Qlik vs. Power BI:

5 Reasons Why Qlik Delivers Lower TCO

Power BI's pricing starts low but gets expensive fast. With Qlik, you pay less and get more, year after year.

Qlik
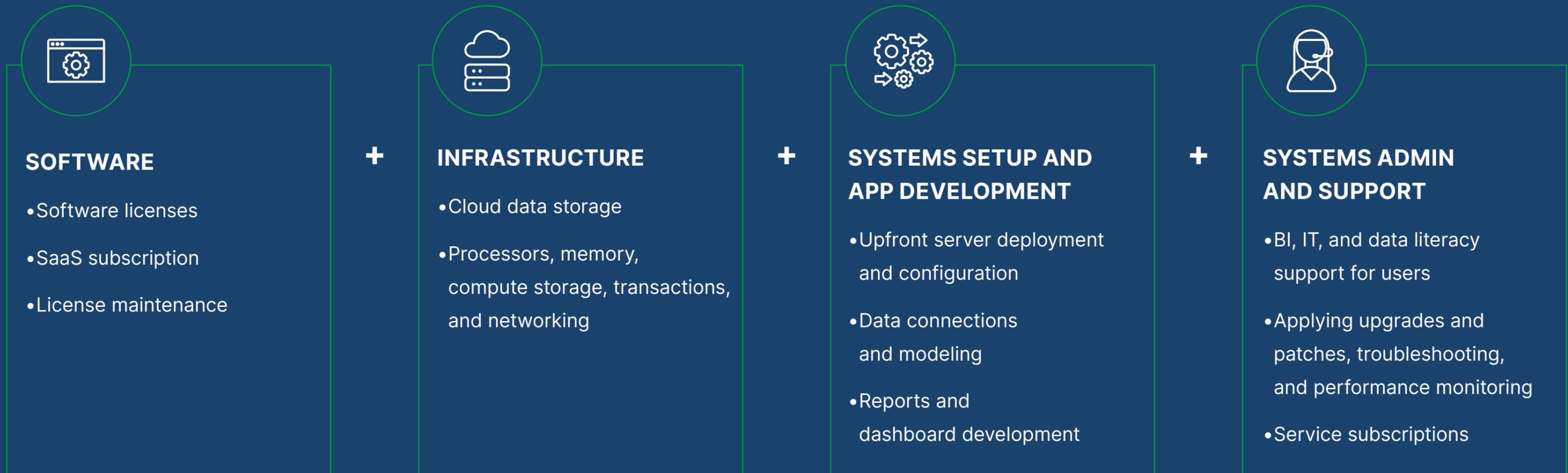
What does it actually cost to own a BI solution?

Many companies only consider the initial purchase price when choosing a BI platform. But total cost of ownership (TCO) is much more than that. From buying the software and infrastructure, to deployment and integrations, to support and maintenance, some platforms demand a much bigger financial – and time – commitment. And even those factors don't fully account for the ROI that the solution can drive.

When it comes to choosing the best solution for your organization, these five considerations should top your list:

☑ **Complexity**

☑ **Self-service**

☑ **Governance**

☑ **Scalability**

☑ **Cost predictability**

The real TCO

TCO includes the cost of purchasing and owning a BI solution for at least 3 to 5 years.

SOFTWARE

- Software licenses
- SaaS subscription
- License maintenance

+

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Cloud data storage
- Processors, memory, compute storage, transactions, and networking

+

SYSTEMS SETUP AND APP DEVELOPMENT

- Upfront server deployment and configuration
- Data connections and modeling
- Reports and dashboard development

+

SYSTEMS ADMIN AND SUPPORT

- BI, IT, and data literacy support for users
- Applying upgrades and patches, troubleshooting, and performance monitoring
- Service subscriptions

1. Complexity

Getting value from a BI platform begins the minute you start setting it up. The more time and labor your solution requires, the more money you'll spend. And for what? Your BI solution has to be able to handle all your data and analytics needs, so it can drive real analytic value – and data-informed action – without driving up TCO.

