

IS YOUR DATABASE ALLOWING YOU TO DRIVE BUSINESS SUCCESS?

PROPERLY MANAGING YOUR DATABASE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

WHITE PAPER

Every time a new customer is added, or a transaction is processed, or a month-end report is generated, you are relying on your database infrastructure to process it quickly, store the data securely, and make the information available in the future. Your database is a central component of your infrastructure. It touches every piece of data that enters your business. Its performance impacts your ability to accurately analyze multiple types of data. In the long term, it can affect the success of your business. Its performance impacts your ability to accurately analyze multiple types of data. And the safety and security of the data can make the difference between life and death for your business.

How do you take care of that database infrastructure? What are you doing to monitor your database and ensure that it is operating at an optimal level? With constantly evolving technologies, aging in-house technology, growing amounts of data, and higher customer expectations, it seems nearly impossible to maintain a thriving infrastructure. The question becomes “can my internal IT team handle database management or do I need external support?”

Additionally, does your internal team have bandwidth to take on strategic projects that can help drive the business? Consider the productivity potential of a balanced team consisting of your internal team and the support of an external team. Your in-house staff is able to off load some of the repetitive, core production work to the external team. This enables your internal staff to work on new and strategic projects.

Your database is a valuable driver of success for your business. Maintaining your data environment is critical, but it can also be expensive, confusing, and time consuming. This paper will examine the critical components of database monitoring, the business problems it can solve, results you can expect and how to get started with database monitoring services.

CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF DATABASE MANAGED SERVICES

According to [Tech Target](#), database monitoring “is the observation of actions in a database. Data monitoring tools monitor, capture and record database events in near-real time and provide alerts about policy violations.” Database monitoring ensures availability and performance of your critical databases.

At the minimum, your database monitoring program should include:

- 24x7 monitoring
- Daily alert notifications
- Routine critical patch updates
- Performance management and tuning
- Backup management process
- Database recovery strategy
- Annual software license assessment
- Proactive administration of database environment
- Comprehensive monthly reporting

This level of monitoring allows for basic coverage and is ample for the small and medium-size businesses. However, enterprise organizations with large, complex workloads and stringent down-time and data loss requirements should consider a more advanced level of database monitoring, which includes all of the above, plus:

- Detailed disaster recovery and business continuity planning and execution, including yearly failover testing
- Monitoring and maintenance for high availability systems
- Monitoring and maintenance for replication
- Advanced auditing support and monitoring
- Hosted production or DR environments with intrusion detection and hot failover
- Complex architecture including Warehouse, BI, and Big Data support

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YOUR DATABASE COULD BE THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

What issues are you experiencing because of your database infrastructure? Slow response time, inaccurate data, system downtime, data loss, disparate systems, and security issues? Your database could be the problem, but an effective database managed services solution can be the answer.

Database monitoring is complex, tedious and never ends. And it is an absolute must for all organizations. Ensuring 24x7 availability and optimal data performance is dependent on a healthy database. A high-performing database allows data to be analyzed and used to make strategic business decisions. When the CFO asks for a report on last week's customer service response times, you want that information at your fingertips. If the data is not available or not accurate, business decisions are at risk. On the opposite side of the equation, if you can pull up real-time data and provide the report within minutes, the business benefits.

Database administrators (DBAs) play a critical role in the monitoring and management of corporate databases. Yet with challenging workloads and other strategic projects on their to-do list, database monitoring often gets pushed to the back burner. This is understandable as many organizations' IT staff are stretched thin. Unfortunately, projects considered more strategic are made the priority while mission critical production databases continue to run with minimal oversight. Databases need to be proactively monitored at all times. With daily reporting and alerts, databases can perform at the highest level. A reliable monitoring process gives organizations the ability to analyze trends, predict usage levels, and identify inefficiencies.

Another challenge is the growing amount and complexity of the data that can put stress on data management systems. DBAs must have the expertise to understand when updates or fixes need to be made. Knowing the leading indicators of database problems is a key responsibility for DBAs. When database admins do not have the expertise to properly monitor the systems, database performance issues will arise. Consider the quantity of data and the importance of that data to your business. Is that an area of your infrastructure that you want to neglect?

For small and medium-size businesses with limited IT staff, what happens when the in-house DBA goes on vacation or resigns? Organizations must have a plan to cover this situation. If a system fails or there is a disaster during this time, someone needs to be able to fill the gap and manage the recovery process. Managing databases is a critical responsibility and needs highly skilled administrators dedicated to the process. How your database is cared for impacts data accuracy and availability. Whether it is customer information or valuable company data, managing the data should be a priority. A properly managed database can be the solution to your database problems.

