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## SAS Institute Is A Leader Among Business Performance Solutions Vendors

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Forrester's 89-criteria evaluation of business performance solutions (BPS) vendors, we found that IBM Cognos, Oracle, SAP, and SAS Institute led the pack because of their breadth of functionality and strength of their business intelligence (BI) foundations. SAP earned the highest current offering score, and IBM Cognos earned the highest strategy score, with Oracle having the best combination of both. Clarity Systems led the Strong Performers group with impressive planning and financial reporting capabilities. Infor was a solid Strong Performer as well, demonstrating very good functional capabilities for planning, consolidations, and performance measurement. Tagetik, a CFO-focused player from Italy, showed sophisticated financial modeling capabilities and an excellent consolidations solution. Host Analytics, the only software-as-a-service (SaaS) pure-play provider in the Forrester Wave™ peer group, had a well-rounded offering and a clear vision and strategy for BPS. Board International and Longview Solutions demonstrated the potential to play well in the BPS market as their latest releases gain maturity.

### SAS INSTITUTE: THE THOUGHT LEADER IN STRATEGY, FORECASTING, AND COSTING

With leading capabilities in cost and profitability management and predictive analytics, SAS Institute is a smart choice for sophisticated companies. The predictive technology supports complex planning and forecasting applications. SAS Institute also offers a broad set of analytical applications, which include solutions for IT, human capital management (HCM), and several other industries. While SAS Institute does not have as much market presence as the other BPS leaders, it has done an excellent job in establishing thought leadership related to strategy management and activity-based management.



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**Figure 1** SAS Institute Evaluation Overview

CURRENT OFFERING	
Planning and budgeting	SAS Institute (SAS) has flexible planning applications, supporting a variety of planning activities. The differentiating strength of the product is forecasting, using predictive and statistical capabilities.
Financial consolidations and reporting	SAS provides sophisticated consolidations functionality, supported by a full ETL tool and good multicurrency/multinational capabilities.
Strategy and performance	SAS Strategy Management (SM) provides dashboards, strategy maps, and scorecards, supporting a variety of strategy frameworks, including Balanced Scorecard. It has extensive KPI support (including key risk indicators [KRIs] and Global Reporting Initiative [GRI] sustainability metrics) as well as good tools for notification and response.
Cost and profitability analysis	SAS Activity Based Management (ABM) and SAS Profitability Management are leading products among the peer group, offering sophisticated modeling of costs and profitability, and allocations.
Functional and industry-specific performance management	SAS has good functional domain support in HR, IT, supplier management, and customer intelligence, as well as a handful of industry-specific analytical applications.
Business intelligence (BI) foundation	SAS has good Microsoft Office interoperability, ETL, and data management capabilities.
Technology characteristics	SAS BPS solutions are built for high scalability as a core design premise and allow for customer choice of platforms, but some complexity exists for application configuration and workflow.
Hosting and outsourcing	SAS offers hosting, and SaaS is on its road map.
Customer support	SAS provides support services under its subscription licensing agreement, and upgrades are provided on a 12- to 18-month cycle. Under phone support, guidance on how to use the software is provided — this is a plus over most standard support arrangements.
STRATEGY	
Product strategy and vision	SAS has a clear vision and sophisticated understanding of business performance management, a well-defined road map, excellent thought leadership, and a transparent subscription-based pricing model.
Technology strategy and vision	According to SAS' response: "The SAS technology strategy focuses on four cornerstones: scalability, interoperability, manageability, and usability. SAS uses an open metadata architecture to construct all offerings and sits on many external 'standards' committees to keep up to date and influence direction. A key focus is to provide uniform access to structured and unstructured information across the enterprise with advanced analytics embedded into the reporting layer. Our common solutions layer wraps process management around these capabilities to ensure consistency/optimal flow." Forrester comments: Scalability is a key pillar for SAS, and usability is improving.
R&D/product development	Twenty-two percent of the 2008 revenue was reinvested in R&D.
Strategic alliances	SAS has partnerships in place with major technology vendors and has a reseller channel established for the BPS products. Implementation and application partnerships are minimal for these products.

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MARKET PRESENCE

Financial viability	SAS Institute is a \$2 billion private software vendor, which Forrester believes is in very sound financial health.
Installed base	SAS has provided customer number guidance under NDA. Forrester believes that SAS has good levels of adoption of its cost (ABM) and performance measurement solutions but somewhat less traction with the financial planning and consolidations solution.
Delivery footprint	SAS has approximately 400 company-owned sales offices and distributors worldwide and 600 implementation resources for the BPS products.

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