Top Five Reasons for Choosing Remote Database Support in the Public Sector

Contents

remotedba

Introduction

In recent years the move to outsource IT or business processes in the public sector has become commonplace. There are many reasons why public sector organisations may choose to work with an external partner to manage all or part of their IT infrastructure. The main driver is typically to save money. Many local authorities face difficult spending decisions and are dealing with running an IT service which is chronically understaffed in order to meet spending requirements. Cost however is not the only reason for looking at external support.

From working directly with public sector organisations we know how difficult it can be to manage IT Systems on a day to day basis. From speaking to our customers we see a range of different reasons for engaging with an external organisation to provide database support services as part of their overall IT infrastructure planning. Cost is certainly one of those, as you'll see below, but we also found a few others.

This paper specifically focuses on DB2 support. Below are the top five reasons we see from our customers for choosing to outsource all or part of their DB2 database support function.

Top Five Reasons for Choosing Remote Database Support in the Public Sector

These are the top five reasons why our public sector customers have chosen a Remote Database Support Solution:

1. Cost
2. Cover
3. Proactive Vs Reactive
4. Lack of skills in-house
5. Insecure Future

Each public sector authority is different and their specific reasons for choosing a remote database support solution will vary but there are many common themes. The need for quality support and technical excellence is of course paramount.

1 – Cost

In recent years the public sector has faced difficult choices when it comes to cost management. In tough economic environments, IT budgets are static or reducing. People costs continue to consume an increasing proportion of the IT budget. This is especially true for highly skilled staff such as database administrators (DBAs).

It is often the case that DBA teams, particularly in the public sector, are overstretched and need more hands on deck but with pressure to keep headcount down there is little chance of employing an extra person. It is fairly common for public sector organisations not to take on new IT staff to replace those who leave or retire. This often means that staff are being asked to take on more work which is often outside their expertise

We have also found that for some customers DB2 is a niche part of their overall IT infrastructure. Therefore they have been reluctant to invest significant amounts of budget in the skills to support DB2, relying on their existing Oracle or SQL DBAs to "manage" when necessary. This can become a real problem if any serious DB2 support issues arise.

remotedba

> By utilising an external support provider, public sector authorities can benefit from additional DBA support far more cheaply than if they had to employ another permanent member of staff. This combination of in-house and external support works well for many organisations.

2 – Cover

High or continuous availability (24x7) is a common requirement for today's "on demand" IT Systems and this can put pressure on small or overstretched DBA teams. Teams can have difficulty providing cover for holiday, sickness or maternity and paternity leave. Adding to this the increasing requirement for systems to be available 24x7 with DBA cover required at all times, the pressure on small DBA teams is clear.

> Our customers have found that working alongside a partner who can provide 24x7 DBA cover with contracted response times down to 1 hour provides the insurance they need.

3 – Proactive Vs Reactive

Expert DBA skills are often needed on different projects and so DBAs can find themselves spending more time on non-core functions. This means that the vital monitoring and management of the database can be sidelined. Overworked DBA teams may not have time to proactively monitor the database. Instead, only reacting once a problem has occurred and authorities are already feeling the effects.

It is important when taking out a remote support contract, to check whether the service provider can offer the option of proactive monitoring. This takes away the concern of problems cropping up unexpectedly and more often than not potential issues are noticed and dealt with before users are even aware of an issue.

> It is important when taking out a remote support contract to check whether the service provider can offer the option of proactive monitoring.

4 – Lack of Skills In-House

We work with public sector authorities who do not have any DB2 skills in-house and departments who have skills in-house but access to those skills is limited.

Some public sector authorities may have inherited DB2 systems through mergers and consolidations and do not have the skills in-house to support it. Whilst their own IT team may be able to cope for a while, if any real issues arise, a support organisation with DB2 expertise will be needed.

We have also seen customers facing the need to replace a DBA quickly but who have struggled to find a new individual with the required level of skills. The cost of bringing in extra DB2 skills is a major issue for many organisations, not just in the public sector. Bringing in a support organisation is a useful way to plug this gap fast with the assurance that you will be getting the highest level of DB2 skills.

