

ASCENT TECHNOLOGY ENSURES NO DOWNTIME DURING COMPUTICKET'S ORACLE DATABASE UPGRADE



Computicket has a long and proud history, with the company coming into being in the 1970s, as the first ticketing organisation of its kind in the world. Renowned for its ability to provide consumers with access to a wide variety of events, from movies and concerts to theatre, sport and a range of different live shows, Computicket was purchased by Shoprite approximately four years ago.

The nature of the company's business is such that its production database systems cannot afford any downtime. After all, if Computicket is unable to sell tickets, it is losing business. This meant that when the time came to upgrade the company's database servers from Oracle version 10g to version 11g, a specialist service provider was needed; one that could ensure a complete upgrade without impacting the operations of the database environment. For this, Computicket turned to Ascent Technology.

Garth Fox, IT Manager at Computicket explains that the unique nature of the organisation's database systems meant that it needed a partner that could offer a deep understanding of database environments. He says that Computicket sells seating for events in specific patterns, in order to avoid leaving odd seats available. Nonetheless, specific seats still need to be allocated, as requested by the client.

"The complex algorithms that control this process lie at the core of our booking database, as our inventory is the heart of our business. Even airlines don't have the same level of specificity we require for our seat allocations, so our database requirements are certainly unique," he says.

"The upgrade to Oracle version 11g was critical for us. Ascent clearly understood the ramifications if anything went wrong, so it planned the entire upgrade methodically and followed through with an equally methodical implementation."

Fox adds that the implementation went off even more smoothly than anticipated. "It was a genuinely flawless implementation, which is something I certainly have never experienced before. In the end it was a simple switchover with absolutely zero downtime."

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this successful partnership is the fact that Ascent's service is much more personal. Ascent is not only interested in what we are doing, the company also makes suggestions on how we can improve things. More pertinently, it is unlike many other service providers in that it never tries to sell us products. Ascent remains focused on their strong Database Consulting Services, thereby providing us with exactly the services we require in this space," states Fox.

Johan Lamberts, MD of Ascent Technology says that the company is well aware that the nature of Computicket's requirements is such that demand will, at times, spike quite heavily.

"Obviously there are times when there is a need for a high volume of transactions – such as when tickets for a major sporting event go on sale - and the database has to scale enormously to deal with the demand. In instances like these, Ascent ensures that it has people onsite to assist Computicket during these high demand scenarios," he says.

Fox adds that Ascent also provides executive level involvement when required by Computicket.

This takes place both on the technical side of operations and in the business arena. "Ascent's role is about more than merely ensuring that the transactional systems work; its people have a genuine understanding of why certain challenges occur and how these should be overcome."

He points out that Ascent has also assisted the organisation in providing a bridge between Computicket's Oracle Database and their Microsoft based CRM environment.

"Ascent's strong reputation as a heterogeneous database technology service provider made it the ideal candidate here as well. Ascent's ability to work with both Oracle and Microsoft databases meant that Computicket was able to deal with the company as sole service provider in this respect, safe in the knowledge of the quality of the work Ascent would provide."

"There is no doubt in my mind that Ascent is the perfect choice to assist with Computicket's unique requirements. I would say that Ascent has effectively become a part of our company now, and they will play a critical role in our technology roadmap moving forward," concludes Fox.