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RESEARCH

# BI AND AI INNOVATION WITH ZOHO ANALYTICS

ANALYST

Alexander H. Wurm

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Zoho Analytics' latest update combines new business intelligence features with AI innovation. To analyze the value delivered, Nucleus spoke with multiple early access customers to investigate early returns and prospective applications. Customers reported significant gains in operational efficiency, over 3400 hours in annual time savings, top line revenue growth, and profitability expansion by leveraging new capabilities, such as enhanced visualization options, predictive analytics, and prebuilt connectors.

## OVERVIEW

On September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Zoho released an updated version of its Analytics Suite, delivering improved business intelligence, data management capabilities, and AI advancements. To examine the value delivered through this update, Nucleus spoke with multiple early access customers and took note of their targeted applications and early returns.

### ZOHO ANALYTICS

Zoho Analytics is a business intelligence and analytics platform that offers a modular framework with components for Self-Service BI, Embedded BI, data management, and data science. The vendor's analytics suite provides the tools for organizations to extract insights from their data using an intuitive drag-and-drop interface, with support for multiple report types and data sources. The platform's capabilities encompass data integration, preparation, visualization, augmented analytics, and collaborative analytics.

### NEW CAPABILITIES HIGHLIGHTED BY CUSTOMERS

Zoho introduced over 100 updates in its new release. The following features discussed represent the innovations most commonly cited by early access customers.

- **New visualizations.** Zoho introduced multiple new chart types including geo maps layers, racing charts, Sankey diagrams, and tree charts. Each customer Nucleus spoke to the value of these new visualization options. Geo maps layers allowed users to analyze business operations by regions, providing a better understanding of market opportunities, local demand, and the effectiveness of marketing spend. Race charts enabled users to evaluate the seasonality of products and services while Sankey diagrams and tree charts helped evaluate product classes and hierarchies.
- **Pre-built connectors.** Zoho added over 25 pre-built connectors to its portfolio. Early access customers used these connectors to unlock new use cases and analytic projects. Connectors to Magento and Stripe enable customers to set up ecommerce business lines while connectors to QuickBooks and Monday.com allow users to analyze the profitability of variable services and align project timelines with operational data.
- **Dashboard tabs and movable elements.** Zoho introduced tabs for dashboards with multiple pages, removing the friction for analyses involving multiple products or geographies. This provides regular time savings for users tasked with regularly reviewing dashboards. Additionally, the ability to copy and paste dashboard elements simplifies development and allows users to better focus on analysis.

- **AutoML.** Zoho introduced automated machine learning (AutoML) model building with capabilities for feature engineering, hyperparameter tuning, and model analysis. Early access customers are using this capability to improve churn prediction models and evaluate correlations and feature importance across customer health metrics like engagement rate, time of service, support tickets, and company size.

## KEY BENEFITS

Early access customers saw multiple tangible benefits from September's update to Zoho Analytics, including user time savings from additional visualizations and dashboard tabs, revenue growth and profit margin expansion, and improved partner and investor buy-in:

- **User time savings.** Each customer Nucleus interviewed for this report stressed the value of Zoho's new visualizations and dashboarding quality of life improvements in the form of user time savings. New visualizations like race charts, Sankey diagrams, and tree charts provide a better understanding of certain analyses, and tabs have allowed organizations to better navigate through dashboards across products, regions, and other relevant hierarchies. Existing Zoho users can expect 20 to 40 minutes of time saving per day with these quality-of-life improvements alone.
- **Revenue growth and profit-margin expansion.** Early access customers saw top- and bottom-line growth following adoption of Zoho's new analytics features. Pre-built connectors to Magento and Stripe delivered with the Zoho Analytics update allowed an equipment manufacturer to actualize its ecommerce vision, providing a new B2C experience that lets anyone order their products. Furthermore, geo map layers and data bucketing tools have enabled early access customers to better understand demand sources, and optimize revenue given the costs associated with its acquisition. Select customers have also used Zoho's AutoML to better investigate lead sources and evaluate the success of marketing spend.
- **Improved partner and investor buy-in.** Although the value of analytics is typically predicated on its ability to drive insights for the organization itself, customers have also cited its importance in securing valuable partnerships and investments. An energy solutions provider noted such in its partnership with providers like Tesla and

**Tabs in Zoho Analytics dashboards drove over 3400 hours in annual time savings**

LG. The availability of precise demand data gave partners confidence in the accuracy of the organization's orders and gave the energy solutions provider priority access to lucrative products like Tesla's Powerwall 3. Additionally, analytics around job cost and profitability enabled the organization to better secure buy-in from investors as it scaled operations.

