

Partner With the Experts

If Matt Collins was concerned about upgrading his company's Oracle database from 9i to 10g, who could blame him?

Even an Oracle white paper calls upgrading a database "one of the most daunting activities" a DBA faces. "Having to comprehend all of the new features and to deal with potential plan changes can be overwhelming," warns the 27-page treatise on the 9i to 10g upgrade.

But really, it was no sweat.

Collins, the Director of IT for Egenera, Inc., has an experienced partner in managing databases, Ntirety Inc. A leading remote database administration company, Ntirety has repeatedly experienced tasks and problems with databases that a single customer may only see once in career.

"Anytime we run into an error, it's going to be the first time we've seen it," says Collins. "But its likely Ntirety has seen it before. We benefit from the wealth of experience that Ntirety has because it has experience with its other customers. Ntirety knows the standard, and sometimes non-standard solutions. They will say, 'Here's something we've seen at other places and here's what worked for them.'"

Based in Marlboro, Mass., Egenera is a 300-employee leader in data center virtualization solutions with offices around the globe. Collins and his two-man team partner with Ntirety to keep the company's databases and applications running smoothly. For an affordable fixed monthly cost, Ntirety delivers Egenera the work of a full-time employee at less than a third of the cost.

The Ntirety team

Ntirety assigns five to seven experts to each customer – provides 24-7 monitoring, administering and tuning of Oracle and Microsoft SQL databases. Ntirety's experts apply their skills and experience to diagnose and eliminate common causes of database outages and cut their customer's information technology costs. Ntirety's team never calls in sick, works day and night, and never takes a vacation.

"I characterize our relationship with Ntirety as a partnership, not as a vendor-customer relationship. That developed because of Ntirety's attitude. They really care about our business. They are always aware of what's going on, and if we need additional resources, they make sure we have them," Collins said.

The Ntirety team assigned to Egenera is in daily contact with Collins' staff, and has a weekly conference call with Collins to discuss issues and plans with the database. Work on Egenera's databases must fit into maintenance windows to minimize disruption to this global business. Ntirety hits those marks, Collins says. And in the off hours, Ntirety is there to spot and fix problems.

When a nighttime power outage knocked out Egenera's system, it did not come back when the electricity did. Ntirety was first to spot the problem.

"It's nice to have such a major part of our infrastructure in such good hands," Collins says.