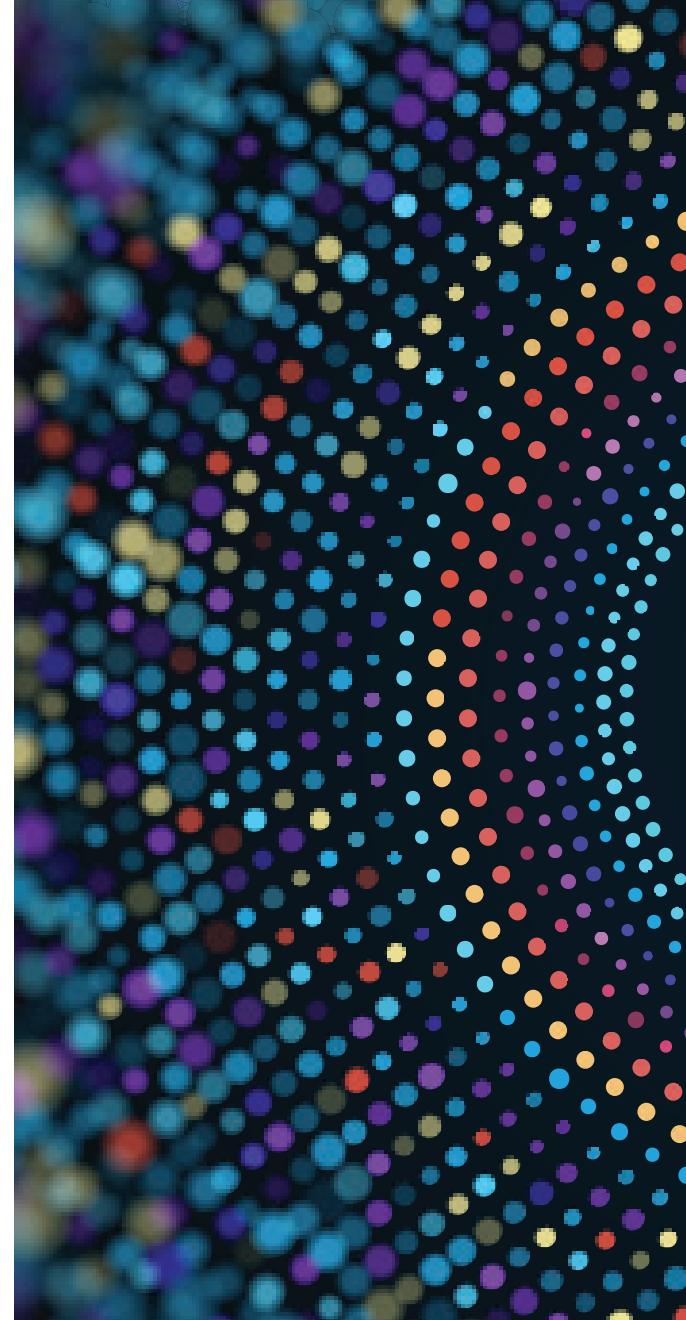

Oracle Database Strategies and Support Survey— The Diversification and Decentralization Revolution



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database
TRENDS AND APPLICATIONS

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01

Executive Summary

Organizations today are entering a transformative era, driven by the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and intelligent agents.

The imperative is clear: to remain competitive and innovative, enterprises must deliver new capabilities, insights, and efficiencies through next-generation applications. These applications—whether powering real-time analytics, autonomous decision-making, or AI-driven business processes—are fundamentally different from traditional ERP, CRM, and BI systems.

As these new applications emerge, they bring requirements that go far beyond the capabilities of classic OLTP (transactional) and OLAP (analytical) database structures. They demand the ability to handle unstructured data, real-time streams, semantic search, and complex relationships—features that legacy databases were not designed to support.

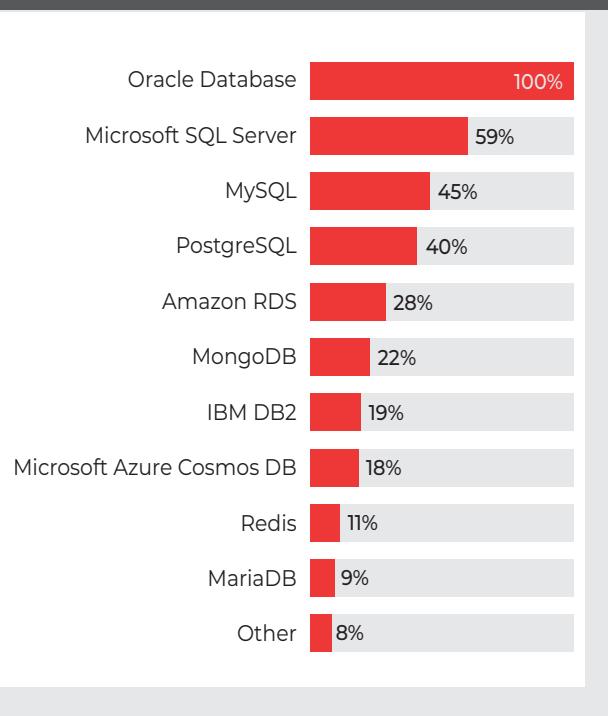
The findings of this survey reflect this evolution: Organizations are adopting diverse database ecosystems and are preparing data architectures to support where the functional revolution is happening: at the application layer. Survey respondents report a strong appetite for AI and ML capabilities, with over half seeking closer integration between their databases and popular AI/ML frameworks, and nearly half wanting native support for large language models. This demand for advanced application features is driving organizations to explore new database platforms, cloud-native solutions, and multi-model architectures.

