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DATABASE SERVICES

Is Your Head in the Cloud

When It Comes To Database Management?

Maybe It Should Be

By Mark Perlstein

ABSTRACT:

Cloud-based database management provides organizations with database expertise when they are needed, where they are needed, and at the scale needed. Having experienced database professionals continuously available, both for ongoing issues and urgent projects, provides organizations with cost-effective solutions and valuable flexibility. While using an external provider for remote database administration services may be new for some, employing cloud-based, remote DBAs comes with savings as well as a host of other compelling benefits.

Cloud-based services are here and here to stay, and the concept isn't only limited to SaaS software or infrastructure– it applies to complex services from a provider that has built scale in a focused area. Remote DBAs (database administrators) from a database managed service allow organizations to save money, improve DBA retention and increase DBA morale. Senior-level staff can, for example, work on higher-level, longer-term projects they find more aligned with their job description and more fulfilling than production support.

These are only some of the value propositions Datavail brings its clients. Through our cloud-based database administration services we make it simple for clients to have the technology capabilities they need in a focused area over which they have control. We offer an on-demand service that helps eliminate traditional challenges associated with database administration including expense, staffing shortages, and retention issues.

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Hiring and Retaining Qualified DBAs is a Challenge

Data drives business. And data is exploding. "There were 5 exabytes of information created between the dawn of civilization through 2003, but that much information is now created every two days, and the pace is increasing," stated Eric Schmidt, then-executive chairman of Google, in 2010. Data availability continues to grow as more devices, sensors, and other technologies gather information around the clock. How do we cope with this explosion of data?

An organization may wish to simply cover its operational capabilities such that the database environment continues running, allowing for 24x7 database monitoring and incident management. A client may also want to add enhanced services, which might include having their managed service provider attend to specific tasks such as database installation, installing bug fixes, SQL tuning, or other requested items. Datavail offers a suite of proactive capabilities designed to improve the client's database environment. These typically include more complex tasks such as instituting backup and recovery, CPU optimization, planning and other strategic tasks tied to the database architecture.

A managed service provider should help solve the problems of DBA shortages, expenses, and retention. By providing services on-demand, in the cloud, it should be easy for clients to determine the capacity required to meet demand and be provided with a variable consumption model that meets their needs as they grow over time.

They should also provide clear value for the services delivered. It is our belief that high-volume work should not break the bank. The value provided should be consistent across any consumption pattern, whether the client is a high- or low-use consumer.

Organizations should only pay for the services they use. Contracts can be easily created based on a level-of-effort model and contain explicit terms and conditions that make them easy to get out of.

Clients should expect their managed service provider's database administrators to become an extension of their team. This also eliminates many of the challenges inherent in hiring and retaining qualified in-house database administrators.

Steady-State Administration Offers Value: Always On, Always Available

We have come to a point where database services and operations must be always available in organizations. We refer to this as database administration "dial tone": steady-state, 24x7 database administration, capability, and accessibility with easily adjusted consumption.

