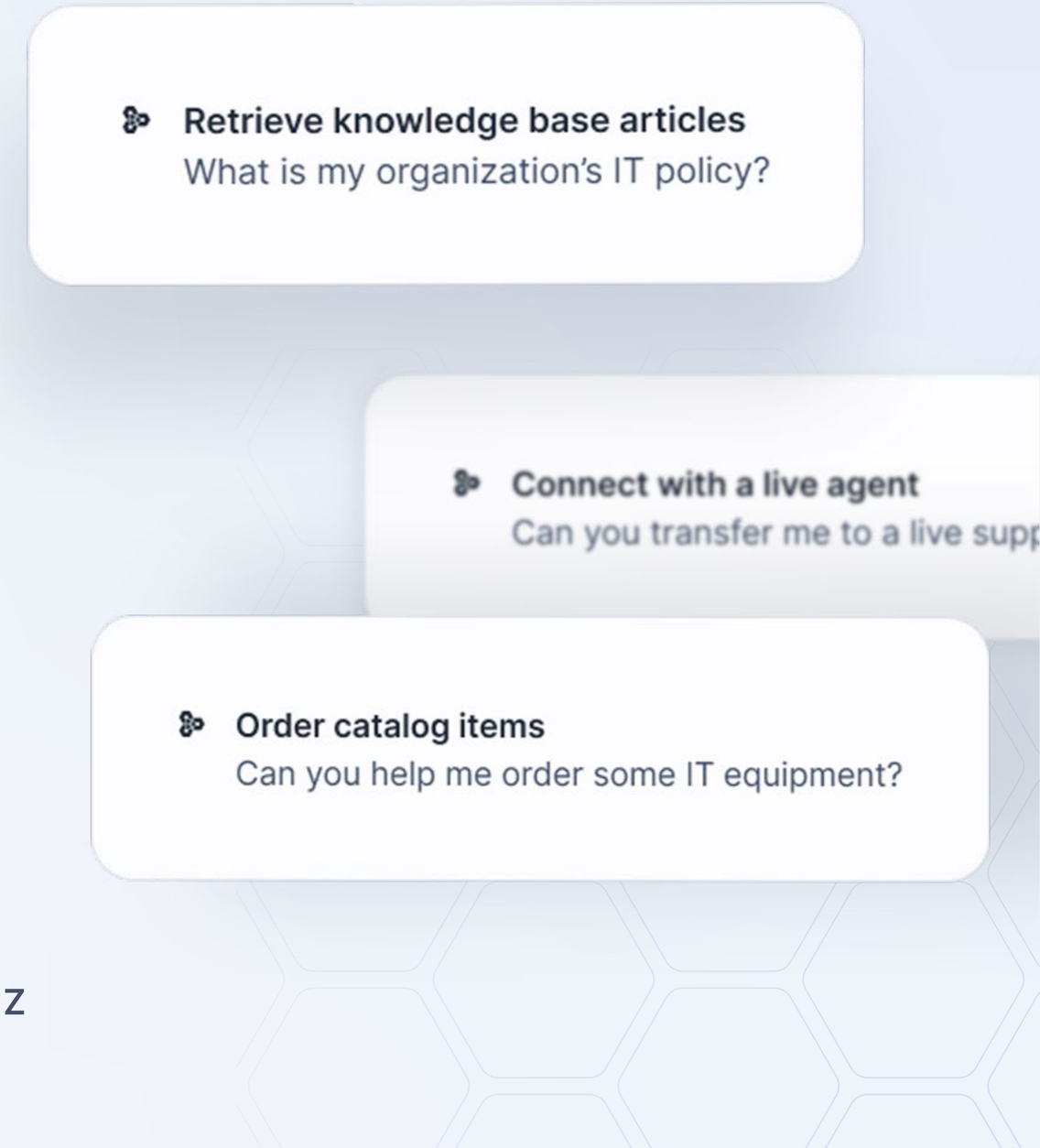
State of AI in BI

Transformation at the Consumption Layer



DATALOGZ

Table of Contents

2026: A Crossroads for Data & Analytics

Welcome to the State of AI in BI Report 2026. In our second annual report, we draw on interviews and data from 70+ data and analytics leaders to explore how BI is evolving in the AI era, and provide insights for organizations as they build teams, processes, and capabilities to future-proof organizations.

Data and analytics operate in a paradox. On a tactical level, the insights produced by processes like business intelligence (BI) provide unprecedented visibility across an organization, and accelerate decision-making. However, on the executive level, data and analytics often struggle to show value and achieve top-tier status on the corporate priority list.

