

7 CRITERIA TO EVALUATE NATURAL LANGUAGE BI



Natural Language BI tools let you explore your data by entering queries in a search box using everyday language. Here are 7 criteria to evaluate this tools.



A Natural Language BI search engine should be significantly different from a web search engine, as it should return concise answers. Providing a list of links to documents is not an answer.

PRO TIP: Can you use everyday language or need to learn a technical lingo? Does it give you a single answer or presents a list of reports?

ACCURACY



For you to measure the accuracy of the tool you have to be able to check the veracity of results. Not go with vendor's statistics on how accurate the tool is, try it yourself.

PRO TIP: Three topics you should focus on:

- Does it understand the queries you enter?
- Does it offer a way for you to check if it is correctly interpreting your queries?
- Does it explain how it did the calculations?

VISUALIZATION

Some of this tools automatically present results in the best visual form for you to understand them, meaning that it chooses between showing a table, a number and different types of charts.

PRO TIP: Look for a solution that offer you this kind of capabilities and make sure that you can still change and edit the type of chart presented in the first place.



SCALABILITY



You may have just two or three users and two data sources with a few files but it will grow. It's important to ensure that the solution you choose is able to grow with you without much effort or cost associated.

PRO TIP: Ask how many users can it handle simultaneously, which amount of data can it search through, which data sources can it connect to and if it can handle different data sources at the same time.

SECURITY



You may not want your sales rep to know each other results, or you may need to limit data access within departments. This tool should let you apply access privileges even within the search.

PRO TIP: Add these questions to the ones you will make to BI vendors: can you limit users' access? how does it work? how can I edit users' permissions?

ARCHITECTURE FLEXIBILITY



BI vendors offer one of two options: import all data to their servers or do the queries directly on top of your data sources. You will find arguments to support both. Try to understand your needs before making a decision.

PRO TIP: If you have a huge amount of data or highly sensitive information definitively go with the second option.

CONFIGURATION FREEDOM



A good Natural Language BI tool should give you the freedom to easily insert synonyms to entities, attributes and data values. Add business rules should also be a simple process.

PRO TIP: Imagine real situations where you would need to make some customization and ask the vendor how would it be possible. Try not depend too much on the vendor to customize things as it increases the cost.