The survey also reveals that most organizations are not abandoning their existing databases outright, but are instead expanding their ecosystems to support new application requirements. This is evidenced by the widespread use of multiple database types—including relational, NoSQL, and cloud-native options—and the growing interest in third-party support and cloud adoption. The move toward decentralization, cloud, and AI integration is a direct response to the evolving demands of business applications.

Despite Oracle Database's longstanding and ongoing role as the backbone of enterprise applications, practitioners are increasingly compelled to seek third-party support and consider alternate technologies. Respondents cite Oracle's high licensing costs as the main reason among many for deploying new applications on non-Oracle databases. A vast majority also report that Oracle support times are less than superior and that slow resolution of issues is problematic or worse for their organizations.

In summary, this survey supports the case that the future of enterprise IT is being shaped by the need for innovative applications. The transformation begins with business requirements and application strategy, which then drive the evolution of data architectures and database choices. Success will depend on building robust data foundations, investing in talent, and embracing open, modular architectures that can adapt to the pace of technological change. Lasting value will also depend on cost-effective and responsive support and performance tuning services.

Figure 1 — What databases do you use?



The survey confirms this database decentralization seen in data environments. Today's data teams work within a diverse ecosystem of database tools. The organizations surveyed are all Oracle Database users, which forms the primary foundation of this report. Along with Oracle, a majority, 59%, also use SQL Server, 45% also use MySQL, 40% also use PostgreSQL, and 28% also use Amazon RDS. (See Figure 1) This decentralization of databases is evolving due to an increased emphasis on the specific benefits these products offer, especially AI, analytics, ease of deployment, and real-time capabilities. However, every company has a different mix of skills and requirements, and reasons for migration may be complex.

Developed and fielded by Unisphere Research in partnership with Rimini Street, this survey report is based on a total of 218 respondents amongst Oracle database users. A significant portion of respondents are high-level executives (42% director-level and above) with extensive experience (63% have over 20 years). The largest segment work in large organizations (47% with more than 10,000 employees), indicating a focus on enterprise-level database management. Major industries represented include technology providers, financial services, manufacturing, and government.

The survey highlights the following trends and attitudes shaping today's database environments:

- AI and machine learning capabilities are Oracle managers' top priorities going forward. While Oracle has addressed such capabilities in its latest releases, market education and upgrade cycles mean there is still work to be done. A majority, 52%, want their current Oracle databases to integrate closely with existing AI/ML frameworks. Close to half, 47%, would like to see native support for large language models.

- A majority of respondents, 77%, have been developing and deploying applications on databases other than Oracle over the last 36 months. This survey indicates that this willingness to use databases other than Oracle springs from a number of different reasons, from cost to frustration with Oracle support.
- Organizations are not happy with their levels of database support. Almost nine in ten, 89%, do not view Oracle support times as superior, and 87% indicated slow resolution of issues was somewhat problematic or worse for their organizations. In addition, they feel Oracle licensing is too complex, cited by a large majority (69%).
- Database performance issues continue to take a major bite out of organizational time and resources. A majority of respondents, 62% report they are impacted by database performance issues on a monthly basis or more.
- There aren't enough skilled people to manage AI/ML initiatives (cited by 52%), and many still are falling short with basic database skills (24%). Third-party integrations, troubleshooting, performance tuning and security are creating the most challenges.
- Organizations are steadily shifting toward hybrid and cloud environments while balancing flexibility and control.

On the following pages are the full results of this important study.



02

Wanted: More AI Features

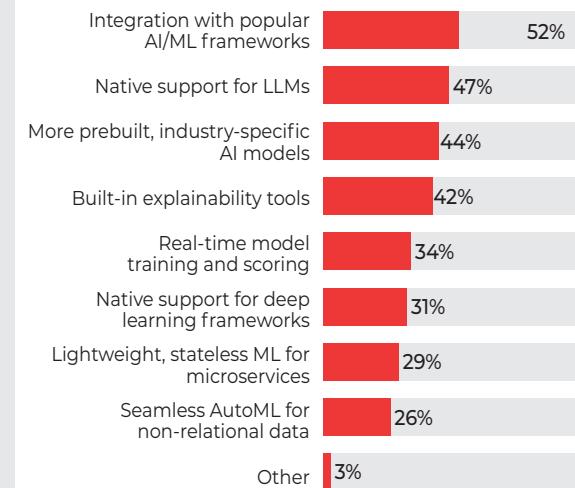
AI and machine learning capabilities are Oracle managers' top priorities going forward.