AI will change the equation. Thanks to the rapid acceleration of AI, more users will have access to automated decision-making. At the same time, the demand for rapid AI transformation is pushing data and analytics to the top of the agenda inside many boardrooms. Finally, insights and value will go hand-in-hand.

But a major risk is lurking inside most analytics environments. Without a sound foundation of clean data, a source of truth, and proper context, the considerable momentum generated by AI is in danger of stalling out. In the AI era, trust must be earned.

Top Findings

BI Governance was a major challenge cited by all interviewees

AI compounds **BI Sprawl**

Fewer BI reports will win the AI era

AI success is built on the **semantic layer**

Evolution of Business Intelligence (BI)

BI sits at the consumption layer, where most business users interact with data. The majority of enterprises use 3 or more BI tools.

Business Intelligence

“Analysts can build me a report.”

Business user interacts with:

IT department & data analyst

Status:

Achieved

Self Service

“I can build a report myself”

Business user interacts with:

BI Tools

Status:

Making Progress

Agentic

“AI can build me a report.”

Business user interacts with:

Agent

Status:

Just Getting Started

AI transforms BI

Toward Agentic BI

The self-service era saw massive growth of BI usage, but it never delivered on the true promise of making every non-technical user a fully empowered and independent data analyst.

The AI era is poised to finally achieve the goals of self-service by automating report creation and analysis, while unlocking new insights through enhanced predictive capabilities and sheer scale of insights.

From Business Intelligence to Decision Intelligence

Old Workflow

“What does the dashboard show? “

Business user: Must master BI tools, build reports & dashboards, interpret results, draws insights, presents analysis, persuades team

New Workflow

“What do I do next?”

- **Business user:** decides they want a report, and inputs prompt.

- **Agentic BI:** Selects data, creates dashboards, analyzes data,and provides recommendations, in minutes instead of hours.

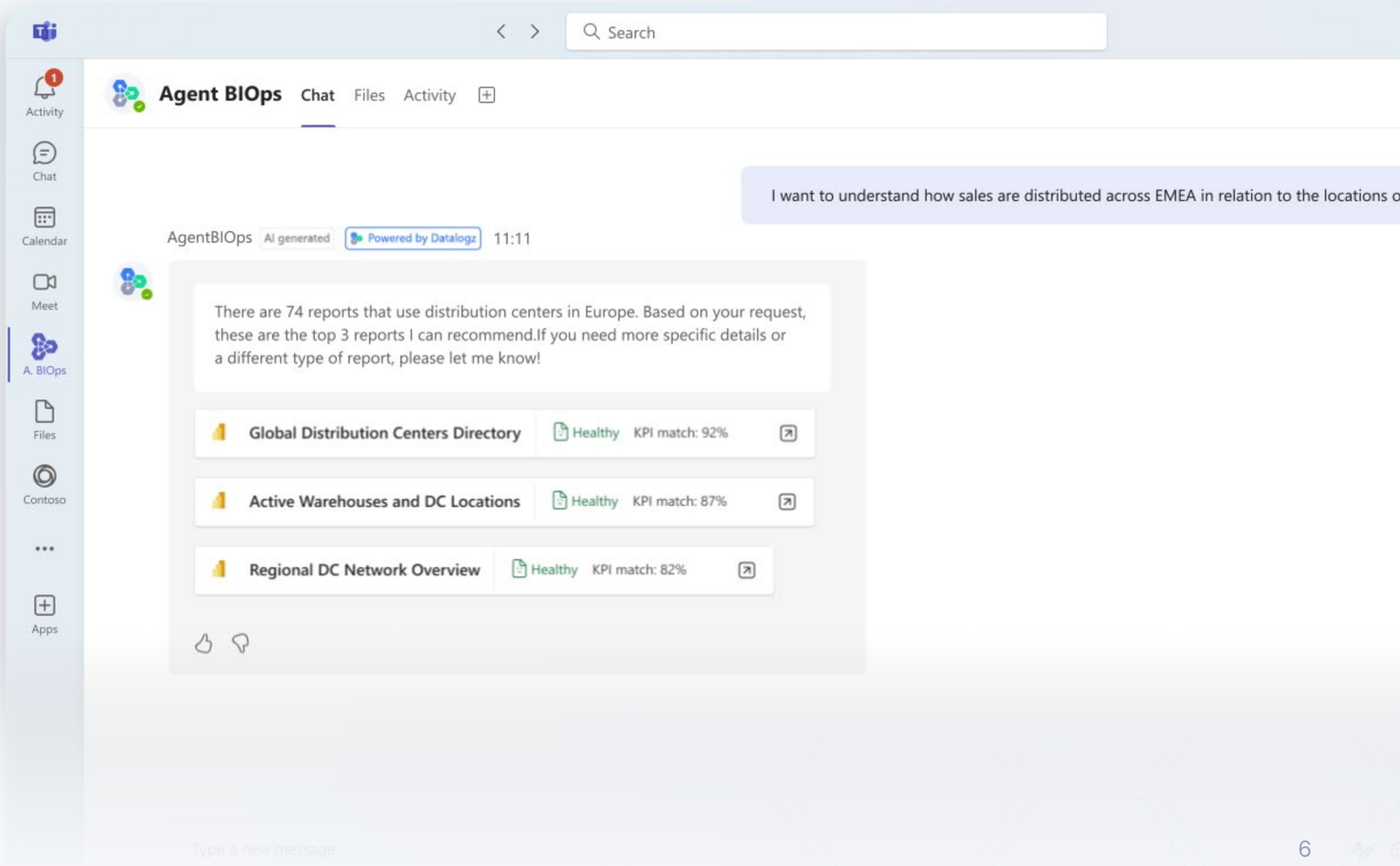
- **Business user:** Identifies additional factors, and prompts more reports to spin up, gets recommendations for decision-making. Presents data and persuades the team

