

Data & Analytics Retreat Oct. 2025 - Agenda

DRAFT as of October 7th, 2025 (details may change)

WELCOME

Wednesday, Oct. 15th

19:00	Welcome Reception at Burg Schwarzenstein <i>Burg Schwarzenstein, Rosengasse 32, 65366 Geisenheim, Tel.: +49-6722-99500</i>
19:30	Dinner at Burg Schwarzenstein Excellent food, wine and conversation with old and new friends.  

WORKSHOP DAY 1

Market Trends, M&A, Corporate Strategy

Thursday, Oct. 16th

09:00	Doors open <i>Burg Schwarzenstein, Rosengasse 32, 65366 Geisenheim</i>
Market Trends	
09:30	1 Key Trends That Are Shaping the Data & Analytics Market – Carsten Bange, BARC After a welcome and program overview, Carsten presents BARC's observations, research results and opinion on the changes that occurred over the last turbulent years. Part of the session will be the general overview and analyst evaluation of trends shown in BARC's trend matrix. We will highlight which trends from our observation have developed a stronger or weaker influence on buying behavior across the D&A space, from data management to AI and CPM.

Is AI Ready to Decide? Exploring the Limits of Generative and Agentic AI	
10:30	2 Decision Automation and Generative AI – Good or Bad? – <i>Mike Ferguson, Intelligent Business Strategies</i> For some years now companies have been making use of Machine learning models and rules engines to automatically make decisions on streaming data and also data at rest. However more recently, we have seen the emergence of generative AI which is raised the question as to whether or not this opens up a new approach to decision automation. If it is a viable option, then the emergence of AI agents could open up a new wave of decision automation. But what are the pros and cons of using the probabilistic reasoning versus deterministic rule based decisioning? Should one replace the other or is there a way to combine the two? This session looks at this problem and explores the implications of it on introducing decision automation into your software products.
11:15	3 Beyond the Philosophy: Deploying AI That Works, Not AI That Thinks – <i>Donald Farmer, TreeHive Strategy</i> The AI industry suffers from a problem of perfectionism. While teams debate whether AI can achieve "true" empathy, understanding, or intelligence, organizations miss immediate opportunities to deploy systems that are simply good enough to create real value. This session challenges the pursuit of AI perfection and champions a more pragmatic approach: building systems that meet practical needs rather than theoretical ideals. Drawing parallels to data quality and analytics initiatives that never achieve perfection, Donald argues that "good enough" AI can deliver transformative results today. We will explore how to identify the right threshold of capability for their specific context, whether that's customer service bots with adequate emotional intelligence, recommendation engines with reasonable accuracy, or decision support tools with sufficient business understanding. Through real-world examples and practical frameworks, this talk shows how to escape analysis paralysis, deploy AI systems that serve immediate needs, and iterate toward excellence rather than waiting for perfection.
12:00	Lunch
Strategic Foundations for AI-Driven Innovation	
13:15	4 Lessons from the Leading Edge: Best Practices in AI and GenAI Adoption – <i>Shawn Rogers and Merv Adrian, BARC</i> This presentation shares key findings from the latest BARC report, "Lessons from the Leading Edge," with a focus on what sets successful AI adopters apart. We explore the specific needs and pain points