AI and machine learning capabilities top Oracle managers' wish lists in this survey. A majority, 52%, want their Oracle databases to integrate closely with existing AI/ML frameworks. Interestingly, while 47% of survey respondents would like to see native support for large language models (LLMs), they may be unaware that Oracle has already incorporated integration and native support for LLMs in versions 19c and 23ai. This can eliminate the need for continuous upgrades or adding of another database provider to obtain new features. (See Figure 2) At this point, just over half of the sites in the survey, 58%, work with 19c, and 16% now have version 26ai.

AI and ML have a great deal to offer database teams, taking on much of the low-level maintenance work of database management—overseeing backup processes, performance monitoring, and the prediction of potential bottlenecks. AI- and ML-based tools and platforms can also provide oversight governance. AI and ML have a lot to offer when it comes to security—the most critical piece of database management and development.

This, in turn, frees up data teams to focus more directly on business requirements and leveraging data assets to better meet customer needs and help prepare for shifts in market trends.

Figure 2 — What AI/ML capabilities would you like to see in Oracle Database?



03

Needed: More AI and Basic Data Management Skills

There aren't enough skilled people to manage AI/ML initiatives, and many still are falling short with basic database skills. Third-party integrations, troubleshooting, performance tuning, and security are taking the most time and creating the most challenges.

AI and ML are a double-edged sword for data teams. It opens up new types of opportunities for data managers and professionals, enabling them to work closer with the business to achieve real-time analytics. At the same time, this calls for an expansion of database managers' skills, to understand tools, models, and data training.

The increasing complexity of tools and the rise of AI/ML initiatives are driving the demand for new skills, particularly in database support for AI/ML and cloud management. A majority, 52%, are finding it difficult to acquire AI/ML skills. (See Figure 3) The database managers and professionals who will be in demand over the months and years to come will be those who work closely with the business, advising, consulting, and even leading business-driven AI efforts.

Basic database skills are also still needed, and AI introduces new challenges. One in four respondents report they don't have enough skilled people to manage a range of basic database functions, such as data architecture, data warehouse or data lake management, multi-database platform management, performance tuning, or automation and scripting. (See also Figure 3) These basic tasks also take up a great deal of respondents' time, as shown later in Section 5 of this report.

Of course, the move toward greater decentralization is creating new headaches. Skills are an issue, and the top reasons creating the need for more skills are the increasing technical complexity of tools, platforms and applications (70%), more AI and machine learning initiatives within the enterprise (58%) and a greater variety of database platforms to manage (54%). (See Figure 4)

Management skills are needed to ensure that data environments meet the requirements of their businesses, and guide future investments in database technology. Management skills most in demand are analytics (56%), problem-solving (52%), and enterprise visionary (44%). Close to half also see a need to "visionary" skills that will help deliver innovation in today's competitive environment. (See Figure 5)

Figure 3 — What skill sets are you finding the most difficult to hire for?

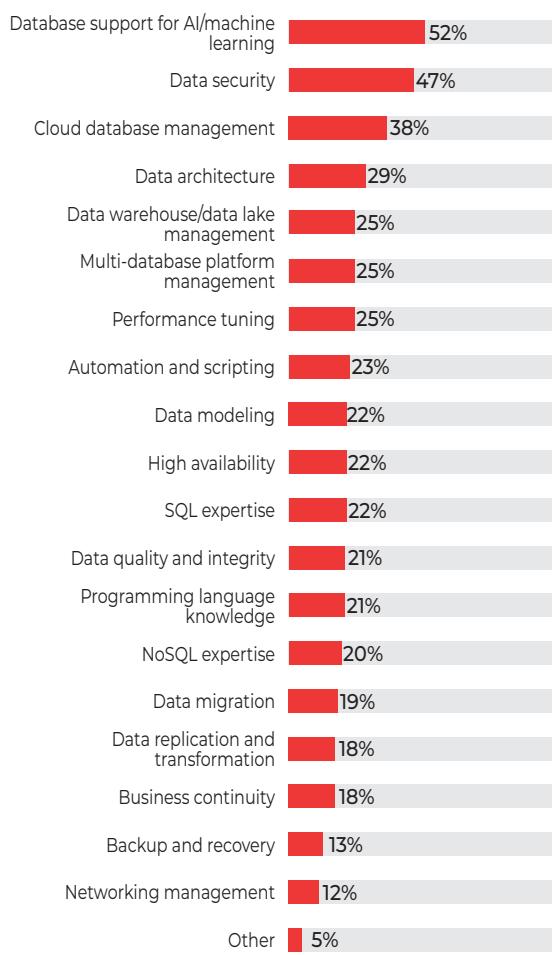


Figure 4 — What is creating the need for more skills?