## CUSTOMER PROFILES

The following profiles are based on Nucleus interviews with organizations that used the latest version of Zoho Analytics in early access:

### EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER

This equipment manufacturer is a supplier of replacement parts harnessing data analytics to promote operational visibility and enhance its decision-making. With a presence across multiple continents, the organization serves both business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) markets. Prior to Zoho Analytics' recent update, the organization had already seen a substantial return on investment with the technology and has since extended the value delivered.

As an early access user of Zoho Analytics' latest update, the organization has been utilizing the platform to streamline its reporting and data visualization processes, which are critical for tracking sales, inventory, and customer trends across different markets. Prior to the update, the company faced extensive manual data handling, requiring effort to manage over 20 different reports for market analysis. The introduction of multi-tab dashboards has reduced friction, consolidating sales data by country, product type, and sales rep performance into a single, more manageable interface. The organization projects that this feature alone will amount to over 3400 hours of time savings per year across the organization's 40 users. The organization was also able to unlock a new B2C business model using Zoho's new connectors to Magento and Stripe for its ecommerce business project. Going forward, the equipment manufacturer mentioned specific interest in using new visualizations including racing charts, Sankey charts, geo map layers, and tree charts to better represent and analyze product hierarchies, sales seasonality, and export markets.

**Zoho enabled a new  
B2C business model  
with its connectors to  
Stripe and Magento**

## SAAS PROVIDER


This software provider offers cloud-based e-sourcing and procurement solutions to over 160 customers globally. The organization has leveraged Zoho Analytics for many years to enhance its data management and analytical capabilities across business functions. As an early access customer for Zoho Analytics' most recent update, its main objective was to refine its customer churn prediction model by identifying the key drivers of customer dissatisfaction, such as high volumes of support tickets or low engagement in procurement events and auctions. By leveraging Zoho's AutoML capabilities, the company aims to automate the analysis of these variables, providing its Customer Success department with predictive insights to preemptively address at-risk customers. Additionally, the organization is utilizing Zia Insights for diagnostics to better understand the underlying causes of performance spikes and drops, especially in the context of sales renewals and growth relative to targets. This is particularly valuable for sales teams, as it helps them evaluate lead sources and align efforts with growth objectives. The company is also exploring Zoho's data bucketing tools to replace existing deluge scripts, aiming to streamline data segmentation and improve analysis accuracy. Moving forward, the organization plans to make use of Zoho's ETL tools to consolidate data from various spreadsheets and sources, further supporting its data-driven initiatives and the continued enhancement of its AutoML-based forecasting tools.

**"If you know your data  
you know your  
customers and you can  
grow your business"**

## ENERGY SOLUTIONS PROVIDER

This energy storage provider based in the Southeastern United States, offers customized solar and energy storage installations through partnerships with industry leaders like Tesla and LG. The organization leverages Zoho's analytics and visualization tools to optimize its business processes and drive bottom line profitability. With connectors feeding data from Zoho CRM, and Projects, alongside new connectors from QuickBooks, and Monday.com, the organization has achieved comprehensive visibility into its job costing, profitability tracking, and project management. By integrating data tethered to its solar operations and job costs, the company has improved its confidence in profitability predictions.

Additionally, as an early adopter of Zoho's geo map layers and data bucketing tools, the solar installation company has been able to better understand market segments and customer behavior. The geo map layers have allowed for real-time visualization of solar and



storage installations across the geographies it serves, helping the company identify installation hotspots and create targeted marketing campaigns that drive customer interest and adoption. By coupling these insights with data bucketing techniques, the organization can segment customer data more effectively, analyze average pricing trends across different geographies, and refine its go-to-market strategies. Additionally, the company is exploring Zia Insights and other AI-driven tools to gain diagnostic insights into job costing and profitability, ensuring smarter operational decisions that align with growth objectives. Looking ahead, the company is particularly focused on enhancing its collaboration with key partners like Tesla, where demand forecasting for the Powerwall 3 is essential for securing more orders. The ability to present current analytics to partners and investors has proved crucial, as it helps build confidence in the organization's operational capabilities and future growth potential.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Analytics technology, more than anything else, is tied to the business outcomes it unlocks. Zoho has recognized this role and delivered updates to its analytics suite that help drive top and bottom-line growth through both traditional BI components and AI innovation. Features like pre-built connectors, geo map layers, and data buckets enable businesses to optimize their marketing strategies, enhance demand forecasting, and expand their market reach. The integration of AI-driven analytics further allows for more accurate predictive modeling and automated decision-making, reducing the time to insight. Zoho's continuous enhancements to its platform ensure that organizations can easily adapt to changing business needs and leverage data more effectively. This strategic focus on both usability and advanced analytics capabilities helps companies not only understand their current performance but also anticipate future challenges and opportunities.