	of enterprise clients, highlight critical success factors in data management and AI implementation, and discuss how vendors can better support organizations in realizing business value from AI. Gain actionable insights to align your products, services, and go-to-market strategies with evolving customer demands and position your offerings at the forefront of AI innovation.
13:45	5 Your AI Is Guessing: The Hidden Cost of Missing Context – Timm Grosser, BARC As AI evolves from simple prompts to autonomous agents managing complex workflows, one truth becomes unmistakably clear: context isn't optional — it's foundational. Without a robust knowledge framework, AI outputs become unpredictable, untrustworthy, irreproducible, and ultimately unusable at scale. In this session, we'll uncover the key pillars of knowledge management within organizations aiming to leverage AI — supported by insights from industry practitioners. You'll explore the role of Context Engineering and understand why a Metadata Fabric is essential for making AI systems truly scalable, explainable, and enterprise-ready.
Market Disruption and Vendor Strategy	
14:15	6 AI First Approach to D&A Software – Disruption or Evolution? – Panel discussion moderated by Carsten Bange The data & analytics landscape is undergoing a profound transformation driven by generative AI and large language models. New players are entering the market with an "AI-first" mindset, building software from the ground up around AI capabilities rather than adding them later. This panel explores how these developments are reshaping the D&A ecosystem and what strategic implications they hold for established vendors.
15:00	Break
M&A and Investments	
15:15	7 M&A and Financing Activity in the Data & Analytics Market – Carsten Bange In 2025, the tech sector saw a wave of mergers and acquisitions fueled by strategic bets on AI, data infrastructure, and cybersecurity. AI startups led the way, securing 53% of global VC funding and 64% in the U.S. Notable deals included a \$10 billion round for Databricks and Salesforce's \$8 billion acquisition of Informatica—both underscoring the drive to boost AI and data management capabilities. This session reviews the year's most impactful acquisitions and funding rounds, from major transactions to emerging players. We'll highlight market segments drawing investor interest and examine what these trends signal for the future of the data & analytics industry.

Market Trends	
16:00	8 Trending Now: Three Hot Topics Every D&A Vendor Should Be Watching – Shawn Rogers, BARC Every year brings new buzzwords—but which trends are actually reshaping the data & analytics market? In this session, we spotlight three of the most talked-about topics currently driving conversations among customers, investors, and competitors alike: GenAI and agents, augmented & automated analytics as well as using unstructured data and multi-modal analytics. Backed by fresh BARC research and market observations, we'll separate substance from hype and explore what these developments mean specifically for software vendors. From product strategy to go-to-market messaging, this session offers a reality check—and a roadmap—for staying relevant in a fast-moving space.
16:45	Summary of Day 1 and End of Day 1 Sessions
17:30	Walk Through the Vineyards to Schloss Johannisberg
18:00	Guided Tour with Wine Tasting and Dinner at Schloss Johannisberg <i>Schloss Johannisberg, 65366 Geisenheim-Johannisberg</i>  
22:30	Return to Burg Schwarzenstein on foot or by taxi

WORKSHOP DAY 2 Go-To-Market & Product Strategy Special Session for CPM vendors

Friday, Oct. 17th

The Marketing Revolution: AI changes everything!

09:00 **9 LLMs Are the New Gatekeepers: Is Your Brand Ready?**
– Axel Bange, B-Eye-Media

AI-powered language models like ChatGPT and Gemini are transforming how customers find products and services online. Traditional SEO is no longer enough - LLMs act as “answer engines,” deciding which brands get surfaced in conversations and recommendations. In this session, we’ll explore what this shift means for software companies, how AI-driven discovery works, and the practical steps you can take to ensure your brand stays visible and relevant in an AI-first world.

09:30 **10 BARC Research and Events Agenda 2026 Considering the Marketing Revolution**
– Roland Hölscher & Carsten Bange, BARC

Roland and Carsten will give an overview of the BARC research and events agenda for 2026 and how BARC implements new AI-based products. This session also opens the opportunity to ask questions and bring in your needs and ideas for new research and events.

Market Trends

10:00 **11 Benchmarking BI & CPM Software in the Real World: The BARC Benchmark Explained**
– Thomas Zeuschler, BARC

The BARC Benchmark introduces a transparent, reproducible approach to evaluating the productivity and scalability of BI, Analytics, and Corporate Performance Management (CPM) software under real-world conditions. It complements traditional feature-based assessments by measuring how efficiently and predictably platforms perform with realistic data volumes, user loads, and model complexity.

This presentation outlines the scoring model and methodology, shares initial results comparing Microsoft Power BI and Qlik, and highlights key insights into performance differences. The findings show how responsiveness, interaction efficiency, and scalability directly influence user productivity and total cost of ownership.

The BARC Benchmark is set to evolve into an open, community-driven standard for objective, data-based software evaluation.

