

Delivering Business Intelligence: Empowering users to Automate, Streamline, Analyze and Predict



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Interview conducted by:
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“We recognize that each contract is a long-term partnership, and our aim is to satisfy the business and productivity needs of the people in the organization – from the CIO & CFO, through the Business and Systems Analysts to the BI consumers. While skill, talent and knowledge are necessary for producing good results, passion is the energy that fuels truly extraordinary performance and partnerships. We approach each customer as a partner, and we approach each partnership with energy, focus and enthusiasm. We bring our passion every day.”- Christian Ofori-Boateng

CEOCFO: Mr. Ofori-Boateng, would you tell us about ChristianSteven Software?

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: ChristianSteven Software delivers advanced Business Intelligence (BI) solutions that solve mission-critical large enterprise needs and includes reporting, distribution, scheduling, dashboards and automating business processes.

Information and insight are delivered intelligently to all stakeholders including management, employees, partners and customers. Our solutions aim to unleash the power of your data and transform the way you do business.

CEOCFO: Have you been able to do that?

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: We have been able to do that but over the years we have specialized and focused on the delivery of Business Intelligence rather than the creation of it.

CEOCFO: I see on your site “automate, streamline, analyze and predict.” How does that work?

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: We focus on the consumer of business intelligence. The business intelligence consumer is an ordinary person, like you or I, working in an organization and living their life. They need information, records, charts and graphs, and they analyze data in order to make better decisions. We focus on the delivery of the information they want in a way they want it.

At work, they may go to a web portal to see some reports, graphs, charts, dashboards and KPIs. At home, it is simple things like downloading your utility bill from a website. The bill was generated from a database somewhere and formatted to look appealing and pre-analyzed so that it would be easy for the consumer to understand and respond to. Billing is a good example of dull, everyday reports that are highly essential for making both business and personal decisions. In the workplace, much of the “high-end” technology you would see include KPIs & Dashboards. Here people want to know when a particular KPI has been achieved and be able to monitor it in real-time. Other examples would be real-time tracking of sales, performance, and inventory.

The information needs to be accessible on all devices on any format, either by emails, Fax, or web portal or mobile phone to support and enhance successful decision-making. We created software that facilitates this, and by so doing, we have empowered the BI consumer to automate, streamline, analyze and predict.

CEOCFO: *Are many companies today looking beyond big data?*

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: If you were alive in the nineteen nineties, you would have tried to create a pie chart in an Excel spreadsheet. That was “Business Intelligence” and Excel gave you the ability to analyze the data in a way that allowed you to make critical decisions. We did not walk around with smartphones, looking at a graph of our spending habits that our bank had made available to us because, well, there were no smartphones! Today, after much evolution, people have Business Intelligence at their fingertips.

There are organizations today that are just creating dashboards, KPIs and static reports, and that market has ballooned since the mobile device era began. As an example, before now, once a week you would get your management report emailed to you. These were analyzed data numbers that were squirted out into PDF and emailed because that was the height of technology.

BI Consumers don't care how the data got to them or where it came from. They care about the analysis and how can they use it to enhance their lives through better decision-making. Now, they access real-time, analyzed information on mobile devices and, having done that, they want to be able to interact with the data – drill down through the bars of a graph or the sectors of a pie chart, for example. Only a few companies are enabling this. That ability to drill down in order to improve decision accuracy is key and that is where I think the leap forward in the future is going to be.

CEOCFO: *How have you made it simple, intuitive and easy to use?*

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: We have evolved with the industry. The report is designed not by us, but by the Business Intelligence analyst in an organization and they create the look and feel based on the business requirements and their audience profile. Our job is to automate the delivery of these reports and show them to the business using delivery methods that make it easy to consume. For example, the business may require a particular report to be emailed to client as an encrypted and password protected PDF on the 3rd Tuesday of every month except December. Another example: The monthly “Management Report” may consist of a number of individual reports drawn from multiple sources. The business may require these reports to be merged as tabs in an Excel workbook & password protected before being delivered to key stakeholders. Our software comes with an intuitive interface for the BI Analyst to click a few buttons to enable these things to happen. The BI consumer receives exactly what they have specified.