Talk to the Data

Traditional BI was a one-way conversation. People grab data, make a report, and then put it to use.

In the AI era, **BI is a two-way street**. Users query the data in natural language using chatbots to dive deeper, and unlock new insights instantly by:

- **Discovering connections** between data
- **Uncovering trends** from diffuse datasets
- Creating new reports with **more detail**
- **Researching the data lineage**



BI Sprawl is unsolved today.

Most enterprises have 3+ BI tools, and thousands of reports and dashboards.

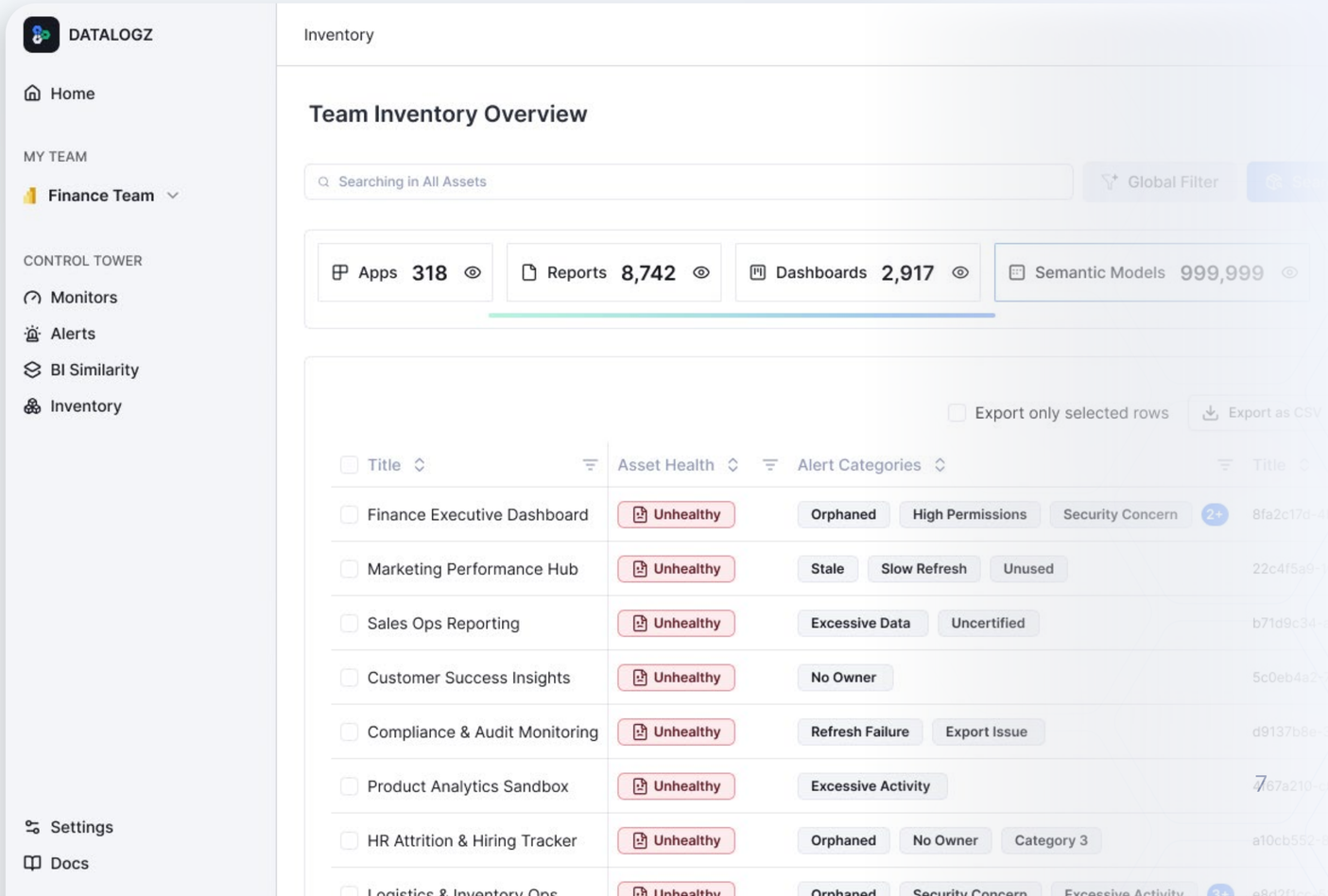
BI environments are growing, but inside you'll find chaos piling up:

- **Messy Environment:** Old, outdated, duplicate, shadow data
- **Governance Problems:** Conflicting definitions & reports
- **Security Issues:** Poor access controls, privacy violations
- **Wasted Compute:** Mismanaged resources, overages
- **Costs:** Dollars, Decisions, and Trust in Data

AI makes it worse.

- Agentic BI will bring more data, more access, more reports, and more complex decisions
- Automated reports face less scrutiny from non-technical users. Decisions get made faster and at higher volume, leaving fewer opportunities to flag problems.
- Without guardrails, errors scale quickly. Conflicting metrics in one report quickly becomes the false premise for dozens of decisions

> *"You don't want to build an AI chatbot that accidentally exposes everyone's salary in the company, so you need to have guardrails around what AI capabilities can access."*
>
> **—Digital Transformation Leader**



The Foundation for Agentic BI

> *"It's that age-old, problem of going into a meeting with two executives, and they're both looking at what they think is the same KPI or same number, but, they actually have different numbers for that KPI. That's a nightmare scenario for any analyst, and I can see AI, Gen AI, helping us in that scenario, absolutely."*
>
> **— VP, Insurance Giant**

Fewer Reports & Dashboards

In past eras, more reports gave us BI Sprawl.

In the AI era, the premium will be placed on **optimization**. Organizations will have fewer reports, and agree on the right set of reports to serve all.

Unification & Alignment

Plan capacity to control compute costs, and map usage against other tools and data functions.

Establish policies for privacy, security, and regulations, and enforce them continuously over time.

Data Quality & Governance

Underlying BI data must be accurate, up-to-date, consistent, and contextualized.

Organizations will have standardized definitions, metrics, rules, and lineage.

Resource & Access Monitoring

The AI will mark the end of siloed data.

Underlying BI data must come together in a central source of truth that crosses all data sources, teams, and tools.

The AI Reality Today

“There seems to be this magic bullet mentality that AI is going to just look at your data and tell you exactly what you need to do, and what you need to do to improve, and what to action.

I guess it can do some of that to a degree, but still, it only knows what it knows, right? It doesn’t know, like, what’s going on outside of itself.”

— Sr. Director of Analytics & Business Intelligence

“A lot of companies right now are putting tremendous amounts of resources into AI. Behind the scenes, when you talk to them, the results aren’t really what they’re expecting. Or they’re learning along the way and saying, wow, you know what? Maybe our data quality isn’t all that good. Maybe our way that we’re defining different KPIs are in conflict.”

— Former Fortune 500 data executive

“The C-suite or the board is constantly thinking about, ‘What are you doing with AI? Where am I seeing it?’

Everybody’s expecting an ROI, it’s just a question of whether they’re expecting it now or later.”

— Head of Data Science & Analytics

“Now business people can actually ask questions in natural language to be able to get the answer to their questions. What we have to solve from an organizational perspective is to help business users ask the right questions.”