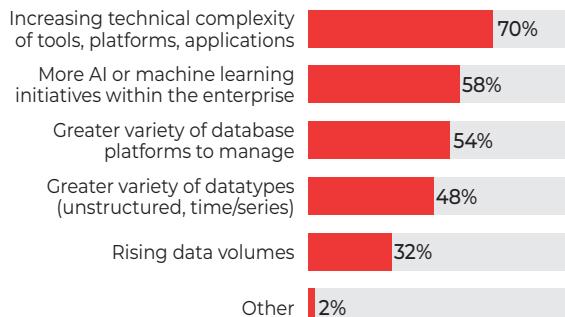
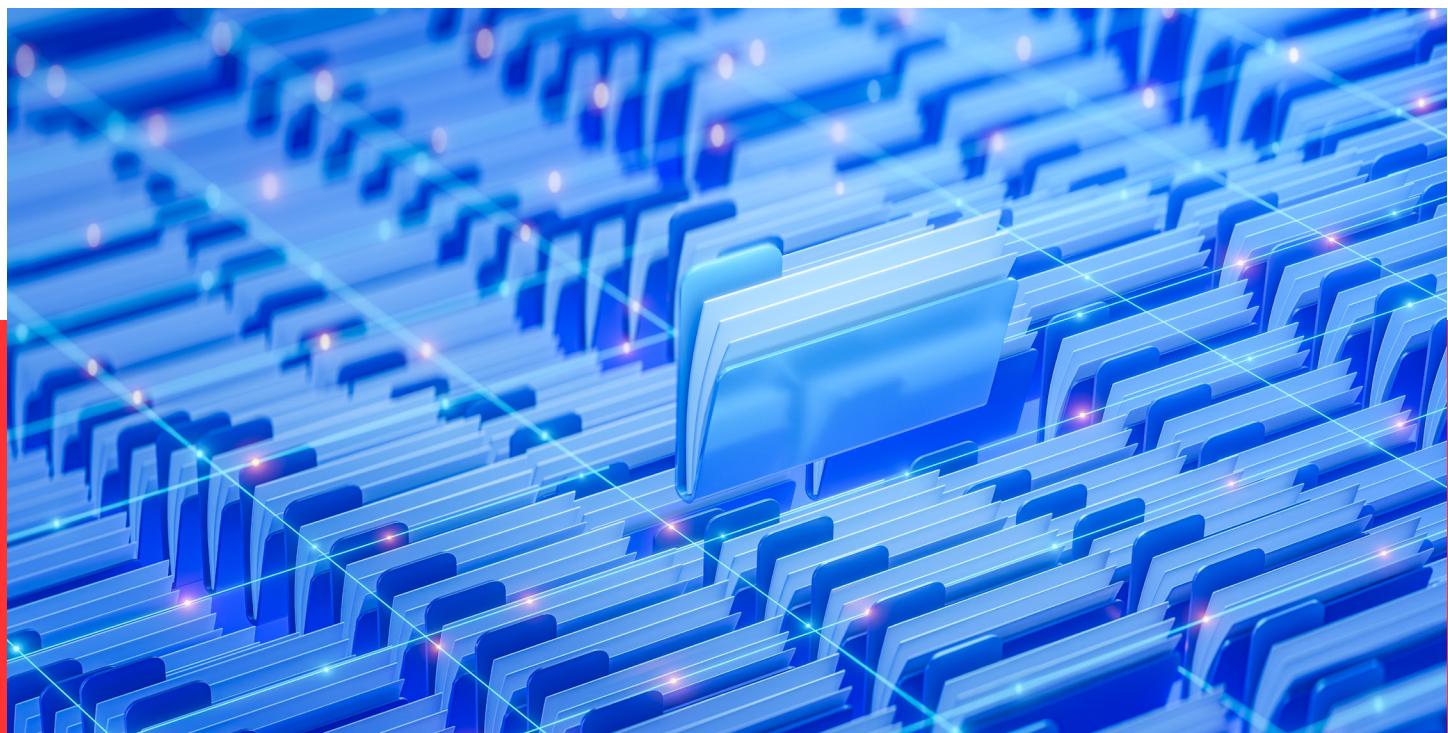


Figure 5 — What management skills are most in demand for your data operations?



04

Moving: Oracle Shares the Stage

A majority of respondents have been developing and deploying applications on databases other than Oracle over the last 36 months. This survey indicates that this willingness to use databases other than Oracle springs from a number of different reasons, from cost to frustration with Oracle support.

While the results of this survey are exclusively based on Oracle users, 77% indicate they have deployed new applications or datasets on databases other than Oracle over the past 36 months. (See Figure 6)

Data managers and professionals report they are exploring other options beyond Oracle databases for new or refactored applications due to high costs (58%), support, and innovation gaps (31%) seen in Oracle platforms. (See Figure 7)

While Oracle has been addressing many of these concerns, data managers are likely to be concerned about Oracle's licensing fees and support costs, often enforced through the vendor's frequent audits. It's notable that Oracle may be more cutting-edge than other database brands. Plus, as mentioned earlier, a majority are demanding integration with popular AI/ML frameworks (52%).