CEOCFO: *What are your current solutions?*

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: ChristianSteven Software recognizes that a typical enterprise has many types of business intelligence consumers, each with its own requirements and working styles. One size does not fit all, hence the need for a portfolio of solutions, each tailored to specific audiences along that spectrum. SQL-RD® (SQL Reports® Distribution) and CRD® (Crystal Reports® Distribution) are a set of best-of-breed platforms engineered to cover the "push" spectrum of corporate BI distribution needs. They provide delivery formats from sophisticated visualizations to raw data files.

As standalone products, these are best suited for companies struggling with the following challenges:

- Frustrated end-users complain that they don't get the reports that they need on time, or the reports are out of date or contain errors.
- There is no central mechanism to manage and distribute reports generated by dozens or hundreds of discrete applications.
- IT analysts spend too much time outside of regular business hours triggering periodic reports, maintaining scripts or fixing batch files.
- Increasing demand for reports usually requires proportional headcount increases.
- IT organizations spend too much time at month-end or quarter-end fixing problems with application interfaces and process breakdowns caused by human errors.
- Companies often face challenges with managing piecemeal and isolated BI distribution solutions, many of which may be homegrown. Organizations that have defined—or intend to define—a single corporate business intelligence distribution strategy for employees, partners, and customers will find CRD & SQL-RD a perfect fit for that need.

For a complete Business Intelligence suite, IntelliFront BI™ (Intelligence Frontier) represents a major leap forward in capability, ease-of-use, and cost efficiency for enterprises that have invested (or will invest) in a SQL Server® or Crystal Reports® portfolio for Business Intelligence. It will, in effect, supercharge Microsoft's & SAP's offerings and deliver unprecedented value for streamlining the borderless enterprise.

IntelliFront BI™ offers Real-Time Dashboards, KPIs, On-Demand Reporting, Data Driven Subscriptions, Business Process Automation and Report Scheduling on one platform. It caters for the full BI Continuum spectrum - the "push", the "pull" and everything in between. It is designed to enhance the capabilities of Microsoft®'s standard SQL Server SSRS and BI offering, and SAP's Crystal Reports solution at a fraction of the cost emphasizing self-help facilities for serving SQL Server reports, Crystal Reports and dashboards while continuing to support centralized management and control over Business Intelligence assets. It comes with advanced security features and a high availability architecture substantially mitigate corporate risk. IntelliFront BI™ doesn't replace existing investments. Instead, it amplifies and extends the power of Crystal Reports and SQL Server reporting at a much lower cost than equivalent Microsoft alternatives.

CEOCFO: *Many companies start off mobile and claim to have an edge because of that. How have you been able to be a long-time player and still be as up-to-date as anyone else and even ahead of most others?*

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: We started in 2002 with server and desktop applications. We focused our products in markets where the data needed to be kept in-house for compliance and other reasons, e.g. Healthcare, Banking & Financial Services. In the mobile world – especially with BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) on the rise – organizations need to be able to serve the information to authorized users irrespective of location and device, and this, the “borderless enterprise” is what we focus on today.

CEOCFO: *Do potential customers appreciate the history of ChristianSteven or is it about what can you do for me now?*

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: It is a mixture. Yes, there are those who feel that innovation can only be found in startups. They may not be entirely wrong. But there are many potential customers who appreciate the history and pedigree. The fact that we have been in business for over a decade, have been through the industry evolution pains & triumphs and we have successfully helped customers through those pains means something to many potential customers. We are BI specialists. It's what we do and, having done it over many years, we are able to bring a “best practice” approach to the table and help organizations avoid costly mistakes and problems they may otherwise have encountered.

CEOCFO: *Why choose ChristianSteven Software?*

Mr. Ofori-Boateng: Like every other software company out there, we have pretty good tech support and pretty good software & we provide these at pretty reasonable prices. So what makes us different?

We recognize that each contract is a long-term partnership, and our aim is to satisfy the business and productivity needs of the people in the organization – from the CIO & CFO, through the Business and Systems Analysts to the BI consumers. While skill, talent and knowledge are necessary for producing good results, passion is the energy that fuels truly extraordinary performance and partnerships. We approach each customer as a partner, and we approach each partnership with energy, focus and enthusiasm. We bring our passion every day.

The logo for ChristianSteven features the word "Christian" in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by "Steven" in a dark blue, uppercase, sans-serif font. The two words are joined together as a single brand name.