EIGHT LEVELS OF ANALYTICS
Not all analytics are created equal. Like most software solutions, you’ll find a range of capabilities with analytics, from the simplest to the most advanced. In the spectrum shown here, your competitive advantage increases with the degree of intelligence.

**STANDARD REPORTS**
Answer the questions: What happened? When did it happen?
*Example:* Monthly or quarterly financial reports.

We all know about these. They’re generated on a regular basis and describe just “what happened” in a particular area. They’re useful to some extent, but not for making long-term decisions.

**AD HOC REPORTS**
Answer the questions: How many? How often? Where?
*Example:* Custom reports that describe the number of hospital patients for every diagnosis code for each day of the week.

At their best, ad hoc reports let you ask the questions and request a couple of custom reports to find the answers.

**QUERY DRILLDOWN (OR OLAP)**
Answers the questions: Where exactly is the problem? How do I find the answers?
*Example:* Sort and explore data about different types of cell phone users and their calling behaviors.

Query drilldown allows for a little bit of discovery. OLAP lets you manipulate the data yourself to find out how many, what color and where.

**ALERTS**
Answer the questions: When should I react? What actions are needed now?
*Example:* Sales executives receive alerts when sales targets are falling behind.

With alerts, you can learn when you have a problem and be notified when something similar happens again in the future. Alerts can appear via e-mail, RSS feeds or as red dials on a scorecard or dashboard.
The best analytics for your business problem

The majority of analytic offerings available today fall into one of the first four areas, which report historical data on what happened in the past but no insight about the future. For simple business problems, these analytic solutions will be all you need. But if you're asking more complex questions or looking for predictive insight, you need to look at the second half of the spectrum. Even better, if you can learn to use these technologies together and identify what type of analytics to use for every individual situation, you'll really be increasing your chances for true business intelligence.

Online
SAS Analytics:
www.sas.com/technologies/analytics