First4 Database Partners

Database management company moves its core infrastructure to the cloud

First4 strives to know about their customers’ database problems before they happen. Their service flags problems, and alerts on exceptions to industry best practices. This enables database administrators to minimize database issues and alerts, creating an environment that does not just react to problems, but proactively eliminates them in advance.

Facing a hardware refresh, with the associated migration planning, vendor conversations, testing, and ongoing support costs, First4 decided to explore cloud solutions for their infrastructure. They moved their core database and associated applications to Oracle Bare Metal Cloud Service.

Aging infrastructure motivates change

For over a decade, First4 has remotely monitored and managed thousands of Oracle and SQL Server databases for their customers. This service involves the collection and analysis of metadata which is stored in a central repository, processed, and used for alerts, service requests, and incident management.

The prior infrastructure resides at a colocation facility, where they ran Oracle Database and Oracle Application Express, along with their own core application, tools, and utilities. With server hardware end-of-life looming, First4 began exploring several cloud options.

“We didn’t want to add capacity to older, ailing infrastructure that we’d soon retire, so our ability to add capacity and innovate had slowed,” said Bruce McCartney, Partner at First4. “Every few years we’d jump through the hoops of exploring hardware options, planning our migration, testing configurations, and executing our new deployment. Then we’d be there in the middle of the night replacing disks, patching, and performing ongoing maintenance. We also had to pay a lot for support, but didn’t really enjoy dealing with a multi-vendor matrix of support from vendors when something went wrong. We’re database people – infrastructure management is not our core business”

Fast deployment, high performance, and backups in half the time

The deployment began with establishing the core database with Oracle Database Cloud Service on bare metal, and an IPSec VPN Connection from First4 to Oracle’s data center. This initial deployment took only two months to plan and bring into production.

First4’s customers connect securely to the existing infrastructure today through dozens of

“By moving our Oracle Database and applications to the cloud, we got out of the infrastructure management business, saving thousands on space, power, and cooling, alone. We also avoid the staffing costs associated with maintaining, patching, and upgrading servers. These time and cost savings enable us to focus on our core business, database management”

- David Rock, President, First4 Database Partners

WHY ORACLE?

- Performance
- Backup takes half the time
VPN tunnels. Upon migration, several dedicated network security appliances will be retired, saving ongoing maintenance costs.

“We also saw some unanticipated benefits,” said Steve Recsky, Partner at First4, “For example, our backups completed in half the time, and it was easier for us to backup more frequently and maintain additional backups – it’s easy to add capacity any time.”

First4 will validate expected cost savings and performance improvements and then begin the benefit analysis to move the rest of its production infrastructure to Oracle Bare Metal Cloud Service. This step would include SQL Server and Active Directory domain controller, leading to a total removal from previous co-location facility and a total production commitment to Oracle Bare Metal Cloud Service.

About First4 Database Partners

First4 Database Partners Inc. is a Canadian company founded in 2005 for the sole purpose of delivering Managed Database Services. Database support is done in a repeatable engineered process that allows for continuous improvement of the client’s database environment. First4’s Managed Database Services are comprised of DBAs and Managers experienced with industry best practices, a Service Request Framework, monitoring, and 24-7 on-call Support.