> Bringing in a support organisation is a useful way to plug the skills gap fast with the assurance that you will be getting the highest level of DB2 skills.

remotedba

5 – Insecure Future

Sometimes public sector organisations are unsure of their strategic IT direction, particularly the choice of database platform. Investing in permanent staff to support and maintain a database that may not be in the long term plans for the business does not make financial sense. Finding a provider who can take control of ongoing database maintenance until a final decision has been made is the ideal solution.

About RemoteDBA from Triton Consulting

As we have seen above, public sector organisations face many challenges in delivering a stable, efficient database infrastructure. Budget pressures, demands for higher availability and increasing workloads can all mean that pressure is building on IT Management to find a cost effective and reliable way of managing the organisations' DB2 infrastructure.

RemoteDBA provides the highest level of stability for business critical operations. Our clients receive a superior level of personalised care – day or night – from our team of highly experienced DB2 professionals.

Key Features:

- ✔ Fixed price with no hidden extras guaranteed

- ✔ Unlimited support calls

- ✔ Unlimited support hours

- ✔ Unrivalled DB2 expertise

- ✔ No performance monitoring tool costs

- ✔ Database healthcheck included

remotedba

RemoteDBA v Full Time DBA

Triton understands the financial pressures that IT departments face. We recognise that IT Managers need to keep service levels high whilst keeping spending to a minimum. With RemoteDBA Office, public sector organisations can benefit from expert DBA support for a fraction of the cost of a full-time DB2 DBA. All RemoteDBA services from Triton have a fixed cost with no hidden extras, making budgeting straightforward.

	Full Time DBA	RemoteDBA
No salary, training or other benefits to pay?	X	✔
Holiday cover provided?	X	✔
Sickness cover provided?	X	✔
Additional DB2 performance tooling included?	X	✔

Public sector organisations can reduce their **annual DB2 support costs by up to 75%** with RemoteDBA Office compared to one full time DBA.

remotedba

RemoteDBA Package Details

Features		RemoteDBA Office		RemoteDBA 24x7	
		Standard	Plus	Standard	Plus
SLA	9-5, M-F	✔	✔		
	24x7x365			✔	✔
Maximum first response time (hours)	1				✔
	2		✔	✔	
	4	✔			
Support Calls		Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Support Hours		Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Databases		2	4	4	8
Proactive Monitoring*		✘	✔	✔	✔
DB2 Version		V9+	Any	Any	Any
Business critical applications		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monthly reports		✔	✔	✔	✔
Access to online client portal		✔	✔	✔	✔
Dedicated account manager		✔	✔	✔	✔
Free database healthcheck**		✔	✔	✔	✔
Hidden extras		None	None	None	None
Fixed price guarantee		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimum duration		1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year

Proactive monitoring is not included in RemoteDBA Office
*** Healthcheck will be conducted remotely prior to commencement of the RemoteDBA service.*

remote**dba**

Ensuring that you have the best possible IT infrastructure to support your ever more demanding public sector organisation needs is a constant challenge. At Triton Consulting we can work with you to provide a full range of IT and data management solutions to meet your business needs. With RemoteDBA you can be assured of a proven, stable and secure process for the cost-effective management of all components of your DB2 infrastructure.

About Triton Consulting

Triton Consulting specialises in Data Management and has been an IBM Premier Business Partner since 1998. Specialising in DB2 for both the mainframe and distributed systems, Triton provides a full range of services from consultancy through to education and 24/7 DB2 support.

For more information visit www.triton.co.uk/db2-support

Case Study

Triton Consulting help Hampshire County Council provide Critical Services with 24/7 DB2 Support

Triton Consulting had been providing Hampshire County Council with their RemoteDBA support service since 2013 and had to go through a tender process to win the three year deal in May 2014.

Following a detailed evaluation process Hampshire County Council opted for RemoteDBA, a DB2 Managed Service from Triton Consulting. RemoteDBA was tailored to provide different Service Levels based upon the criticality of the incident.

You can read the full case study here

remotedba