



**HOW** can organisations translate theory into practice when it comes to Big Data? The use of big data analytics in real life scenarios came under scrutiny at the recent MIA Big Data Analytics Conference 2015, where some of Malaysia’s leading companies in assorted sectors offered insights into how they leverage big data analytics to enhance their business performance.

“Customer analytics (48%), operational analytics (21%), and fraud and compliance (21%) are the top three use cases for big data analytics. Accountants would be able to easily relate to these use cases given their focus to increase revenue, reduce costs and improve cash flow. The remaining two use cases are new products and

*Accountants would be able to easily relate to these use cases given their focus to increase revenue, reduce costs and improve cash flow.*

services introduction and enterprise data warehouse optimisation,” said Sheikh Manzoor Ghani, Executive Director at SAS Institute Malaysia.

Loon Wing Yuen, Programme Director of Innovation, Group Information and Operations Division, CIMB Bank, elaborated on how CIMB utilised big data to support new product and service innovation by leveraging improved customer analytics. “CIMB’s big data journey started in 2012 - despite having over a dozen data marts from which transactional data about customers was available, there was no platform available for obtaining insights from customers’ social media usage. This social media data stream was added in order to be able to run more effective acquisition and usage campaigns for debit cards. The big data analytics was used to provide very specific offers based on customers’ Facebook likes for usage

and acquisition campaigns to upsell debit cards to existing customers.”, said Loon.

The Axiata group, of which Celcom is a part, with a subscriber base of over 200 million in Asia, also generates a lot of data. “However, within the Axiata group, we use the term data science, rather than big data. Data science practice lies at the intersection of computer science, mathematical statistics and the application domain. The most substantive core expertise required of the three is the application domain and the definition of this area ultimately depends on the practitioner of the big data analytics. The application domain could be risk management, psychology or resource management depending on the goal of the initiative at hand,”

## MALAYSIAN STATUS QUO

### *How does Malaysia compare to its neighbours in its big data adoption?*

“The government is spearheading the big data drive by putting in place programmes such as 1MalaysiaGRIP – 1Malaysia Globally Recognised Industry and Professional certification via HRDF (the Human Resources Development Fund) which provides opportunities for employees to increase their skills by becoming experts in specific fields.

Malaysians could leverage this support to get level 0 or level 1 understanding in analytics,” said Sheikh Manzoor.

“In addition to the requirements for in-depth knowledge of the specific application domain, computer science skills especially database programming and an understanding of non-traditional databases and statistics is a must to become a real data scientist,” elaborated Chua.

Unlike its neighbours, Malaysia also faces the additional challenge of a diverse local language mix that impedes the speed of big data analytics adoption. Fortunately, with the advancement of technology and the increased use of machine language algorithms and Natural Language Processing, the applications and usage of big data analytics is on the rise with the ability to better and more quickly decipher online content.

explained George Chua, Head of Intelligence, Celcom Axiata Berhad.

Although big data is taking off, it is more likely to complement rather than replace conventional analytics. “The harmonious co-existence of traditional business analytics infrastructure together with newer forms of big data infrastructure is expected as ultimately each will have its own application and use within the organisation. For example, the product marketing teams would likely need the insights from big data, whereas the traditional standards-based compliance reporting will likely continue to need the traditional business analytics,” explained Loon.

## JUST DO IT

Organisations differ in their best practices in big data adoption, especially with regards to profit-oriented organisations where the goal is to maximise shareholder value. Chua advised, “When piloting a big data project, use big data analytics to address or solve core competency issues that directly impact shareholder value. Doing a pilot on a useless project to showcase the success of the big data technology adds no value and will only result in it being shut down.”

Perhaps the best advice is to jump on the big data bandwagon sooner rather than later. Technology is firmly embedded into all aspects of our lives and businesses today with our digital footprint creating trillions of bytes of data daily. As such, big data is here to stay and it is poised to get bigger as technologies such as IoT (Internet of Things) mature. Businesses that begin to accept and create a culture around using big data effectively and efficiently look set to win in the end. ■