Power BI

Complex setup and maintenance

When you first evaluate Power BI, it might look simple. But loading an Excel file with a couple hundred thousand rows is not an enterprise solution for analytics. If you want Power BI to do more than just simple visualizations, buckle up for a complicated (and expensive) ride. You'll need to configure several products across desktops, servers, and cloud – and maintain and support them all – which increases costs.

Power BI report development and data modeling are done on tools that have to be downloaded to a desktop or laptop and maintained. Certain integrations, like on-premises data, require a heavy and unreliable data gateway. Want to run your BI on the cloud? Your only choice is to get locked into Azure.
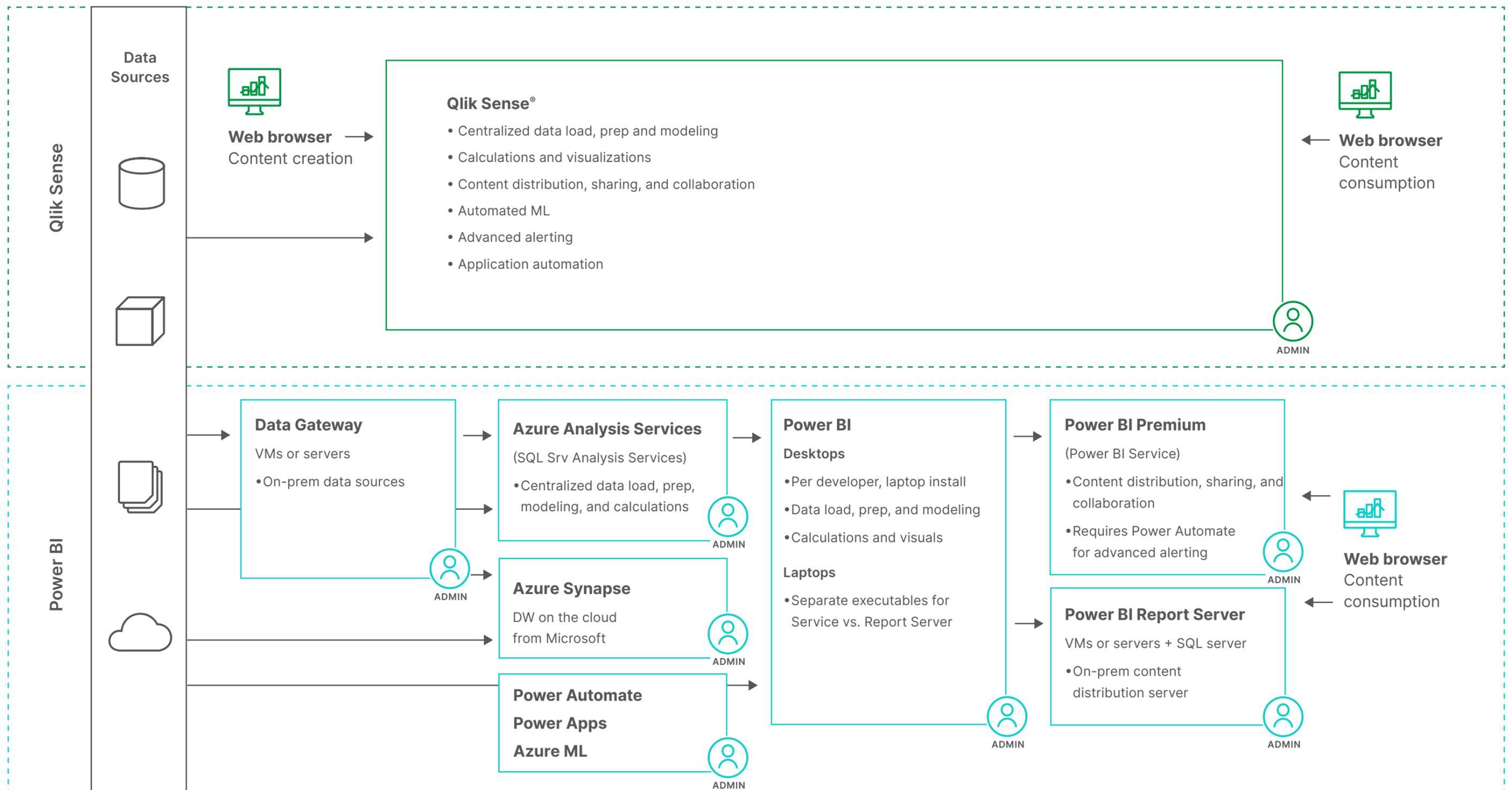
Qlik

