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Photos by Marc Bemsau

**Are Your Workforce Management Solution Sales Skyrocketing?**  
**Workforce management is more than just time and attendance for this integrator/software developer — it's the reason for the company's 230% sales growth this year.**

**Business Solutions, April 2006**

Written by [Dan Schell](#)

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It seems straightforward. You identify a need for a technological solution in a vertical market, you develop that solution, and the bucks roll in. Right? Of course, it's not that simple, as Joe Velazquez can attest. Velazquez is the technology and business development director for Business Analytics Corp. (BAC), a 3-year-old integrator/software developer that sells what it calls human capital management solutions. What is human capital management? Velazquez admits this is one of the new industry buzzwords used to describe workforce management solutions. But what are workforce management solutions? For BAC, that term describes its budgeting, forecasting, scheduling, dashboards, and time and attendance applications/modules. (For time and attendance, BAC also sells Accu-Time Systems time clocks and data collection terminals.)

BUSINESS ANALYTICS CORP.
2005 SALES GROWTH RATE: 210%
2006 PROJECTED SALES GROWTH RATE: 230%
EMPLOYEES: 10
(617) 259-1705
WWW.BIZ-ANALYTICS.COM
VERTICAL MARKETS: FINANCIAL, HEALTHCARE, HOSPITALITY, RETAIL
VENDOR: ACCU-TIME SYSTEMS

The need BAC identified was in the retail market, a familiar vertical to Velazquez and his partners. In fact, many of BAC's staff have between 10 and 20 years of experience developing and selling workforce management solutions for retailers. "In the enterprise retail market, we saw a need for the consolidation of distributed disconnected systems into integrated Web-based solutions," says Velazquez. In other words, his company's applications are designed to integrate with existing client systems such as those for payroll or POS (point of sale). And although BAC's time and attendance module is the most common product the company sells, Velazquez says he doesn't want to be known as just a time and attendance integrator. "Today, everybody offers some kind of time and attendance solution," he explains. "Customers want to know what makes your product different from the rest. For us, that difference was the level of business intelligence we built into all our applications as well as the ability to morph our standard programs into vertical-specific solutions."

**Do Your Solutions Have Business Intelligence?**

BAC's goal when designing its human capital management systems was to develop Web-based solutions that could be used by a variety of different clients and could be customized without changing baseline code. To do so, BAC built its applications on a service-oriented architecture (SOA), which enabled customization without affecting a client's ability to receive future software updates and revisions. The Web-based nature of the applications also meant BAC's staff rarely needed to go on-site to install a system, allowing more time for new business development. But being Web-based and customizable didn't make BAC's solutions unique. The company needed a bigger differentiator. "We wanted our applications to complete as much of a client's work as possible," explains Velazquez. "Thus, we wanted our solutions to have more business intelligence." As an example, he described the evolution of time and attendance software. With a paper-based time and attendance system, a customer manually counts employee hours from time cards and then applies those hours to a pay scale. The main benefit of using time and attendance programs is the hours and pay are calculated automatically, eliminating time and manual mathematical errors. Often, the advantages stop there, but BAC realized today's retailers (and other companies) want more. That's why BAC built in the ability for a customer to define key performance indicators (KPIs) such as total sales compared to labor dollars or actual hours worked compared to hours scheduled. BAC's dashboard system notifies a manager when real-time conditions fall outside of a KPI.

The integration of BAC's applications with customers' existing systems further accentuates the business intelligence the company promotes. Velazquez gives the example of a 400-store retailer using BAC's budgeting, dashboards, and time and attendance modules and separate payroll and POS systems. "Say the retailer wants to know when its labor costs are exceeding 5% of sales," Velazquez begins. "We can set up such a rule by integrating all of the systems and having a notification sent to managers when this condition occurs. Managers can then analyze and drill down through the data in the dashboard module to determine why this happened." To customize these kinds of solutions, BAC needs to know information such as payroll policies, union agreements, business practices to automate, workflow events that should be integrated, KPIs, and the management and business structure hierarchy.

