

Superior Support Enables High-Performance Data Storage Company to Sustain Rapid Growth



Client Profile: DataDirect Networks (DDN) is the world's largest privately held data storage company. Founded in 1998, DDN has customers in over 50 countries. Significant investments in innovative technologies have propelled DDN to the top of many industry storage sector scorecards.

Industry: Technology

Geography: Headquartered in Chatsworth, California

Revenue: \$400 million

Employees: 1,000

Supported Products/Applications:

- Oracle EBS 12.1.3 including tax, legal, and regulatory updates
- Oracle Database 11.2.0.4
- Oracle Fusion Middleware 11gR2
- Agile 9.2

Benefits

- **Reduce support spend:** Slash Oracle ERP support fees in half
- **Maximize investments:** Get more from existing systems, improve quality, and do more with the same headcount — without upgrading
- **Prevent business disruption:** Keep business running and users happy with fast and easy system fixes

“Our objective has always been to get the maximum return from our investments. We’ve been able to automate, increase functionality, and generally get more out of our systems — all without adding headcount or upgrading.”

– *Kristin Blanco, Oracle ERP Manager, DataDirect Networks*

If data is king, storage surely is its castle. The critical nature of storage is reflected in the dynamic landscape of the market sector, characterized by numerous mergers and acquisitions, well-funded new entrants, frequently commoditized pricing, and relentless technology innovation. For a data storage company to thrive, stability in its core business infrastructure and systems is the key to the castle.

The Always-On Engine

At DataDirect Networks (DDN), the world's largest non-publicly listed data storage company, keeping core systems running in tip-top shape is Kristin Blanco's job. As the Oracle ERP manager, Blanco and her team of four are committed to continuous process improvement. She explained, “The objective has always been to maximize our investments. We inherited a lot of headaches from the original Oracle implementation, plus we were only using a fraction of the available functionality. So, our goal was to clean it up, start utilizing all the capabilities, and get more out of our systems.”

To Switch or Not to Switch

As a long-standing user of Oracle support, Blanco confessed to a level of nervousness about moving to an independent third-party provider: “The primary driver for making a change was the cost savings. But it was also essential for us to maintain a high level of support for our ERP, so I was initially reluctant to switch.”

Having decided to make the transition to third-party support, the value of having highly responsive service was immediately amplified following DDN's acquisition of three companies in quick succession. Each addition dramatically increased transaction volumes and to further complicate the situation, each company had its own ERP system.



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Kristin Blanco
Oracle ERP Manager,
DataDirect Networks

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Kristin Blanco
Oracle ERP Manager,
DataDirect Networks

Blanco recalled, "The acquisitions had great potential for chaos! Because volumes were so much higher, we rapidly had to improve our efficiencies and implement new functionality to cover the combined companies' processing needs. The earlier versions of Oracle quickly ran into issues, but our new support partner acted fast and made it really easy to log a ticket, get a patch, and keep the business running. There was no dead-in-the-water time, so I became a big fan."

She added, "In addition to more personalized support, we were able to cut related costs by 50%. And because of the guidance and insights from the new partner, we've been able to achieve a lot more with our existing system."

Smart Centers

The DDN team has contemplated the need to upgrade, especially when there is a glitch that may be potentially fixed in a subsequent release. However, Blanco discovered that she could avoid the hassle, time, and money involved in upgrading to a new version with targeted modifications to the existing Oracle platform. "With access to quality support, it's so much easier to keep the existing version in place and continue to enhance the capabilities. We can deliver higher-value services without having to add headcount."

With DDN's growth, volumes increased 20-fold and the previous manual procedure for taxes proved unscalable. Blanco recalled, "Implementing the Oracle EBS tax module was complicated, but our support partner guided us through the process and the resulting accuracy and throughput improvements definitely made it very worthwhile."

Blanco shared that her users are happier too. "We have about 50 users that access OBIEE [Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition] reporting every day. When Adobe Flash stopped being supported in IE, the graphs no longer worked but we got a quick and easy fix from our support partner and that led to happy users again!"

Rimini Street: A Partner with Pace and Precision

A vital complement to Blanco's talent for driving improvements and maximizing ROI is her partnership with Rimini Street. "I've learned a lot from Rimini Street, and we wouldn't have been able to achieve half of the improvements we've done without its know-how — the aggravation and intensive labor requirements would have overloaded my team. I used Oracle Support for 15 years before making the change, and working with Rimini Street has been an easy transition. We're able to 'move the ball forward' considerably faster now."

Blanco also values that she is working with a partner who understands and supports her position. "I didn't like the constant pressure to upgrade when the current system is working just fine."

Aside from the tangible business benefits of partnering with Rimini Street, Blanco also appreciates the human touch: "With other support organizations, it feels like you have to ask multiple times to get someone on the phone. But with Rimini Street, I know I'm going to talk to an expert within a few minutes and quickly receive a solution."

For More Information

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