

ASCENT TECHNOLOGY AND SUN INTERNATIONAL'S PARTNERSHIP REACHES NEW HEIGHTS



Sun International continues to leverage its long standing partnership with Ascent Technology, most recently in respect of configuring its Microsoft SQL Server environment for its organisation-wide replacement of its legacy gaming system.

Established in 1979 with the introduction of the world-renowned Sun City Resort in the North West Province, Sun International (Sun) has grown into a successful leisure brand, with hotels and casinos situated in eight countries. Sun International is built on the principle of offering customers world class entertainment destinations - from family resorts to African safari holidays - as well as captivating casinos and much more.

As the organisation has expanded, so its database environment has grown in size and the management thereof has become that much more challenging. Sun has been able to overcome these challenges thanks to its longstanding partnership with experts in the field of Enterprise Database Management, namely, Ascent Technology.

According to Sun's Group Manager: IT Operations and Shared Services Johan Kok, the company has worked with Ascent since 2006, when it brought the company on board to assist it in maintaining its database environment.

"At the time, our database environment was quite small, so it made more financial sense to outsource its management than to employ in-house administrators for this task. Furthermore, since our environment includes both Oracle and Microsoft solutions, we required a partner that was capable of handling both technologies. Ascent's Technology heterogeneous approach to Enterprise Database Management meant that the company fitted the bill nicely," he says.

"Of course over the years, our database environment - in particular the Microsoft SQL Server footprint - has grown quite extensively. Because of this, we have at times considered bringing the database administration aspect in-house. However, our relationship with Ascent is extremely strong and we are very pleased with the work they have done so far; moreover, we understand the importance of having experts looking after such a critical part of our business."

Gona Rajoo, Sun's IT Infrastructure Manager adds that Sun has undertaken several database-related projects over the years, and each time Ascent has been the natural partner of choice. These projects have included the consolidation, virtualisation

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Gona Rajoo, IT Infrastructure Manager: Sun International

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and standardisation of the entire Sun database environment.

"The flexibility and experience Ascent brings to this role has been invaluable, and the company has comfortably adapted to our requirements as the nature of our engagement has changed over time."

Rajoo points out that the latest project undertaken by Sun has been the organisation-wide replacement of its legacy gaming system. He says that with this project, it was crucial that the database environment was ready to handle such a migration. In this respect, Ascent's role as Sun's trusted advisor was critical.

"This was a major undertaking for us, as it had to happen across all our various resorts. Therefore, in order to ensure there was no disruption to our guests' entertainment, it was imperative that our Microsoft SQL Server environment was properly configured."

"In this respect, we relied on Ascent to bring its expert knowledge of the Microsoft SQL Server space to bear, in order to enable the migration to the new gaming system to take place as quickly

and unobtrusively as possible. As always, Ascent worked closely with our people to ensure that the project went off without a hitch."

Ascent Technology's MD, Johan Lamberts adds: "It has been a long road we have travelled with Sun so far, and over the years, our people working with them have had the chance to gain additional experience and have matured over the course of the relationship. It has certainly been a fruitful endeavour from both sides and we are proud to be associated with Sun International, which remains one of our key clients."

Kok suggests that this continued growth and maturation has dovetailed nicely with Sun's own expansion plans.

"Ascent is a genuine partner to Sun, as evidenced by the fact that as our organisation has expanded and has continued setting up operations in other countries, so Ascent has continued to provide support for these international resorts from South Africa. As leaders and innovators in their field, much like Sun, Ascent aligns clearly with our culture and values, which is why I envision this partnership continuing for many years to come," he concludes.