Easier to get up and running

Qlik® is a complete BI platform that runs on the cloud, making it faster and easier to set up. With Qlik, things like data prep and app development are done via the web, so there's no need to download or maintain tools. SaaS with Qlik is 100% cloud-based, so you can avoid having to download products across desktops, servers, and cloud. And Qlik runs on your preferred cloud solution, like AWS, Azure, Qlik Cloud, or any other.

Plus, Qlik takes you way beyond simple visualizations. Our one-of-a-kind analytics engine gives users of all skill levels the power to freely explore their data and answer questions, without help from the experts. And with advanced capabilities like automated machine learning, application integration, and workflow automation, you can create data-driven pipelines where real-time insights trigger immediate action.

Whoa, Power BI – that's a lot of components.

Qlik is a much lighter load.

Qlik Sense

Data Sources

Web browser
Content creation

Qlik Sense®
- Centralized data load, prep and modeling
- Calculations and visualizations
- Content distribution, sharing, and collaboration
- Automated ML
- Advanced alerting
- Application automation

ADMIN

Web browser
Content consumption

Power BI

Data Gateway

VMs or servers
- On-prem data sources

Azure Analysis Services

(SQL Srv Analysis Services)
- Centralized data load, prep, modeling, and calculations

ADMIN

ADMIN

Azure Synapse

DW on the cloud from Microsoft

ADMIN

Power Automate
Power Apps
Azure ML

ADMIN

Power BI

Desktops
- Per developer, laptop install
- Data load, prep, and modeling
- Calculations and visuals

Laptops
- Separate executables for Service vs. Report Server

ADMIN

Power BI Premium

(Power BI Service)
- Content distribution, sharing, and collaboration
- Requires Power Automate for advanced alerting

ADMIN

Power BI Report Server

VMs or servers + SQL server
- On-prem content distribution server

ADMIN

Web browser
Content consumption

2. Self-service

Number of support and **maintenance FTEs is at least**

1.7x

higher for Power BI

Power BI

Qlik

Businesses are facing an explosion of available data and want to be more data-driven – and it's not enough to enable only power users. Self-service has to be extended to developers and non-technical users, too. A BI solution that helps all users analyze data with confidence, answer their own questions, and act on their insights not only boosts data-driven transformation; it also improves data literacy and reduces dependency on IT. Which results in lower TCO.

Power BI

High dependency on (limited) IT resources

To create a report in Power BI, non-technical users or consumers rely heavily on technical experts and report developers. And thanks to data restrictions, reports lack depth and interactivity. Query-based tools like Power BI require SQL programming skills. SQL queries load subsets of data predetermined in the design phase – so when new questions come up later, consumers must go back to IT for new reports. With Power BI, users need to know DAX, M, and MDX – well beyond the skill set of most nontechnical users.

Qlik

Self-service for everyone

Qlik has always empowered both technical and non-technical users to freely explore data. And they can do it with a level of interactivity and flexibility not possible with query-based tools, thanks to our unique Associative Engine. Qlik's industry-leading AI capabilities and interactive charts boost non-technical users' ability to ask and answer their own questions without having to rely on intervention from power users. So with Qlik, consumers rely less on IT and contribute more to your organization's success.

3. Governance

A data democracy is only as good as its data governance. Without it, data users can't fully trust their BI, and they open up your business to security risks. But with a properly governed framework, users can share created content – making everyone more efficient.