10:30 **Break**

Multi-Agents	
10:45	12 Governing the Ungovernable: Managing Multi-Agent AI Teams in Enterprise – Donald Farmer, TreeHive Strategy While single AI agents create governance headaches, multi-agent systems multiply the complexity exponentially. When autonomous agents collaborate, negotiate, and make collective decisions, traditional compliance frameworks break down entirely. This session tackles the emerging challenge of governing AI agent teams that can restructure workflows, reallocate resources, and modify their own behaviors without human oversight. Donald Farmer explores real-world scenarios where agent teams have grown beyond their intended scope, the unique risks of emergent behaviors in collaborative AI systems, and practical frameworks for maintaining control without stifling innovation. We will look at how to design accountability for distributed AI decision-making, implement monitoring systems that track inter-agent communications, and establish protocols for when agent teams drift from their original objectives. Through case studies from financial services, healthcare, and supply chain management, this talk reveals why multi-agent governance requires fundamentally different approaches than single-agent oversight and provides actionable strategies for organizations deploying collaborative AI systems at scale.
Regional Markets	
11:30	13 The D&A Market in the Middle East – Andreas Simon, Simon Consulting The Middle East is emerging as a dynamic region for data & analytics, fueled by national digital strategies, ambitious investment programs, and a growing appetite for AI-driven innovation. This session explores key market trends, regional priorities, and what makes the Middle Eastern D&A landscape unique—from government-led initiatives to rapid enterprise adoption and evolving vendor opportunities.
12:15	Lunch
Option 1: Main Program	
13:20	14 AI Readiness of Databases – Merv Adrian, BARC As AI adoption accelerates, databases are under pressure to evolve. In this session, renowned analyst Merv Adrian examines what it means for a database to be “AI-ready”—from architectural foundations and workload flexibility to integration with vector search, LLMs, and real-time analytics. Drawing on decades of market insight, he explores which database technologies are rising to the challenge, what gaps remain, and how vendors can position themselves for the next wave of AI-driven demand.

14:00	15 The Implication of Transaction Database and Lakehouse Integration – <i>Mike Ferguson, Intelligent Business Strategies</i> As the pace of business quickens, the demand to analyse lower latency data increases. Over many years, technology has advanced to help with this. For example, change data capture, data replication, and integration with messaging systems have all helped to move transaction data quickly to where it can be analysed. Now, the emergence of lakehouses and open tables has opened up new possibilities. Already, almost all data warehouse vendors directly access open tables. But what about transaction systems? This session looks at how transaction databases are now integrating with open tables, what it means and what it enables you to do if you add support for these new capabilities to your products?
14:40	16 AI & Data Management: Beyond Automation – Reshaping the Data Landscape – <i>Timm Grosser, BARC</i> AI is no longer just optimizing — it's disrupting how we manage and interact with data. This session explores how AI is already transforming data management through intelligent automation, more intuitive user interaction, and enhanced capabilities in governance, data quality, and integration. Using concrete examples, we'll spark a discussion on how AI-driven disruption is reshaping user expectations and redefining the future of data management software. By contrasting evolving user needs with current market trends, we'll offer a provocative outlook: Will traditional tools be replaced — or must be supercharged to stay alive?
15:20	Break

Option 2: Breakout Session on CPM

13:20	17 Global CPM Trends and Priorities for 2026 – <i>Christian Fuchs, BARC</i> What are the key CPM trends for 2026? With over 1,800 participants from various industries and regions, the BARC CPM Trend Monitor 2026 reveals the global priorities of performance management professionals. This session will offer exclusive insights into the key findings of the joint research report on CPM trends and priorities conducted by BARC and BPM Partners.
13:35	18 Shaping the Future of Corporate Performance Management: Trends and Transformations for the Next Decade – <i>Bani Brandolini, BARC Ambassador</i> CPM software is evolving rapidly to meet rising demands for agility, integration, and intelligence. This session examines how technology trends – such as AI, cloud-native architectures, and advanced data integration – are reshaping CPM platforms. We'll explore