Having databases always available is no longer optional. It's a necessity in today's data-driven, competitive business environment. It is nearly impossible for most organizations to structure themselves to meet this level of services because volume and scale don't allow it. Cost and tight budgets typically inhibit implementation of 24x7 coverage in the database tower of service. As service needs scale up, the associated costs often become prohibitively expensive. Many conventional database staffing options are fixed, high-cost services that are relatively inflexible.
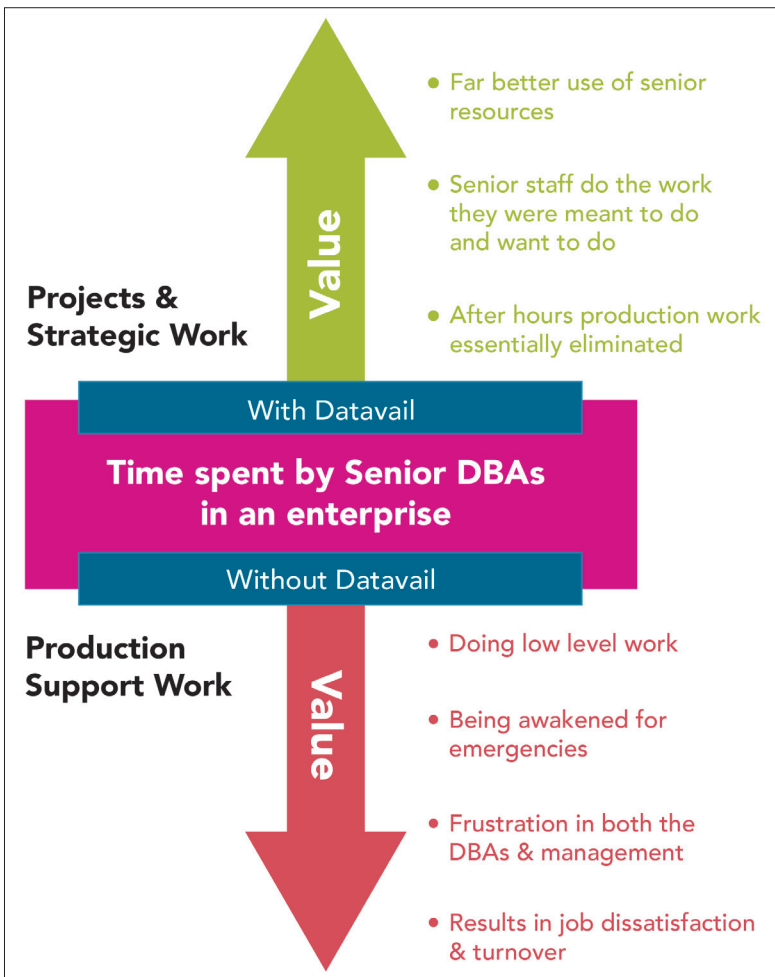
Steady-state administration offers a significant value proposition to both on-staff DBAs and the organization. The organization is able to achieve both cost and operational efficiencies with this type of service.

On-staff database administrators see improved quality of life and job satisfaction. This ultimately benefits the organization as those satisfied, happy employees want to stay in their jobs.

Valuing Your Senior DBA

What does a senior database administrator do? This varies by organization and depends on the staffing structure in place.

When there is no 24x7 support, the senior database administrator is typically forced to do low-level work and is placed on-call for emergencies. She becomes bogged down in adminis-trivia and is unable to operate effectively. Her talents are squandered. This results in frustration on the part of both the DBA and management. When there is effective around-the-clock support, senior-level DBAs can be applied far more effectively.

Value

- Far better use of senior resources
- Senior staff do the work they were meant to do and want to do
- After hours production work essentially eliminated

With Datavail

Time spent by Senior DBAs in an enterprise

Without Datavail

Projects & Strategic Work

Production Support Work

Value

- Doing low level work
- Being awakened for emergencies
- Frustration in both the DBAs & management
- Results in job dissatisfaction & turnover

The senior staff members are able to do the work they were meant to do rather than respond to emergencies and tackle production support tasks.

They can attend to high-value projects that are more valuable to the organization and also further develop their technical skills. This creates job satisfaction and helps organizations retain those valuable employees.

How Does Datavail's Model Work?

Datavail clients come in all sizes and operate businesses in varied sectors with locations spread across the globe. Some Datavail clients may be organizations whose brand name products you encounter every day. Others are mid-market businesses in very specialized industries. Each organization has unique database challenges based on the technologies they use. Because of the breadth of skill sets of our DBAs and our organization's operational flexibility we are able to meet a broad set of requirements. Let's review two examples.

Let's look first at a large multinational firm using the Oracle E-Business Suite. The director of database administration leading the group was unhappy with their existing service provider due to lack of focus and general poor quality.