Power BI

Limited governance and reuse

Imagine hundreds or even thousands of data users, each with their own version of Power BI Desktop on their laptops. They each have their own connections to data sources, and they might even have sensitive data stored locally on their laptops. Governing all that data is tricky and time-consuming. Plus, the lack of self-service capabilities can force IT and developers to give everyone an editable copy of each Power BI report. But this leads to report sprawl, high governance costs, and multiple versions of the truth.

Qlik

Advanced governance and reuse

Qlik's governance capabilities and unique approach enable governed self-service. The web-based platform gives IT visibility and centralized control over data provisioning, along with more granular data access controls. What's more, Qlik developers and analysts can create apps that serve as platforms for governed data sharing. For example, Qlik lets consumers of BI content create their own sheets and visuals on top of a published Qlik app and dataset, leveraging a governed library of business logic built into the app.

Number of desktop authoring tools across an organization

Power BI: dozens to thousands

Qlik: zero

4. Scalability

The amount of data available is growing exponentially. But it won't do your organization any good if you can't use it. And if you choose a BI solution that requires adding capacity too soon or too fast, it will scale poorly and cost more. A platform that can handle any number of users, massive quantities of data (regardless of where it resides), and any degree of complexity will scale seamlessly – right along with your organization.

Power BI

Scaling is a lift.

Interested in moving beyond basic visualizations to the broader functionality that's mission-critical for competitive edge? Then you'll need higher Power BI Premium capacities that will add more costs. Is your Power BI report too slow to load? You'll need to break it up into smaller pieces – or use other workarounds. And as data volumes and user adoption grow, Power BI's query-based reporting will constrain scalability and report performance. Need incremental loads? More than eight data refreshes a day? How about advanced collaboration? Again, you'll need to buy Power BI Premium.

Qlik

Scaling is a breeze.

When it comes to scalability, Qlik far outpaces the competition. It's fast and cost-effective for smaller deployments, and its architecture scales economically from megabytes to terabytes of data in large global enterprise deployments. Qlik's unique in-memory Associative Engine supports more concurrent users without any loss of performance. So you can do more with less capacity – which lowers your costs. You can even securely extend Qlik Sense SaaS® capabilities to wherever your data resides – on-prem, virtual private cloud, or public cloud – with Qlik Forts. So you get the cost savings and performance benefits of SaaS without compromising data locality requirements.

How much does that "power" in Power BI cost?

Power BI Premium per user: $20/month/user

Power BI Premium P1 node: $5,000/month

Power BI Premium P3 node: $20,000/month

5. Cost predictability

Analytics technology and user needs will, of course, evolve over time. So, how can successful BI buyers future-proof their investment? By examining the gritty details in order to choose a solution that avoids hidden costs.