	the convergence of planning, reporting, and analytics, the impact of ESG, taxation, tariffs and regulatory requirements on product development, and how existing and new vendors, as well as service providers, are rethinking usability, extensibility, and automation to stay competitive in a fast-changing market.
14:00	19 Market Development and Trends in Corporate Planning, Financial Consolidation and Group Accounting – <i>Christian Fuchs and Stefan Sendl, BARC</i> This session will provide an update and overview of the corporate planning, financial consolidation, and group accounting market. Christian and Stefan will discuss the evolution of the software market, current buying trends, and prevailing market dynamics. Based on the latest BARC research, we will examine the results of the world's largest independent surveys of planning and financial consolidation software users: The Planning Survey and The Financial Consolidation & Group Accounting Survey. Our goal is to provide an overview of market demand trends and drivers to help adjust marketing and go-to-market strategies.
14:20	20 ESG and Omnibus – <i>Stefan Sendl, BARC</i> The European Union has shaken up the market for ESG reporting and CSRD solutions with its announced "Omnibus" proposal, which changes the scope and number of companies affected by ESG reporting. In this session, we will discuss these changes and their impact on the third edition of BARC's "ESG & Sustainability Survey", conducted earlier this year when the changes were announced.
14:40	21 Market Figures CPM and Services Market – <i>Stefan Sendl, BARC</i> Market figures update: Over the past year, BARC has conducted several analyses and projects focusing on current CPM market figures in Europe from product and service perspectives. This session will provide an overview of the latest findings.
15:00	22 Discussion: Why isn't AI taking off in CPM? – <i>Stefan Sendl and Christian Fuchs, BARC</i> BARC's research shows that AI implementation in the "Office of the CFO" is extremely hesitant, and figures have recently declined in some cases. Why is this topic meeting with such resistance? Join the discussion with the panel and BARC experts.
15:20	Break

Market Trends and Corporate Strategy	
15:45	23 Hype or Reality - A Discussion of Industry Trends <i>Session and discussion moderated by Dan Sommer (Senior Director, Global Market Intelligence Lead at Qlik) and James Richardson (VP Product Strategy at Oracle)</i> Dan and James will lead an interactive discussion on views on where the most hyped technology is heading and what value it brings to companies. Why it will work, why it's overhyped, what are the risks..., all leading to the question how Data and Analytics will look like in 5-10 years?
16:30	Wrap-up of Two Workshop Days
16:45	End of the Retreat Workshop Program
	Analyst 1:1s Fireside Chats, work time, or leisure / visit of Rüdesheim
18:45	Walk to Weingut Trenz
19:00	Dinner at Gutsausschank Trenz <i>Schulstr. 3, 65366 Geisenheim</i>  
22:00	Return to Burg Schwarzenstein on foot

Optional ADD-ON DAY with 1:1s

Saturday, Oct. 18th

09:00	Analyst one-to-ones Please contact us before or during the event at cbange@barc.com for appointments.
12:00	End of the Data & Analytics Retreat & Farewell

Speakers and Analysts



Merv Adrian – BARC

With over 40 years in IT, Mr. Adrian has experience as a programmer, marketing and strategy director, IT market analyst, and research executive. He now helps IT vendors with market strategy, competitive assessments, speaking engagements, and webinars. Specialties include mapping the DBMS, Big Data, and NoSQL landscape. Previously, he managed all technology research at Forrester and served as a vendor lead at Gartner, roles that provided him with deep insights into software and cloud-based architectures, which he continues to leverage as an analyst and consultant.



Axel Bange – BARC & B-Eye-Media

Axel Bange is responsible for Corporate Communications at BARC. He is also CEO of B-Eye-Media GmbH. Axel has 20 years of experience in the business intelligence and data analytics industry in various roles.



Dr. Carsten Bange – BARC

Carsten Bange is the founder and CEO of BARC. He is an internationally recognized analyst and consultant on data, AI, analytics and CPM strategy, organization and architecture. As a long-standing and neutral observer of the software market and the impact of digitalization on companies, Carsten is a frequent speaker at conferences and seminars and author of numerous articles, research notes and market studies.



Bani Brandolini – BARC Ambassador and President Darwin Analytics Inc.

