# BUSINSS INTELLIGENCE APPLIED TO AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT EVENT

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## Abstract

AIM
Since 2011, Sport Business School Finland has conducted a total of twelve research projects for the WRC Neste Oil Rally Finland–event in Jyväskylä. This paper seeks to illustrate the application of business intelligence to an international sport event, and introduce the concept of Sport Business Intelligence (SBI). The paper reveals the needs and requirements of the sport event organization over time, and the longitudinal data collected and analysed for planning and service quality improvement. As a result this study illustrates the pragmatic application SBI to the intentional evolution of the WRC Neste Oil Rally Finland.
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
The increased volume (and stakes) of sport business-driven activities necessitates sport organizations adopt sound business practices. Business intelligence (BI) is a set of theories, methodologies, architectures, and technologies that transform raw data into meaningful and useful information for business purposes. Often, large amounts of unstructured data are analyzed to identify and develop new opportunities. To further understand the managerial meaning of business intelligence, another definition by Williams and Williams (2006) is offered: “BI combines products, technology, and methods to organize key information that management needs to improve profit and performance. More broadly, we think of BI as business information and business analyses within the context of key business processes that lead to decisions and actions and that result in improved business performance.” The core idea of BI is to provide historical, current and predictive views of business operations. In terms of functions, BI includes for example reporting, analytics, data mining, online processing, business performance management, benchmarking, text mining, predictive and prescriptive analysis. According to Kobielus (2010), “business

intelligence is a non-domain-specific catchall for all the types of analytic data that can be delivered to users in reports, dashboards, and the like." Real-time business intelligence (RTBI) is the process of delivering information about business operations as they occur. Real time means near to zero latency and access to information whenever it is required (Rud, 2009). The RTBI system not only supports the classic strategic functions of data warehousing for deriving information and knowledge from past enterprise activity, but it also provides real-time tactical support to drive enterprise actions that react immediately to events as they occur. As such, it replaces both the classic data warehouse and the enterprise application integration (EAI) functions. Such event-driven processing is a basic tenet of real-time business intelligence (Williams and Williams, 2006).

In the context of the present case, Sport Business Intelligence (SBI) applies advanced data-collection and sophisticated analyses to support informed decision-making and quality improvement of a sport event and organization. In this respect SBI applies the models of modern customer-oriented business information to sport. This approach is merely an application of existing ways and means, even though it aims to take the specifics of sport (as a product) into account.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

This paper is based on a comparative analysis that reflects the theoretical structures and definitions of BI and applies them to the data collection/analysis and decision-making by a sport event organization. Spectator data collection started in August 2011 during the WRC Rally Finland. Since then, new data were collected annually bringing the number of total responses to over 4,700. Data were gathered using structured field survey questionnaires with Likert scale determinants and open-ended questions. Spectator responses were captured on-line with iPad tablets permitting real-time business intelligence. All were processed and restored in the Webropol data system, with some results made available to the Rally organizers during the event.

RESULTS, IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Results of this study indicate that business intelligence as an approach to business development is useful and applicable to sport events. Sport and especially sport events require a distinct application of business intelligence, as the needs and requirements of sport business are eminent. Our results suggest that to be successful, SBI both requires and supports strategic planning. Since the overall data analysis of WRC Rally Finland is on-going at the deadline of this abstract, final analyses will be presented in September.

## References

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