— Analytical Lead, Tech Giant

“Show me your lineage, and I’ll show you my lineage. If it matches, then yes, I trust what you have. And then you can trust what I have. Until that is in place, you can’t trust it.”

— Data Leader

The Semantic Layer

Where AI and BI Governance Meet

The Rosetta Stone for Enterprise Data

As organizations race to adopt AI, many data and analytics leaders are turning their focus to the semantic layer, where businesses operationalize their priority data to gain an advantage. Sitting between the storage layer (warehouses, data lakes) and consumption (BI, analytics), it is here where organizations establish a single view of data across an organization, and a source for standardization of data, definitions, and metrics

Connecting Business Units

Most organizations struggle with fragmentation between data sources, departments, tools, and even individual users. A classic problem: Different teams create different reports, and can’t agree on the right
metric.

The semantic layer mediates between all of this conflict, ensuring that all decisions start from the same data baseline.

Semantic Layer for AI

In traditional BI, the semantic layer transits and filters data from the warehouse to the business.

In the AI era, data will move out from the semantic layer in multiple directions:

- Report & dashboard creation
- Natural language queries to dig deeper into data
- Training LLMs
- Decision engineering

BI Transforms AI

Context is Key

Trusted, actionable metadata is the foundation for generative AI.

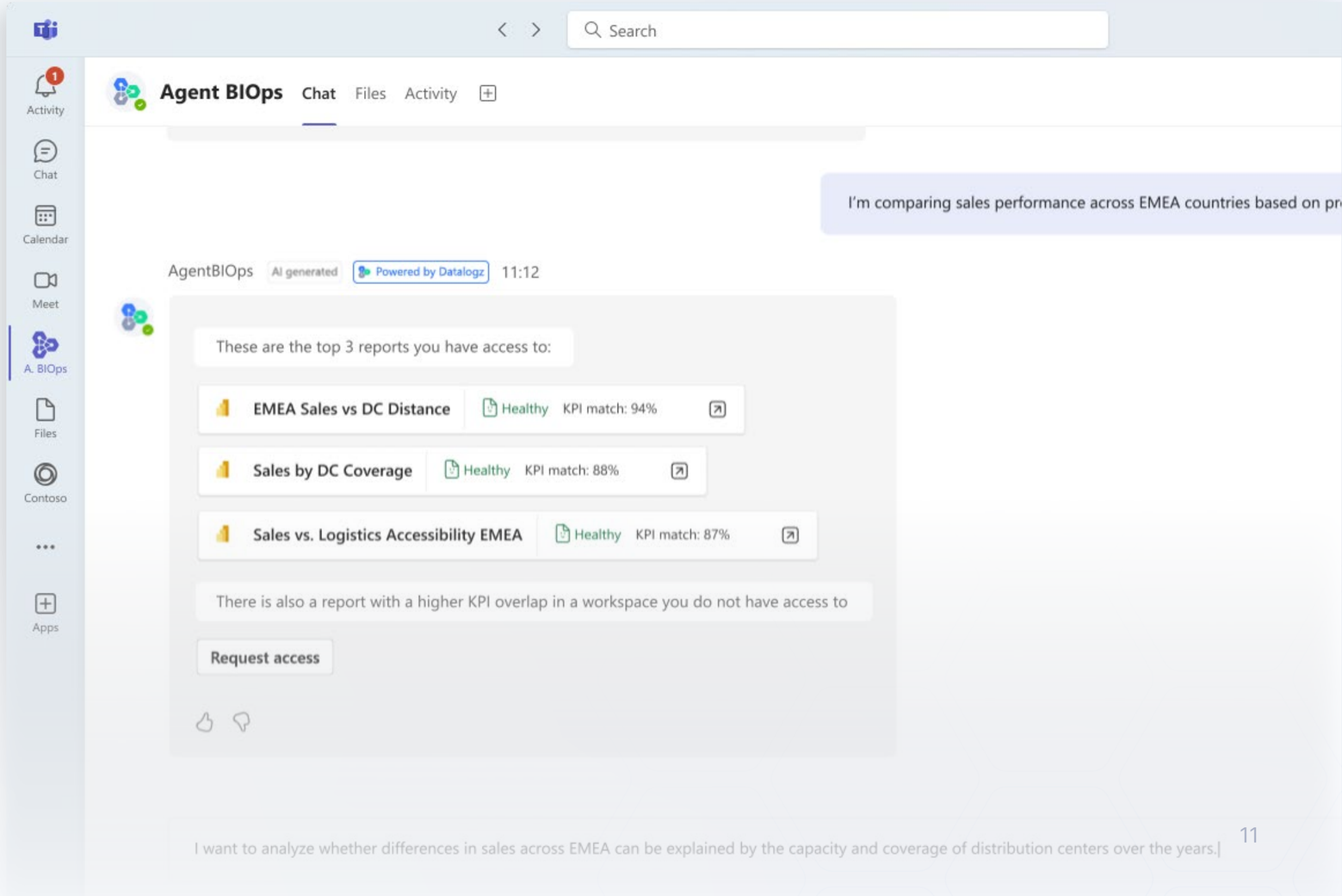
But without proper context, LLMs can hallucinate, or pull the wrong data.