Power BI

Surprise costs

To add capabilities and users to Power BI, you need to buy extra products, licenses, and capacity. For example, if you want to access on-prem sources, you'll need Data Gateway servers, infrastructure, and Microsoft Express Route for a secure connection. Need to deploy data marts or warehouses? You'll probably need an SQL server, possibly Analysis Services or Azure Synapse. Have a lot of users viewing reports and dashboards, and need consistent query performance and higher refresh frequency? You'll need more of the larger Power BI Premium nodes and possibly Express Route – even if you already own Power BI Pro licenses. And if you want content physically stored closer to your users, you'll need multiple Power BI Premium nodes in each region.
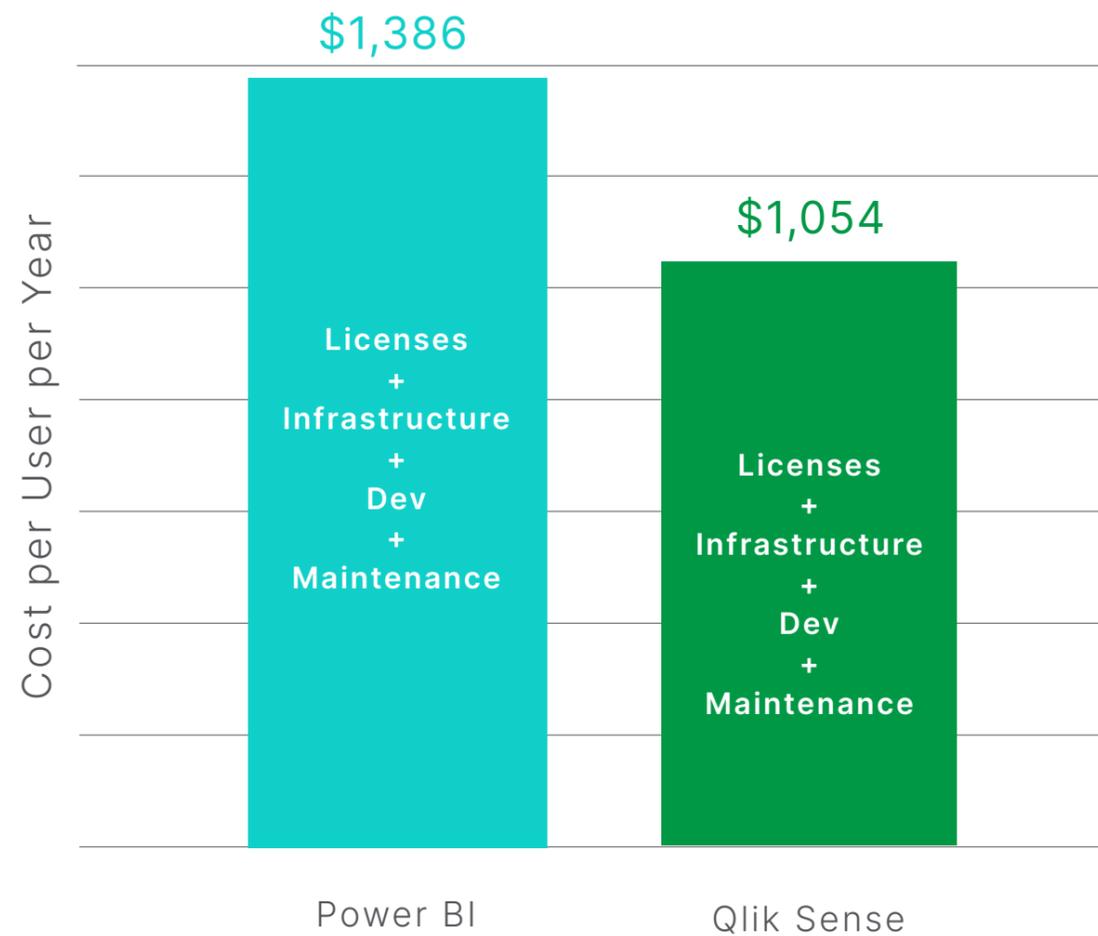
Qlik

Total cost transparency

Our subscription model lets you know exactly what you're getting, right out of the gate. And it's a lot more than you get with Power BI. Valuable capabilities that drive deeper insights with predictive and prescriptive analytics are included in our SaaS pricing. Plus, our multi-cloud capabilities give you flexibility and the ability to grow without the worry of large, unplanned costs.

Year after year, Power BI costs 30% more (scenario for 100 users).

Cost per User per Year

Power BI — $1,386
Licenses + Infrastructure + Dev + Maintenance

Qlik Sense — $1,054
Licenses + Infrastructure + Dev + Maintenance

And Power BI's surprise costs just keep coming.