The survey finds high levels of either dissatisfaction or ambivalence on the Oracle Database environments under respondents' charge. Close to a third, 30%, feel they are getting little or only some value for their Oracle database investments. For another 35%, the feeling is lukewarm, indicating "moderate" value. (See Figure 8)

Figure 6 — Have you deployed new applications or datasets on databases other than Oracle over the past 36 months?

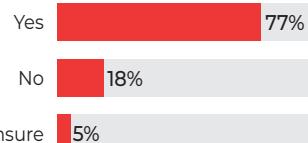


Figure 7 — What were the main reasons you migrated?

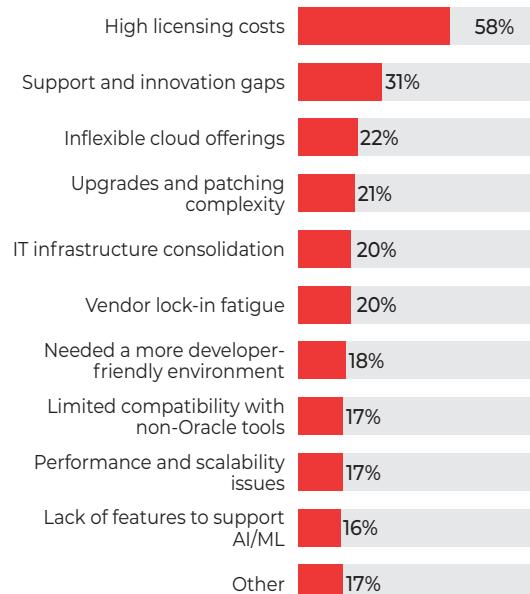
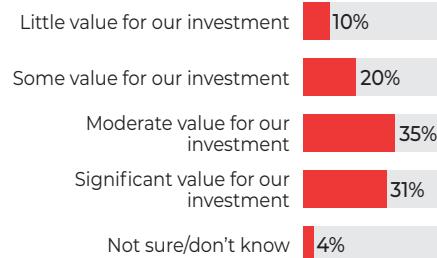


Figure 8 — If you work with Oracle databases, how much value are you seeing from these databases?



05

Sought: Greater Support and Satisfaction

Organizations are not happy with their levels of database support. Almost nine in ten do not view Oracle support times as superior, and indicated slow resolution of issues was problematic or worse for their organizations.

As highlighted in the previous section, there is a movement toward a greater diversity of data systems. Tellingly, the survey shows great dissatisfaction with both support and licensing from Oracle.

In addition, the survey unveils big questions on the value of Oracle Databases. The survey finds high levels of either dissatisfaction or ambivalence on the Oracle Database environments under respondents' charge.

There is a need to lower support costs and receive faster support resolution. Almost nine in ten, 89%, do not view Oracle support times as "superior," and 87% indicated slow resolution was problematic or worse for their organizations. (See Figure 9)

There are many issues data executives and professionals report with Oracle Database support, led by the costs associated with such support, cited by close to two in three (63%). Slow response/resolution times (35%) are significant concerns regarding Oracle Database Support. (See Figure 11)

A majority of users rate Oracle's response times to support issues as at least "mostly helpful," but a substantial portion finds it lacking, with 41% rating it as "minimally acceptable" or worse. (See Figure 9) Only 16% of respondents consider their initial support engineer to be "very skilled." (See Figure 12)

Respondents are increasingly considering third-party support, with 25% currently using it and 30% considering it. (See Figure 13) The biggest opportunity areas for third-party support are cloud database management (37%), data migration (36%), performance tuning (34%), and backup and recovery (32%).

The complexity of licensing may contribute to dissatisfaction and migration considerations. A large majority (69%) of respondents believe Oracle's licensing model is too complex (See Figure 14), with EULA being the most common licensing agreement.

Figure 9 — How would you rate Oracle's response times to support issues?

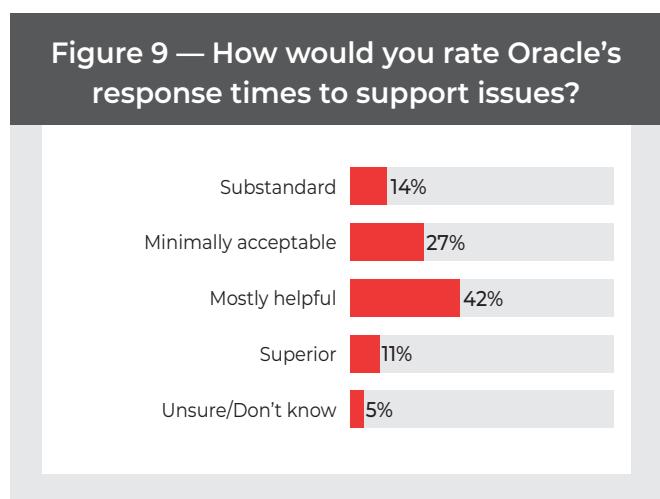


Figure 10 — How is your organization affected by slow resolution from Oracle?