PRIORITIZE SUCCESS WITH DATABASE MANAGED SERVICES

Your database is not an area to cut corners. If your internal IT team is too busy or not experienced enough to properly monitor your database infrastructure, it is important to find an expert managed services provider. Database monitoring services will have an immediate impact on your organization's success. A service provider will prioritize your database.

More uptime, higher productivity. A managed services provider monitors your database 24/7/365 and will notify you immediately when a potential problem arises. This can be an invaluable feature because the earlier an issue is realized, the earlier it can be resolved. 24/7 monitoring allows for most issues to be realized and proactively resolved before they become major problems resulting in significant downtime.

Higher efficiency, lower cost. An experienced database services provider will analyze the existing system to identify areas of inefficiency and failure. Databases will be consolidated where appropriate, improving efficiency and lowering operating costs. In addition, a managed services provider can configure and tune a database infrastructure resulting in faster processing of daily tasks, also lowering costs.

Reliable backup and disaster recovery process. Your database service provider ensures all data is backed up on a regular schedule and implements a fully tested disaster recovery process. In case of a disaster, database restoration and/or database replication and recovery services are provided.

More strategic in-house IT. Database monitoring services are a cost effective method and more strategic way to manage your database infrastructure. Utilizing managed services allows in-house IT staff to focus on more strategic objectives and process improvements. A service provider eliminates any gap caused by employee absence or turnover. Carolyn April, senior director, industry analysis, from the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA), states, "Very few companies get rid of their IT staffs because they contract with a managed services provider (MSP). Especially among larger companies, bringing an MSP on board frees up the IT staff to work on more strategic projects. It elevates the IT staff and brings them out of the shadows within the organization." ([CompTIA, 2015](#))

Predictable monthly costs. Managed services are typically contracted at a fixed rate, either monthly or annually. Often a pay-as-you-go arrangement is available. A fixed payment means you know what you're going to get and how much it is going to cost over the contract. No unexpected upgrade charges or changes in charges.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Despite growing challenges to align IT resources with business objectives, organizations hesitate, if not completely resist, using an MSP for certain business processes. Business owners and managers have concerns over security or compliance, may not see the value, have not had reason to change, or assume the cost is too high. However, the truth is that there are many reasons - new technologies, aging in-house technology, growing amounts of data, and higher customer expectations - that make maintaining a stable, reliable infrastructure difficult without help.

The CompTIA Fourth Annual Trends in Managed Services study found that “almost 40 percent of the companies surveyed believe their current IT management methods are working just fine. The remaining 60 percent are still looking for some type of improvement.” ([CompTIA, 2015](#)) The assumption that the businesses’ IT data management methods are working adequately need to be checked. While it appears that your database infrastructure is performing well, an assessment of the systems more often than not uncovers unexpected issues that lead to improved processes and architecture, and a better night’s rest!

Therefore, the first step in determining if a database management services provider is beneficial is to conduct an assessment, also called a health check, of your database infrastructure. An experienced services provider will conduct an in-depth assessment, sometimes free of charge, before an engagement.

The assessment should include:

- A thorough security analysis
- A review of your existing backup processes
- A review of current security procedures
- A review of environmental file locations
- A report of your potential risk factors and recommendations for securing your data

The assessment can identify:

- Low- or high-level processor, memory, or disk utilization
- Improper backup/recovery configuration issues
- Workload balance issues
- Business requirements limiting downtime or data loss that are not consistent with current architecture
- Software licensing risks
- Predictable growth modeling

A DECISION NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY

In today’s data-driven world, the success or failure of organizations largely depends on their ability to transform data into actionable insights that drive innovation and growth. Storing, managing and moving data is a core business strategy that can give businesses a competitive edge - if it’s done right. Who you select to manage your database infrastructure is critical, whether it is internal staff or a managed services provider.

Eagle Datagistics provides database support and managed services for Oracle, MySQL and SQL Server database environments through its OnTrack™ solution. OnTrack is a comprehensive database management solution designed to take the expense and confusion out of managing your data. OnTrack ensures 24x7 availability and performance of your business critical databases. Eagle’s experts continuously monitor, manage and ensure optimal performance of the database environment and function as an extension of your organization.

With Eagle, organizations also benefit from higher efficiency and lowered cost of database management. More support, more expertise, and more performance, are available for less than the cost of adding staff. OnTrack offers four different service levels based on your business needs, ranging from basic workday coverage to 24x7x365 with full disaster recovery.

The bottom line is that Eagle’s highly skilled staff of developers and DBAs make sure your data is providing maximum value for your business.

Contact Eagle Datagistics to see how world-class data professionals can help you drive business success and deliver peace of mind.



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