



UK Broadband gets switched-on to the value of outsourced expertise



Industry

Telecoms

Key challenges

- Needed resource and expertise to manage mixed database environment
- Shortcomings with insourcing revealed potential weaknesses for the business

Solution

- Outsourced DBA service
- Team of consultants combined with comprehensive service desk
- Matched precisely to business needs

Business benefits

- Delivered for just 30% of the cost of insourcing a DBA
- Paid for 80% of first year service in week one thanks to 50% saving on software license renewal

Specialist skills result in better operation of critical databases

UK Broadband's 4G broadband services are changing the market by bringing fast, reliable, and cost-effective Internet connectivity to businesses and consumers alike. These services cut out the need for expensive fibre connections, instead offering access to the Internet over the 'air' through high-capacity point-to-point and point-to-multipoint services.

Thinking differently and acting decisively has been a major factor in the success of UK Broadband. Faced with the dilemma of re-recruiting for a dedicated Database Administrator (DBA) or coming up with an alternative to solve the challenge of managing and operating their critical databases, UK Broadband tasked trusted IT partner Highlander to propose some options.

Company overview

UK Broadband provides wireless data capacity, equipment, services, and solutions to the telecoms industry, service providers, channel partners, and the public sector. They switched on the first 4G LTE system for commercial services in the UK and now offer 4G wireless broadband services to consumers and businesses.

The challenge

UK Broadband operates several databases critical to the performance of its services. Ranging from customer records to service performance, they are at the very heart of how the business functions and are built on a mix of platforms including Oracle, MySQL and Microsoft SQL Server. Naturally, these databases need to be fast, resilient, available, and secure. Historically, UK Broadband had employed a dedicated DBA to undertake the task of administering these systems.

However, after the departure of the DBA and having identified shortcomings with insourcing this expertise, they wanted to explore new ideas that would ensure they still had the resource and expertise required to successfully operate these systems moving forward.



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It was a really easy commercial decision. Following a formal knowledge transfer, including an in-depth database healthcheck, Highlander took immediate responsibility for delivering the service.

Grant Gibson, Head of IT Operations

Grant Gibson, Head of IT Operations, recalls: “The challenge we faced was a tricky one. We needed the know-how of a dedicated DBA, but the volume of work involved in maintaining the systems had gradually reduced over time and was no longer a full-time job. Plus, an individual DBA wasn’t helpful at times of sickness and holiday, or potentially if we experienced a serious issue.”

UK Broadband needed to reconcile an annual increase in operating expenditure from one highly skilled resource against an annual decrease in productivity, as less work was required to maintain a stable system.

With rapid growth being experienced elsewhere in the business, the pressure was on to allocate operating expenditure as effectively as possible, and reducing the support headcount was seen as a potential option to achieve this. UK Broadband needed to look at options that would reduce costs whilst maintaining the same high level of support a dedicated DBA would deliver. Highlander were invited to offer an outside perspective.

The solution

Following an in-depth review of the challenges that UK Broadband faced, Highlander felt confident that creating an outsourced DBA service would be a viable alternative solution. Acquiring the high levels of expertise needed across such a mix of database platforms would not be easy to source. However, backed by an enviable ecosystem of partners, assembled over more than 20 years, Highlander went to work and identified a database specialist who could offer the capabilities UK Broadband sought.

They had never considered outsourcing such a vital function before. “We really liked the idea,” affirms Gibson. “It had the potential to satisfy all our needs, but we worried that the commercials may make it cost-prohibitive.”

The eventual solution Highlander scoped consisted of a transition of management, ongoing monitoring and performance tuning, and a fully inclusive service desk. Critically, the solution would provide considerably more coverage than UK Broadband achieved with just one DBA for just 30% of the cost.

“It was a really easy commercial decision,” continues Gibson. “Following a formal knowledge transfer, including an in-depth database healthcheck, Highlander took immediate responsibility for delivering the service.”



UK Broadband gets switched-on to the value of outsourced expertise

Specialist solutions



Infrastructure



Protection



Cloud



ERP



Workspace



Services

Business results and benefits

A fraction of the cost versus insourcing niche expertise

“Not only has Highlander been able to come up with a tailored service for us that matches our business’ needs, but they’ve done this for 30% of the cost of having our own dedicated DBA!” enthuses Gibson.

Depth of resource and system familiarity

Importantly, the new service is delivered by named consultants. It means that UK Broadband has a team of people who have developed an intimate knowledge of their systems without the risk of this residing with a sole DBA. Regular site visits ensure a smooth working relationship and see that ongoing recommendations for improvement can be made.

Know-how that pays for itself

Within the first week of support, some analysis of their Oracle licensing arrangements helped reduce UK Broadband’s license renewal by 50%, which on its own covered 80% of the annual service bill.

Future innovation

UK Broadband has ambitious plans that rely on the performance of the databases and sophisticated business intelligence derived from them. The DBA service has stabilised their environment, brought valuable peace of mind, and ensured the systems are ready for future innovation.

Working with Highlander



This was the best business decision I have ever made. Highlander introduced us to a partner who know what they’re doing and just get on with it. I’m confident that I can just leave it to them and trust it’s in safe hands. While Highlander has brought a specialist to the table to deliver the service itself, their continued involvement helps ensure we get the very best outcomes from it.” Grant Gibson, Head of IT Operations.



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