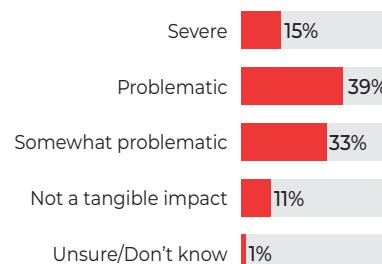


Figure 11 — Have you experienced any of the following issues with Oracle Database support?

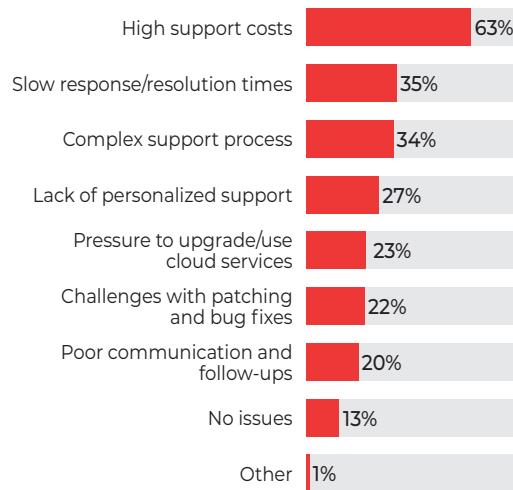


Figure 12 — How would you rate the expertise of the initial Oracle support engineer that responds to your support tickets?

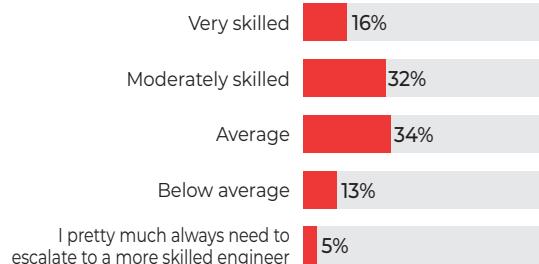
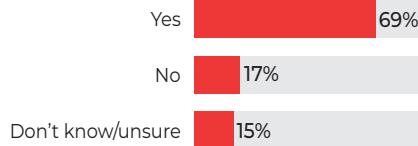


Figure 13 — Do you use, or are considering, third-party support for your database environments?



Figure 14 — Do you think that Oracle's licensing model is too complex?



06

Works in Progress: Database Performance and Challenges

Database performance issues continue to take a major bite out of organizational time and resources. A majority of respondents report they are impacted by database performance issues on a monthly basis or more.

Database performance issues affect more than strictly data operations—slow response times or glitches can cut into employee productivity, as well as an organization's revenues and market position.

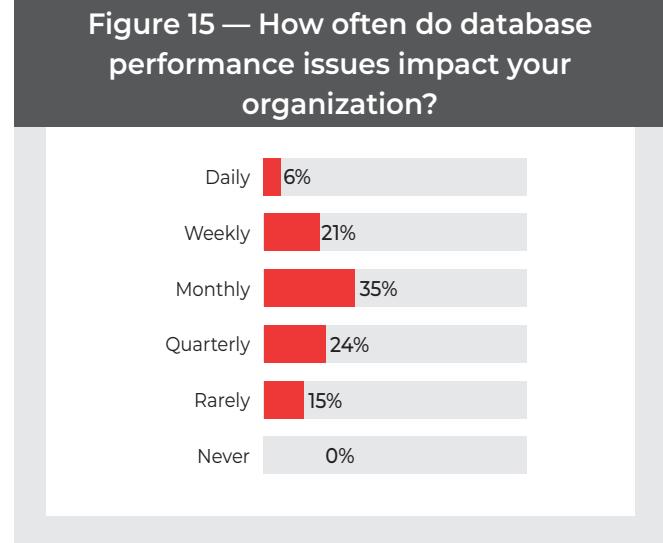
Such performance issues continue to take a bite out of organizational time and resources, the survey shows. A majority of respondents, 62% report they are impacted by database performance issues on a monthly basis or more. Notably, only 15% report they were "rarely" impacted by database performance issues. (See Figure 15)

With issues that affect organizational success arising on a weekly, and sometimes daily basis, for more than one in four respondents, it's no surprise that addressing performance issues ranks as the top time-consuming tasks faced by database teams.