While the firm they were using was effectively delivering infrastructure support in other areas, there was dissatisfaction in their database services delivery.

Exacerbating the problem was an over-reliance on contractors and staffing, which can be both expensive and inflexible. This firm opted to test our managed services model and see if quality and flexibility could be enhanced. We showed their team how Datavail services could be used to build capacity to meet demand. We gave them an option: obtain equal capacity at a substantial cost reduction or gain a substantial capacity increase at equal cost.

We were able offer a solution that increased the client's capacity by 50% and decreased its service costs by more than 40%. This client has now been with us for more than four years.
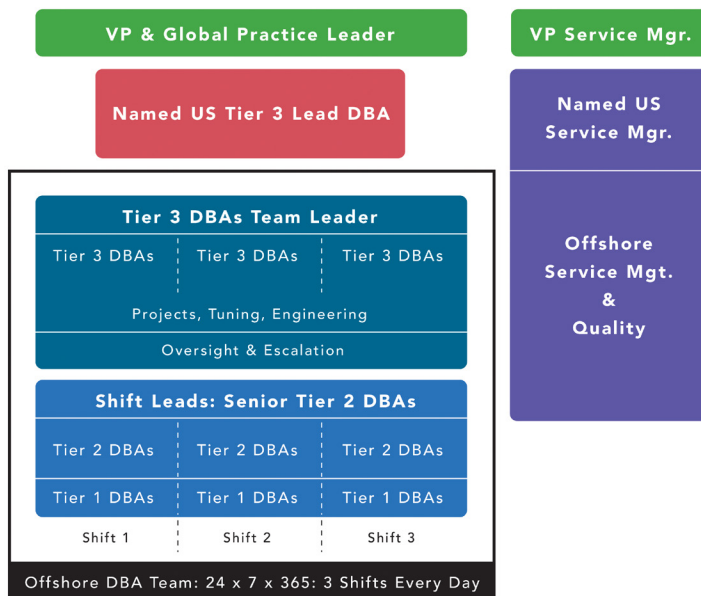
Not unlike our first case study, a large manufacturing firm was dissatisfied with its current service provider. The database team issued a request for proposal for a specific project in mid-2014 designed to select a new database services provider.

This client had Oracle, SQL Server, and Oracle E-Business Suite platforms. Requirements included 24x7 operations, multi-tiered delivery, and a strong layer of interactive US-based Tier 3 DBA services.

Our relationship with this client has progressed well past this initial project and has been with us over two years.

Datavail's Delivery Model Leverages Remote DBAs

Our delivery model starts with a specific technology practice structure. A U.S.-based lead database administrator is the main contact for our customers. Each client is assigned a U.S.-based lead Tier 3 database administrator. In addition, each client is also assigned a named, U.S.-based Service Manager as well. The Service Delivery Manager works to coordinate reporting and governance while the Lead DBA focuses on the core aspects of technical delivery. The client is then assigned to one of our offshore teams in that specific technology practice – this consists of subgroups of 20 to 30 people working in three, nine-hour shifts daily. This allows us to provide 24x7 coverage for technologies such as Oracle, Oracle EBS, Microsoft SQL Server, DB2, MongoDB, and others.

VP & Global Practice Leader

VP Service Mgr.

Named US Tier 3 Lead DBA

Named US Service Mgr.

Tier 3 DBAs Team Leader

| Tier 3 DBAs | Tier 3 DBAs | Tier 3 DBAs |

Projects, Tuning, Engineering

Oversight & Escalation

Shift Leads: Senior Tier 2 DBAs

Tier 2 DBAs	Tier 2 DBAs	Tier 2 DBAs
Tier 1 DBAs	Tier 1 DBAs	Tier 1 DBAs
Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3

Offshore Service Mgt. & Quality

Offshore DBA Team: 24 x 7 x 365: 3 Shifts Every Day

Our teams of experienced professionals work together and stay together as a team. For example, our Tier 3 service layer consists of professionals with 10 or more years of experience. To help keep attrition down and retention high Datavail does not have a team that only works the late hours, a.k.a. the graveyard shift. No one ever works only nights and weekends. This strategy has helped us maintain one of the industry's strongest employee retention rates.

