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Evaluation Methodology

BIScorecard evaluates vendor products with the view of a customer who wishes to buy a full BI suite or integrated toolset. Products are evaluated according to major functional areas ranging from query and reporting to architecture and administration. Within each functional area, I score vendors on various features. This list of criteria is based on:

- features that customers often look for in evaluations
- unique capabilities identified while evaluating products
- vendor marketing claims that are either a point of differentiation or confusion

To evaluate products, I rely on vendor briefings, customer feedback, and newsgroup postings. To ensure an objective, apples-to-apples comparison of products, I also evaluate the software hands-on. Because I seldom have the benefit of days or weeks of training (that I hope a typical customer would invest in), this does pose a challenge in evaluating more complex products. When a task is not apparent via the menus or online help, I rely on vendor documentation.

Each feature is assigned a score of 0 to 3:

Score	Explanation
3	Exceptional capabilities
2	Very good capabilities
1	Limited capabilities, difficult to do, or may require a work around
0	Minimal capabilities out of the box. The software may require customization or coding to accomplish.

I first began evaluating MicroStrategy with its 1.0 product, DSS Suite, and have re-evaluated the product multiple times since 1994. The findings from this report are based on an in depth evaluation of version 7.5, released December 2003. This report has been updated to include capabilities from MicroStrategy 8, released February 2005. August 2005 updates include a re-evaluation of the Office Add-In.