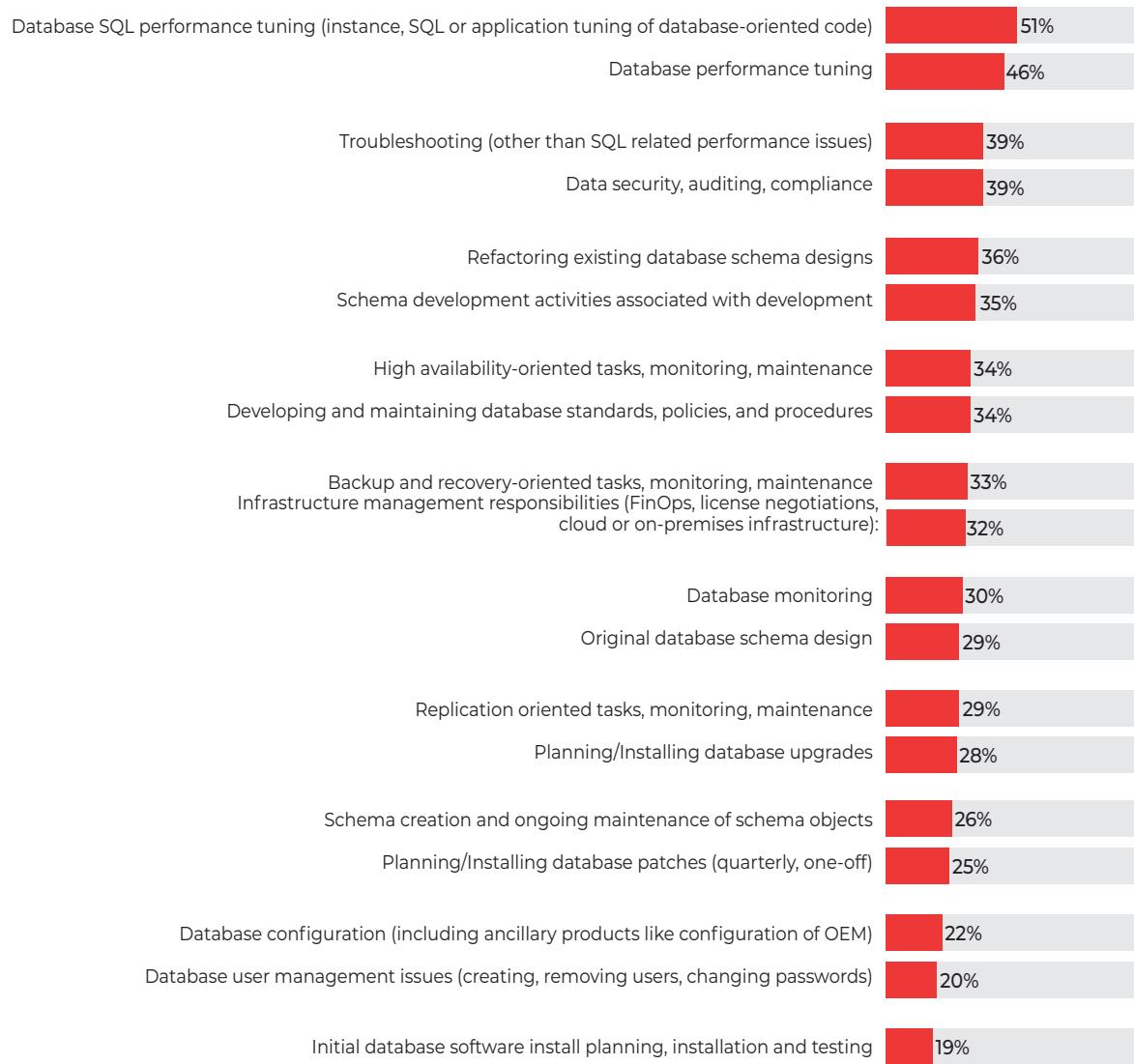
A majority, 51%, cite database SQL tuning as their most time-consuming task. Similarly, general database performance tuning ranks high among 46% of executives and professionals. (See Figure 16)

There are other concerns that extend into the jobs of data managers and professionals themselves. Performance glitches or slowdowns soak up the time and resources data teams need to devote to moving the business forward with advanced initiatives such as AI and real-time.

Figure 15 — How often do database performance issues impact your organization?



**Figure 16 — What are the tasks that take up your time working with your databases?
(4+5 on a scale of 1 to 5)**



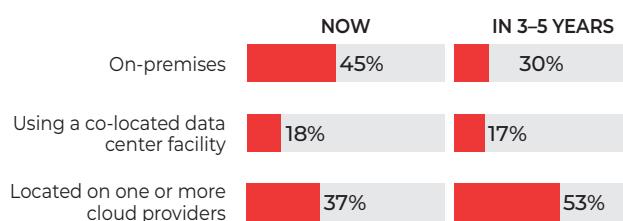
Toward Tomorrow's Platforms: Database Infrastructure Rebalancing

Organizations are steadily shifting toward hybrid and cloud environments while balancing flexibility and control.

Survey results show organizations are rebalancing their database environments. At present, 45% of databases are hosted on-premises, 18% in co-located data centers, and 37% on cloud infrastructure. Within the next three to five years, cloud-hosted databases are expected to rise to 53%, while on-premises hosting will decrease to 30%, and co-location will remain stable at 17%. (See Figure 17)

This transition reflects a pragmatic approach: most enterprises continue to operate hybrid environments, expanding their options and balancing flexibility, control, and cost. Decisions about hosting are shaped by business needs, application requirements, and operational priorities—not by a universal shift to managed database services.

