

Greetings, I'm John Baltes president of SVA Consulting and a strategic IT consultant. Today I'm here to shed some light on a business tool that is commonly referred to as an enterprise data warehouse. So why are executives spending resources on building out an enterprise data warehouse? Some of the more popular reasons that we see is, their desire to use information in the decision-making process at all levels in their organization. They're acknowledging that the daily decisions that people are making are affecting their performance and they desire to use information to improve that performance. The second reason is some executives are simply frustrated with the software publishing industry. The expense and the industry's inability to keep pace with their ever changing business environment. They're tired of the expense, they're tired of the control they've given to this industry, so they're looking to take that control back and control their own destiny. Lastly some are acting in a very strategic manner. They've determined that building out a data asset for their organization is the right long-term solution. So what is a data warehouse? It's a single source of answers for all employees. The key word here is all and answers. When we talk about "all" we want to make the information available to all and not a select few individuals who are then used to disseminate the information or control the behaviors of others; that has become hugely ineffective. Hence, we're trying to get the right information to the right people so they can make the right decisions at the right time. When we talk about "answers", the EDW contains answers - it stores answers. We're not talking about a bunch of data that requires analysis or aggregation or anything else, we're trying to get the answers to the people in a consumable format that they can understand. Again, we're not expecting them to comb through data to figure out what the insight is. So we're asking, when you think about an EDW, think about the right information going to the right user at the right time so they can make the right behavior and have them control their own behavior, not someone else.

So how does this all work? A data warehouse essentially gets its information from transactional systems. It takes that information and transforms it and makes it usable to two people to answer questions. When I refer to transactional systems, I'm referring to softwares like accounting, time entry, payroll, warehouse management, and on and on. These systems we all know we have in our business today. What they're doing is capturing the actions, the events, the dollars that happen all over our business on a daily basis in our computing environment. Today, these transactions are being captured by many different systems that could be dispersed all over the place; that's the challenge. The reality is, it's only going to get worse. So gone are the days when we can put in ERP and we can have all of our business transactions in one place. So now we have these transactional systems and we need to put an enterprise data warehouse in place. What the enterprise data warehouse does is it takes the data out of the transactions, it aggregates it, it transforms it, and it makes it consumable to a user. So I have information coming from many different sources, being aggregated together, being synthesized and then presented back to a user.

So how can SVA Consulting assist you in making an enterprise data warehouse a reality for your organization? What we have is the experience, the expertise and the methodology to actually design and develop and roll out an enterprise data warehouse to your users. Let us take you through that methodology and reveal how an enterprise data warehouse could be a strategic tool for your organization.