### **Expand From Retail To New Markets**

"We initially intended to focus on enterprise retail clients," explains Velazquez. "However, as we started to develop the business, we realized there was a good fit for our modules outside of the retail vertical and for smaller clients. Now, we are partnering with vertical-specific integrators and software developers to make inroads into additional verticals."

One of those partnerships is with a company that sells scheduling software to long-term healthcare facilities. "This market has a different scheduling problem from retail," Velazquez says. "In this vertical, staffing requirements are driven by government regulations. These facilities have to have x amount of nurses or professional staff per x number of beds that are filled. Our time and attendance module integrates with the scheduling software."

BAC is developing a partnership with a company that provides software solutions for managing work orders for companies with large maintenance departments (e.g. utilities, municipalities, refineries). This company intends to integrate and privately label BAC's time and attendance application into its own software solution. The BAC system tracks the time of the maintenance workers who are completing work orders.

Hospitality (e.g. hotel) is one of the most recent verticals in which BAC is developing a partnership. In this market, BAC's forecasting, scheduling, and time and attendance products could integrate with a company's reservation application. For instance, if a specific room occupancy rate is forecasted for a specific time frame, the BAC system could tell how much labor will be needed. Further, it could determine the type of labor (e.g. laundry, front desk, restaurant, lifeguards) that will be needed.

### **Try The ASP Model — Again**

Since BAC is not exclusively targeting enterprise retail clients anymore, it now offers an ASP (application service provider) model option for delivering its programs. "The ASP market is ripe now since many smaller companies [e.g. fewer than 100 employees] are considering this delivery model," explains Velazquez. This is a shift from a few years ago when smaller companies couldn't afford ASPs because of the cost of bandwidth and servers. These customers were also concerned with the security of their databases. But the falling costs associated with ASP technology and the improved data security programs/procedures in use today have convinced many companies to adopt this model.

To find those customers, Velazquez says he uses his 20 years of experience in the workforce management software market. He also relies on his past contacts to develop partnerships with consulting firms, integrators, and software developers. Because of his history, he knows of customers who have workforce management solutions near the end of their life cycles that could benefit from being replaced. And when he has a new client, he always tells a potential partner that he wants to establish a long-term partnership instead of a single project agreement. He says it's those partnerships that generate the most business. And business is good. This year, the company expects 230% sales growth, much of which will come from one enterprise retail customer. However, it's the partnerships in other vertical markets that Velazquez expects will drive future growth for his company.

### **How Will You Choose A Time And Data Collection Terminal?**

In 2005, integrator/software developer Business Analytics Corp. (BAC) sold approximately 100 Accu-Time Systems (ATS) time and attendance terminals. This year, thanks to a huge retail project, BAC plans to sell five times that number. BAC sells Accu-Time's products along with its own BACWorkforce, a suite of human capital management products that include budgeting, forecasting, scheduling, time and attendance, and dashboard modules.

BAC's Technology and Business Development Director Joe Velazquez had worked with ATS terminals at a previous job. It was that exposure that led him to choose ATS terminals to resell at his company. "We chose ATS terminals for their metal cases — which are rare these days — and their ability to be programmed," Velazquez explains. "You don't have to send the terminals back to ATS to make customized programming changes that require firmware upgrades. And by customizing, I don't mean just choosing one of a set of predefined actions for a function key. You can define whatever function you need to give the user real-time data."

Another reason BAC chose ATS terminals is the two-finger biometric reader that can be included for time and attendance applications. One BAC customer using this style of terminal is a nursing home chain with 10,000 employees. This client was planning on replacing its paper-based time and attendance system with an automated solution by a competitor of ATS. However, the client had a strong union, and the implementation was never completed. That's when BAC approached the company through a partner. According to Velazquez, the

two-finger biometric of the ATS Cyber Series terminals was deemed more acceptable by users because it didn't carry the fear of fingerprint solutions nor the "mark of the beast" concern associated with hand geometry biometrics. The ATS Cyber Series terminal includes an audible indicator for a successful punch-in or punch-out and a 4-line by 20-character LCD. It also includes up to 1 MB of RAM and can be programmed via ATS' Universal Command Set modules, C programming language, or a third-party custom application package.

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