Figure 17 — What percentage of your overall database infrastructure is: (averages reported)



Conclusion and Call to Action

The AI tsunami has already started, and all signs are that it's growing at a breathtaking pace.

Organizations are struggling to navigate performance issues, support complexities, and the integration of new technologies. The survey finds high levels of either dissatisfaction or ambivalence on the Oracle Database environments under respondents' charge. In addition, upskilling Oracle DBAs and managers is critical as AI introduces new challenges.

The following are key actions data managers and professionals can take for ensuing development of a successful AI-driven enterprise:

■ **Ensure a strong and reliable data foundation:**

AI and ML are only as effective as the data that goes into them. It's now critical that data be timely, clean, and well governed. Such a foundation should also be architected and configured to support AI and ML, with low latency and high performance to deliver.

■ **Be open to new database approaches:** The survey finds that today's data organizations are highly decentralized, with many choices. Different database products are built for specific purposes, such as mapping unstructured data or feeding AI and ML training models. At the same time, be cautious when it comes to skills requirements for decentralized data

environments. There is a cost of this diversity—each new tool, each new technology that is deployed will create demand for new skill sets that is increasingly difficult to address.

■ **Look to cloud services for scalability and flexibility, but be cautious about security risks, as well as escalating and hidden costs:**

Today's generation cloud offerings offer the customization previously associated with on-premises systems. Applications associated with AI and ML demand a great deal of data, often real-time streaming, which cloud providers offer. At the same time, cloud offers a much broader attack surface, actually putting organizations data at more risk, as opposed to on-premises or co-located database options. Stories of data leakage, successful hacking attempts, and even vendor errors in securing the environments are becoming common occurrences.

■ **Provide and prioritize talent:** Dedicated database skills have long been valued, but such capabilities need to be expanded to the AI and ML realm. Provide data team members with continual training and insights, as well as expanding recruiting efforts.

- **Pay greater attention to data governance and ethics:** As AI and ML are extremely data-dependent, this opens them up to potential issues with privacy and compliance. Plus, AI itself can run services assuring greater performance and availability for changing business requirements.
- **Be open to innovation on a larger scale:** Until now, database-related jobs had been relegated to maintaining and refreshing databases. With AI and ML now working behind the scenes to deliver more routine tasks such as backup, this is an opportunity to elevate the roles of data team members to higher-value tasks, including offering innovative ways to leverage AI for growth. At the same time, bringing data teams closer to the business will require some retooling and reeducation of what may potentially be otherwise idled human resources to enable them to contribute to the business.

Demographics

The data covered in this survey represents respondents that work directly with Oracle Databases. At the same time, it's notable that they also work with a wide variety of non-Oracle databases as well.

This survey was developed by Unisphere Research in partnership with Rimini Street and fielded among readers of *Database Trends & Applications* in April through mid-2025. A total of 218 usable responses were received, filtered to Oracle database users.

Figures 18 through 20, below, reflect data pertaining to job roles, geographic locations, and industries.

Figure 18 — What is your role?

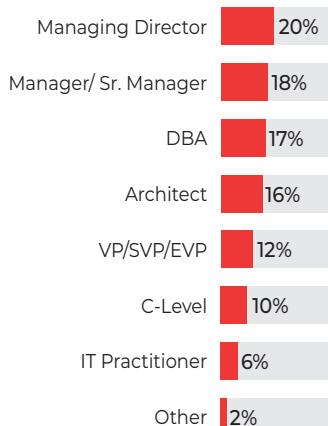


Figure 20 — What is your industry?

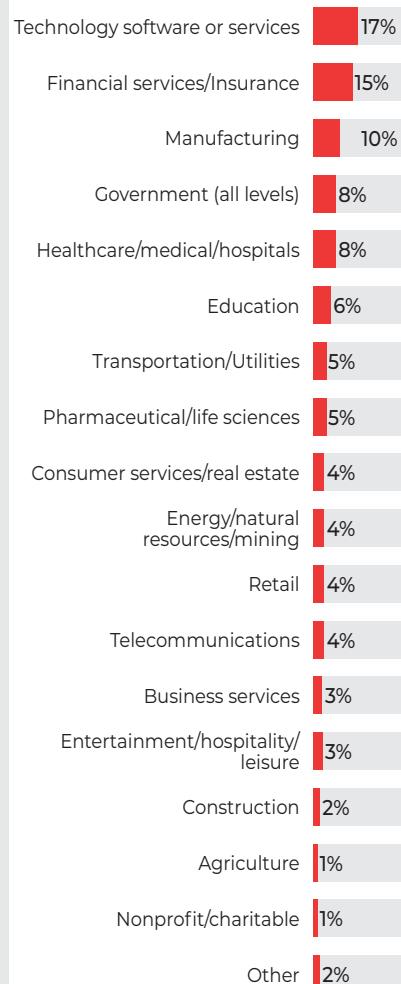


Figure 19 — Where are you located?