Bani Brandolini is a seasoned executive in Corporate and Enterprise Performance Management (CPM/EPM) with a track record of leading vendors like Oracle Hyperion, SAP OutlookSoft, and CCH Tagetik to global success. A graduate of the London School of Economics, he started his career at PwC in London and co-founded several successful start-ups. As an early advocate of AI in the CFO office, Bani combines deep CPM expertise with strong go-to-market experience. President of Darwin Analytics Inc., Bani is dedicated to driving the rapid evolution of CPM through strong innovation and strategic partnerships with ISVs and consulting firms.



Donald Farmer – TreeHive Strategy

Donald Farmer has over 30 years experience in data management and analytics. He has worked with vendors such as Microsoft and Qlik developing market-leading analytic products. Now he works as a strategic advisor to investors, enterprises and software companies looking to maximize the value of data and analytics in their work.



Mike Ferguson – Intelligent Business Strategies

Mike Ferguson is Managing Director of Intelligent Business Strategies, an independent analyst and consulting company specializing in business intelligence, big data, data management and enterprise business integration, and has over 37 years of IT experience. Mike speaks at events all over the world, has written numerous articles and teaches detailed master classes in Big Data, New Technologies for Data Warehousing and BI, Operational BI, Enterprise Data Governance, MDM, Data Integration and Enterprise Architecture.



Dr. Christian Fuchs – BARC

Dr. Christian Fuchs heads up BARC's Data & Analytics Research team. He is the author of numerous BARC studies and a frequent speaker at conferences. He specializes in decision-supporting information systems for corporate performance management, planning and budgeting, financial consolidation and analytics. As a senior analyst and consultant, he supports companies in the software selection process and in the introduction phase as well as in strategic questions regarding the front-end tool portfolio, architecture and use cases.



Timm Grosser – BARC

Timm Grosser is Senior Analyst Data & Analytics at the Business Application Research Center (BARC) with a focus on data strategy, data governance and data management. His core competencies lie in the definition and implementation of your data & analytics strategy, organization, architecture, and tool selection. He is a sought-after speaker at conferences and seminars and the author of numerous BARC market studies and specialist articles.



Roland Hölscher – BARC

Roland Hölscher brings as Chief Revenue Officer (CRO) a holistic perspective to all business functions that contribute to revenue growth. In his role at BARC, he supports cross-functional coordination and is responsible for specific operational sales areas. His responsibilities include contributing to the definition of the go-to-market (GTM) strategy, coordinating revenue-relevant functions across departments, and leading the operational execution within key areas such as campaign management, vendor sales, and end-user sales.



Shawn Rogers – BARC

Shawn Rogers is the CEO of BARC US and brings over 28 years of experience to the role. He is an internationally respected industry analyst, speaker, author, and instructor on data, business intelligence, analytics, AI/ML, and cloud technologies. His former executive strategy roles with Dell, Statistica, Quest Software, and TIBCO give him a unique perspective on the software industry.



Stefan Sexl – BARC

Stefan Sexl is senior analyst and fellow at BARC. He is an expert in BI and CPM solutions with more than 30 years of experience, co-founder of an Austrian BI consultancy and former board member of MIS AG, Darmstadt. As a co-founder and board member of pmOne AG, Munich, he developed the leading Microsoft BI partner and the market for Tagetik software in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.



Andreas Simon – Simon Consulting

As Director Sales MEA at Simon Consulting, I focus on expanding our global network of vendors, partners, and customers - especially across the Middle East, India, Africa, Turkey, and Pakistan - by building strong relationships in AI-driven software and digital transformation. With over 30 years in the BI and EPM market, including my role as Director Sales MEA at Jedox where I built the Middle East entity and team in Dubai, I bring deep international experience and a strong partner-focused approach to every engagement.



Thomas Zeutschler – BARC

Thomas is a senior analyst and fellow at BARC, specializing in data, analytics and AI as well as modern cloud-native software & solution development. With industry experience, he's skilled in data management, BI, analytics, AI and cloud-native solutions, previously leading these at Henkel globally. At BARC, he offers consulting and coaching, guiding clients in data- and AI-driven business strategies and solution development.