John **McCormack**

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About Me

I am passionate about SQL Server and cloud technologies. As a highly experienced and certified Database Administrator with experience in Azure and AWS, I specialise in SQL Server and Azure SQL Database. I enjoy working on production support, performance tuning and cloud database solutions (IaaS and PaaS). I have significant Azure and AWS cloud solutions experience. I am a Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert for Data Management and Analytics.

Work history

**Principal DBA:**Monster Worldwide: March 2021 - Present

* As the Principal DBA, I have overall responsibility for several key performance areas.
  + Health, availability, and performance of our SQL Server instances, failover clusters & RDS
  + Emergency triage and troubleshooting of issues including performance problems
  + Monitor alerts and act upon them or delegate action
  + Prevent and minimise downtime
  + Audit preparation and delivery
* Design and consultancy
  + Design process improvement solutions and offer design advice on data platform solutions
  + Design, implement and administer RDBMS solutions for on premises SQL Servers, AWS & Azure
  + Migrated a 500GB database from Oracle to SQL Server
    - Streamlined process to reduce transfer time from 20 hours to 1 hour
* Cloud
  + Regularly review resources and their utilisation to ensure value for money (Cost optimisation)
  + Manage Azure SQL Databases (PAAS) and AWS data platform products (RDS, EMR, Elasticsearch)
* Mentoring/Development
  + Lead daily stand-ups to ensure objectives are being met and team members are not blocked
  + Hold weekly one-to-one meetings with team members regarding career development
  + Manage workload and delegate tasks
  + Coach/train team members to help them improve knowledge and performance
  + Share knowledge through presentations, documentation and side by side working

**DBA Contractor:**Nebula Data Solutions: January 2019 – Present

**Client: Optiseller**

* Health check and consultancy
  + Analyse usage to help right size PAAS resource
    - Showed how to use hidden benefits such as read-only replicas
  + Provide a monthly SQL DB health check with actionable items
  + Help the team implement suggested improvements such as “remove unused indexes”
  + Participate in troubleshooting events and provide solutions
  + Be available as a resource to ask questions via Zendesk ticketing system

**Client: City Facilities**

* Performance tuning and optimisation
  + I reviewed indexes and expensive queries across the main customer product and implemented several fixes and solutions. This stabilised performance at first and eliminated downtime events.
  + Further enhancements improved performance to the level which allowed the customer to scale down SQL Server to a cheaper VM, saving thousands in compute and SQL Enterprise licence costs.
  + I also rewrote several stored procedures and views and replaced some complex Entity Framework queries with efficient stored procedures.
  + I ran several load tests and collected metrics before and after to evidence improvements.
  + I worked with developers to show them how better to design indexes.
* Cost optimisation
  + I was a key contributor to a cost optimisation project with my personal contributions amounting to £400k annual savings.
  + I automated the start/stop of non-production VMs out of hours.
  + I deleted millions of old and unneeded files from blob using PowerShell and runbooks.
  + I right sized all the SQL DB PaaS databases and migrated to serverless from provisioned where we had long periods of inactivity.
  + I recommended the use of reserved instances for production instances.
* SQL Server IaaS (Azure)
  + I removed a tempdb bottleneck by relocating the files to D drive (ephemeral storage). This resulted in huge performance improvements which [I blogged about](https://johnmccormack.it/2019/03/put-tempdb-files-on-d-drive-in-azure-iaas/).
  + I performed storage migration to premium disks, where this could not be done automatically. I minimised downtime by working on a secondary replica, then failing over when work was complete.
  + I implemented SQL Server Agent Extension to automate backups and patching.
  + I set up AGs for a performance load test environment. This included automatic failover and read only routing against a secondary replica. I also managed and used the AGs in production.
  + I patched SQL Server and minimised downtime by utilising availability groups.
* Automation
  + I introduced the DBATOOLS PowerShell module as a way of automating several tasks
  + I created a PowerShell script to manage cross subscription data warehouse restores on Synapse Analytics. Prior to this, the restores took almost a day. My process reduced the time to 1 hour
  + I configured backup archival in blob storage using PowerShell and lifecycle management.
* Cloud Migration Proof Of Concept (IaaS to Managed instance)
  + I worked on a POC to migrate the SQL Server VMs to Managed Instance. The application worked very well, and the migration was smooth using DMS
* I mentored & trained DBA team members to allow them to carry on with the changes I introduced, following the completion of my contract. This included recording a lot of bespoke video content on Microsoft Stream, and documenting processes in confluence.

Certifications

* MCSE: Data Management and Analytics
* AWS Cloud Solutions Architect Associate
* MCT: Microsoft Certified Trainer
* Azure DP-900 and AZ-900

Skills

* **Production DBA** - Availability Groups | Failover Cluster | Replication | PowerShell | Log Shipping | Mirroring | Backup/Restore | SSIS | SAN
* **Development DBA** - Index tuning | Query tuning | Strong T-SQL skills | Performance triage | Agile / SCRUM
* **Cloud DBA** - Azure SQL Database | Managed Instance | Storage | Runbooks | Elastic Jobs | RDS | Cost optimisation

Previous roles

**Database Administrator:**  
Monster Worldwide: October 2012 – January 2019

In this role, I progressed from Associate Database Administrator to becoming a senior member of the team, responsible for high transaction OLTP systems and Data warehouses, as well as SQL Server Migrations. I co-ordinated an annual DR test, including failover to a new data centre. (SAN/RecoverPoint replication was used along with failover clusters.) I also implemented a wide array of cloud solutions including Azure SQLDB, AWS RDS & Athena.

I had responsibility for managing a workload of 600+ daily SSIS packages for our data warehouses and marts. I wrote packages too and handled daily debugging issues as deduping data. I also wrote packages on an ad hoc basis for new data flows. I also managed a Global finance mart ETL process which included sourcing Oracle data. I was security cleared (SC) due to working on Government solutions.

**Various positions before working in IT (Customer services, Sales and Team Manager)**

August 1997 – October 2012 (RBS, British Gas then T-Mobile EE. Please ask if you’d like further details).

Education

* **2008 – 2012** –University of the West of Scotland - Bsc (Hons) Web Development 1st Class - Court medal winner
* **1992 – 1997** – Paisley Grammar School

Personal Interests

I enjoy helping the data community by sharing my knowledge through blogs, videos and speaking at conferences as well as contributing code to the DBATools open-source PowerShell project. I have my own [Data Platform blog](https://johnmccormack.it).