**Questions Every SQL DBA Should Ask Before Supporting a New Third-Party Database**

1. Which versions of Microsoft SQL Server are supported?

2. Is database store at Onprem or cloud?

3. Does your application work 24/7?

4. How many production servers/clusters do you have?

5. How many database/tables do use your project?

6. Which size does have your database? How faster is it growing?

7. Will you give me access to using SQL Profiler? Extend events

8. Do you have documentation?

9. How is database delivery going at your project?

10. Can you explain your architecture?

11. How do you request data? SP, native query, ORM?

12. Which problems are you have? What do you expect from me?

Additional questions:

* Windows authentication or SQL Authentication? *If SQL – how do you enforce policy? Do you cleanup and encrypt passwords?*
  + What should I expect to see for performance characteristics? (I/O, Mem, CPU utilization)
  + Will your app live in a shared instance that looks like our environment? (*I HATE SQL Server sprawl. I hate seeing many installations of SQL server, each with a license cost, each with an administrative overhead, just sitting their supporting a small application because the vendor said “has to be that way”)*
  + What sort of performance issues have your support folks commonly dealt with in similar environments to ours?
* Does your application support a named instance? (*Sounds stupid but it isn’t.. ask any question. They should. But if they don’t and you do? You’ll have to figure that out. It may be that they have no clue what you mean. That’s a sign for you also*.)
* Does your application support and is it certified to communicate with a SQL Cluster? (*again may sound stupid when you think about clustering and SQL with an instance only active on one node anyway*)
* Does your application work in a SQL Server Availability Group?
* I want to put this in the cloud in AWS EC2 or Microsoft Azure on an IaaS deployment – do you have issues with that?
* For a smaller DB – are there any plans to move to SQL Azure?
* Can you explain your architecture? Looking for discussion about:
  + Data Access methods – are they developing with performance in mind, are they using modern technology… Will you get hammered with a bunch of sp\_cursorfetch statements? Do they care about performance?
  + You may be “just” the DBA but we all know the DB gets blamed first  Understand how they connect, if you are making the back end Highly Available, how is everything above the DB going to be HA? It’s great to have a cluster or availability group but useless if there is a single app server.
* Can you share with me all of the recommended best practices your installation and support folks suggest for database maintenance? *I like to roll my own – but I like to hear what the vendor says. Do they have bad advice? Do they have special things you should do on a regular basis? If you don’t ask, you’ll never know.*
* For an application of this category and usage, here is our general backup/recovery strategy. Do you have any issues with that? (Are there distributed transactions that need to have coordinated backup? Do they have issues with backup methods you use? Does the DB backup need to coincide with some XML file someplace?) – *Again – you own this, but it is good to know about exceptions.*
* Does your support have any processes that involve recycling the SQL instance or rebooting the server? If so, is this mandatory? Why? *This is good to know if you are trying to cut down on sprawl and reduce licenses – you don’t want Vendor X restarting the SQL Server that applications A-J are on. And you probably don’t even want them restarting their own. But if you don’t ask, you’ll be surprised sometimes.*
* Do you have any reference sites we can talk to? If the app is large enough, try and get a customer of similar scenario. Talk to their IT staff, talk to a DBA there. Maybe overboard but can be helpful if conditions warrant.