PADNOS

How IDERA streamlined SQL Server management for the family-owned recycling company

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OVERVIEW

Founded in 1905, PADNOS is an industry leader in customized recycling solutions that buys, processes and sells paper, plastics and metals for industrial and commercial customers. Headquartered in Holland, Michigan, the family-owned and operated business employs more than 700 people at its 25 recycling locations in Michigan and throughout the United States.

The company's nine-person Information Technology group manages three SQL Servers that run a number of critical software applications, including systems for: electronic document imaging, delivery and pickup tracking, fleet tracking for the company's 80 trucks, maintenance management for the fleet and plant equipment, human resource management, and accounting. Nearly 500 PADNOS employees actively use these systems every day.

ORGANIZATON PROFILE

PADNOS
Industry Customized Recycling Solutions   **Headquarters** Holland, MI   **Website** padnos.com

CHALLENGE

The PADNOS IT team faced ongoing problems with the company's mission-critical accounting application, which serves as a retail point-of-sale system for buying and selling scrap products. Too often, high demand for the application caused one set of users to get blocked out by another, resulting in delays of up to 30 seconds and ongoing frustration for customers.

The team tried to address this issue by running queries with SQL Server management tools, but they lacked the visibility required to pinpoint issues quickly. The PADNOS IT team needed another management tool to provide real-time analysis of SQL Server health and performance metrics so they could understand what was going on in the application, and how to fix it.

SOLUTION

After evaluating numerous tools, the PADNOS IT team selected IDERA SQL Diagnostic Manager in 2011, using it to monitor one SQL Server instance initially, before expanding it to the company's other SQL Servers based on the product's proven success.

Now PADNOS uses SQL Diagnostic Manager to monitor all of its multi-user and mission-critical applications and to quickly pinpoint health, performance or availability problems within its SQL Server environment, including when third-party application queries may be slowing down key operations.

In one case, the information gleaned from SQL Diagnostic Manager helped PADNOS convince one of its software vendors to review its code, and ultimately identify and fix a hidden problem, translating into significantly improved application effectiveness and speed.

SQL Diagnostic Manager's main dashboard, history, reporting and alerting features are also very useful, helping PADNOS IT understand when some sessions are blocking other sessions for a certain amount of time, as well as pinpoint issues such as too much stress on the system.

BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

SQL Diagnostic Manager saves the PADNOS IT team significant time and resources associated with finding queries to run, getting answers promptly and observing multiple queries at once. When someone is blocking another user's session, they can get in quickly and resolve the situation.

The PADNOS helpdesk is now trained to know when it is appropriate to use SQL Diagnostic Manager to kill a user session or to unblock access for the right people so the IT team does not have to do deal with the issue, which is another major time saver.

The IT team also uses SQL Diagnostic Manager to avoid having to buy another expensive or more powerful server. For example, PADNOS was only using one vendor's latest product for testing purposes and its IT team had to greatly increase the CPU count on the server to keep the application running. With SQL Diagnostic Manager, PADNOS could quickly see what was causing the excessive workload and eliminate it from the server.

"SQL Diagnostic Manager was an easy sell to my coach since it works so well and saves our team time and effort that would otherwise be spent running queries," said Todd Gronevelt, senior application developer in the PADNOS Information Technology group. "SQL Diagnostic Manager's main dashboard is extremely helpful in giving us real-time server visibility, and showing our vendors the before and after once we fix their problems. I always go to SQL Diagnostic Manager first when something is going on with our systems."

SQL Diagnostic Manager

ACHIEVE 24/7 SQL MONITORING

- Performance monitoring for physical and virtual environments
- Query plan monitoring to see the causes of blocks and deadlocks
- Transactional SQL Server application monitoring with SQL Workload Analysis
- Integrated SQL Doctor expert recommendations
- Predictive alerting with settings to avoid false alerts
- Web-based dashboard with at-a-glance views of top issues and alerts

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