Our services are delivered to the client through a fixed-price, monthly contract. The fee is based on a level-of-effort model that is highly flexible, eliminating some of the typically contentious problems occurring between price and project scope. We work with the client to estimate the effort associated with each tier of work.

Datavail's scale and flexible delivery model ensures that Tier 3 skills are properly layered into a solution, ensuring quality, while also making sure low-level work is not sent to layers of delivery that are more costly than the work requires. Ultimately, a unit of work is sent to the Tier that is best able to handle that work, striking a balance between cost and required skill set.

The result is a highly cost effective, high quality 24x7 database managed service. Our contracts are simple, with terms that are easily understood, and services that are easily measured and governed. We do not bind clients to long-term fixed contracts and offer extremely fair cancellation terms.

Operational delivery and projects, for example, can be outlined within the same contract structure. Our clients have the ability to adjust their priorities within scope of the monthly contract.

Ultimately, there are an infinite number of possible solution options available to a customer working with Datavail. This enables us to offer customers a high degree of flexibility, and create solutions that fit an organizations requirements.

There's a Better Way to Use Your DBAs

Using Datavail allows organizations to flexibly gain access to specialized teams for database management. By having Datavail attend to common processes, capacity management, workload distribution, and other routine issues, we solve the problems inherent in database administration staffing. This includes the associated expenses and turnover. We enable our clients' core staff to become more efficient and effective by providing them with 24x7 coverage, allowing their employees to concentrate on higher end, high value database projects.

Customers stay with us because they trust us. We have more than 300 customers who have been with Datavail for an average of seven years. We also have some customers who have been with us since our inception. Our customers tell us they stay for the quality service we consistently deliver year after year, project after project.

Datavail has the experience and expertise you need, when you need it. We have the most experienced database administrators available to help your organization deal with its most pressing challenges. Whether it is coping with explosive data growth, 24x7 coverage, or managing and tuning existing databases, we provide you with a custom solution tailored to your organization's specific needs.

For more information, please contact us at www.datavail.com or at 866-828-7843.

BIOGRAPHY

Mark Perlstein
President & CEO of Datavail

Mark is President & CEO of Datavail, a national leader in database support and professional services. For more than two decades, Mark has been a leader in the IT services market and brings a wealth of growth-oriented and operating experience in the services business to Datavail.

Prior to his CEO role at Datavail, Mark was President of the IT Operations/Managed Services division of a large global systems integration corporation. While there, Mark led the firm's entry into the IT infrastructure managed services market and helped lead that division to a tripling of its revenues and becoming a major force in the ITO sector. In this role, he worked directly with numerous CIOs of Fortune 100 and midmarket companies to deliver 24×7 IT operational support.

He also served as Chief Operating Officer of AlphaNet Solutions, a regional IT services provider traded on NASDAQ and located in the NYC/NJ area. In his career, Mark held various positions in the IT services sector, including serving as President of Aztec Technology Partners' $175 million New England-based business unit. His background also includes starting up, and then selling, a consulting and services firm that focused on the implementation and support of accounting and financial systems.

He is a graduate of the State University of New York at Albany where he received a bachelor's degree in communications with a minor in business administration. Mark also attended Hofstra University's MBA program from 1988 to 1990. Mark is an active leader in the IT community and frequent speaker at IT conferences.

ABOUT DATAVAIL

Datavail Corporation is the largest pure-play provider of remote database administration (DBA) services in North America, offering database design and architecture, administration and 24x7 support. The company specializes in Oracle, Oracle E-Business Suite, Microsoft SQL Server, MySQL, MongoDB, DB2 and SharePoint, and provides flexible on-site/off-site, onshore/offshore service delivery options to meet each customer's unique business needs.

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