That's how BI Sprawl overwhelms AI.

Sound governance for BI is critical to help LLMs get to the right BI data, and validate it.

How BI context helps AI

- **Trustworthy Content** is prioritized
- **Relationships** are tracked, including lineage and similarity.
- **Clarity** in what is used and trusted is delivered.
- The **signal** is separated from the noise.



The New Metrics for Success

At its heart, AI is about data. And once you start a new data program, it won't be long until someone asks,

"How are you measuring it?"

In the AI era, that's changing. With the focus shifting from reports and dashboards to decisions, new metrics for success will take root inside organizations.

"Our level of trust across the organization in our data and our, reports and visuals is probably around an 8 or a 9. We're highly trusted, and we take that really seriously."

— Data Analytics Leader

- **Data-driven:** How many decisions did AI + BI enable?
- **Time-to-decision:** How long from request to decision?
- **Productivity:** Speed of development, deployment
- **Cost of a decision:** Time, effort, compute
- **Trust:** Does your team use and believe data?
- **Customer Benefit:** Productivity & Time Savings
- **The valuable metric we never knew:** "Who are our top customers?"

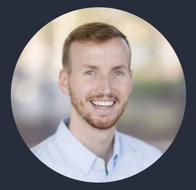
What will you be proud of in Q1 2027?

To get where you want to go, it's useful to imagine what it will be like when you get there. So we asked the above question to many interviewees.

Some were in the walk stage, and wanted to crawl. Others saw themselves getting ready to run. More than one wanted a bigger team to get everything done. AI may be able to help them.

If the past year has taught us anything, we know that the future will be here faster than it may seem now. AI is racing ahead, with expanded capabilities and new tools emerging explore constantly. We know that BI will continue to be incredibly useful to help businesses find trends and make connections. We truly believe this will be a net positive.

Those of us who can see the future coming also have a responsibility to prepare for it. Without governance and optimization, we won't see the predicted gains from AI bear fruit. This is the greatest opportunity to advance human progress in decades. Let's make the most of it.



Logan Havern
Founder & CEO
Datalogz

About this Report

A look at our sources and methods.

We talked to 70+ data leaders

CDAO | SR. BI Analyst | CISO | Sr. Director, Commercial Digital Products | Executive Director | CEO | Delivery Lead | Global Head of Data and BI | Sr. BI Engineer | Director of Business Intelligence | Staff Data Analyst | Software developer | Vice President | Director, Business Analytics | Director of Customer Analytics | SVP Data Science & Engineering | Data Analytics Manager | Senior Business Analyst | Senior Data Analyst | CDO | Head of Analytics | Chief Data Scientist | Enterprise ML Architect | Global Head of Data and BI | Technical Specialist | Client Solutions Partner | Senior Manager DS | Director | Other

From Companies in

Fortune 1,000 Banks and Financial Services | Fortune 40 Pharma and Healthcare | Large Retail and Consumer Brands | Other Enterprises and Niche Players | Global Technology and Media Giants | Consulting Giants

Glossary of Terms

Agentic BI

The shift from manual BI report creation and analysis to a new paradigm where humans task automated agents to complete end-to-end report creation and provide recommendations for decisions.

Business Intelligence

The tech-enabled process of collecting and analyzing business data to provide actionable insights that drive decision-making and improve operations.

BI Sprawl

The tech-enabled process of collecting and analyzing business data to provide actionable insights that drive decision-making and improve operations.

Context

The underlying reference data that helps humans and autonomous agents understand the right data to prioritize, use, and trust.

Semantic Layer

The data layer between warehouse and business intelligence that serves as a source of truth for data definitions, metrics, and business logic.

Is your BI environment ready for AI?

Book a demo!

Thank You!

to all who contributed, all who read, and all who shared.

datalogz.io

hello@datalogz.io