- SQL server: $15,000/core
- Express Route: starts at $60,000/year for 1Gbps connection
- Data Gateway infrastructure: starts at $7,000
- Power BI Premium P1 node: $60,000/year
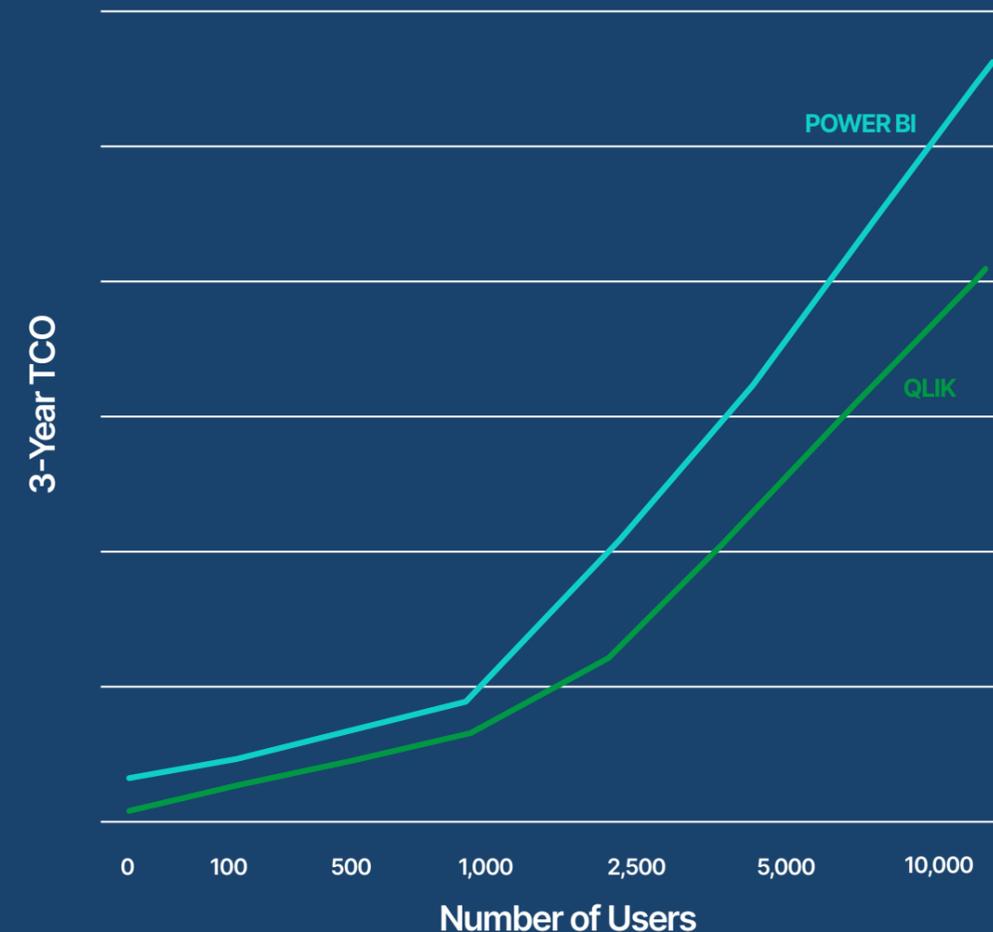- Power BI Premium P2 node: $120,000/year
- Power BI Premium P3 node: $240,000/year

Qlik has a lower TCO, no matter the deployment size.

Enterprises today need an analytics solution that empowers all users across the entire organization with self-service capabilities, whatever the data source. Unlike vendors that dictate a cloud strategy and leave little flexibility for their customers, Qlik offers flexible deployment options and provides an array of modern capabilities and higher scalability – all with lower complexity in architecture and licensing. Our unique approach gives data users the flexibility, elasticity, and portability that modern analytics demands. And that means better insights – and lower TCO – for your business.

But don't just take our word for it. **Try our cloud analytics solution, Qlik Sense Business, for yourself.**

Start Free Trial

Chart axes: 3-Year TCO (vertical), Number of Users (horizontal)
X-axis labels: 0, 100, 500, 1,000, 2,500, 5,000, 10,000
Lines labeled: POWER BI, QLIK

About Qlik

Qlik transforms complex data landscapes into actionable insights, driving strategic business outcomes. Serving over 40,000 global customers, our portfolio leverages advanced, enterprise-grade AI/ML and pervasive data quality. We excel in data integration and governance, offering comprehensive solutions that work with diverse data sources. Intuitive and real-time analytics from Qlik uncover hidden patterns, empowering teams to address complex challenges and seize new opportunities. Our AI/ML tools, both practical and scalable, lead to better decisions, faster. As strategic partners, our platform-agnostic technology and expertise make our customers more competitive.

qlik.com

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