Paul Olson

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SQL Server DBA, Data Developer, and IT leader.

I have always been a craftsman, whether it was robotic assemblies years ago or a custom MSSQL Server health and monitoring application last week. My strengths are SQL Server Architecture, Database Engineering, and IT Leadership with years of experience in designing, optimizing, and managing enterprise-scale data infrastructures. I am passionate about emerging technologies, automation, and leading teams to drive innovation and operational excellence.

2013-Present: SQL Server DBA, Data Developer, and IT Leader for bswift LLC

MSSQL 2008R2-2022 | Server 2008-2022 | VMware | AWS | Power BI | Hadoop | F5 | SharePoint | .NET | C# | PowerShell | Python

Key Responsibilities & Accomplishments:

- **Database Architecture & Emerging Technologies**
  - Designed and implemented complex**, high-availability SQL Server architectures**, including **Always On Availability Groups** and **Distributed Availability Groups** across geographically dispersed data centers.
  - Led the **SQL Server infrastructure migration** through **four major corporate acquisitions**, moving environments from **Rackspace** to **Sungard**, Sungard to **Aetna**, Aetna to **CVS**, and finally CVS to **AWS—migrating hundreds of servers** across multiple **production and lower lifecycle environments** (DEV, QA, UAT, SND, PERF, DR).
  - Built a **custom AI-driven analytics server** that pulls and analyzes SQL query plans, leveraging machine learning techniques to suggest **automated performance optimizations** (AI DBA).
- **Complex Database Development & Performance Optimization**
  - Developed **enterprise-wide de-identification software** for **HIPAA compliance**, which obfuscates **PHI and PII data** across **23 HIPAA compliance points**, securing lower lifecycle environments.
  - Created a **custom-built, high-performance backup solution** in SQL, PowerShell, and C#, deployed 12 years ago, outperforming off-the-shelf backup products, requiring minimal maintenance while supporting hundreds of terabytes of critical data.
  - Engineered a **fully automated lower lifecycle refresh system**, integrating SQL, PowerShell, and C#, enabling seamless **data replication** and **environment synchronization** for development and testing.
- **Disaster Recovery & High-Availability Systems**
  - Solely responsible for **disaster recovery strategy and execution**, designing a **15-minute Recovery Point Objective (RPO)** for mission-critical **multi-terabyte SQL databases**.
  - Authored **fully automated DR scripts and playbooks**, capable of rebuilding the entire database infrastructure within four hours in a failover event. This solution reduced DR deployment from **12hrs to 4hrs**.
- **Monitoring & Performance Tuning**
  - Selected, implemented, and managed all **SQL Server performance monitoring** platforms (Idera, Redgate, SentryOne, LogicMonitor), ensuring continuous database health.
  - Developed a **comprehensive SQL Server capacity planning model**, identifying scalability trends and future infrastructure needs.
  - Led efforts to optimize query performance, indexing strategies, and SQL feature enhancements, **significantly improving application performance**.
- **Infrastructure Engineering & Security Compliance**
  - Designed and implemented **SQL Server security policies**, aligning with **HIPAA, SOX,** and enterprise security standards.
  - Built out the **ETL Server infrastructure**, ensuring secure and scalable data processing for benefits administration.

    - Created and enforced a **structured change management process** to enhance **database deployment stability**.

- **Enterprise Documentation & Knowledge Sharing**
    - Established and maintained the **company DBA blog**, serving as a technical knowledge base and collaboration portal for the DBA team.
    - Authored **detailed technical documentation** for database design, performance tuning, disaster recovery, and application integration, providing clear guidance to developers, system engineers, and business stakeholders.
    - Created **developer training materials** to improve SQL coding practices and enforce enterprise-wide coding conventions.
- **Leadership & Strategic Influence**
    - Served as the **primary engineer for SQL Server infrastructure** including**:** builds, patching, and upgrades, ensuring smooth transitions between SQL Server versions (including SQL Server 2022 upgrade evaluations).
    - Provided **strategic guidance to executive leadership** on database scalability, emerging technologies, and risk mitigation strategies.
    - Acted as a **key technical resource** in cross-functional teams, leading efforts to **eliminate technical debt and modernize infrastructure**.

2010-2013: SQL Server DBA, Systems Admin, and IT leader for ITW

MSSQL 2000-2008R2 | Server 2000-2008R2 | VMware | Dell-hp SAN | Cisco | Numara | F5 | SharePoint | AD | Exchange

I worked as the sole database administrator for ITW (Fortune 200) via the consulting company Prescient Solutions. I started as the company's first dedicated database administrator. After my initial assessment, I immediately set out to develop and deploy a global backup and monitoring solution that would fit the decentralized and segmented MSSQL environment. In addition, I also provide senior systems support for the IT operations team.

After the IT Operations manager left, I was asked to lead the team as we moved forward with our five-year plan to scale out our corporate services catalog. I accepted the post, and I lead the operations team as we provided business services to our 500-user corporate office and over 800 business units around the globe.

Typical Work:

- **Work with project teams** to determine the infrastructure for corporate services and systems.
- Help in-house developers **improve performance** of their applications.
- Administration and development of the company's 500+ databases, on **SQL Server, PostgreSQL and Oracle**.
- **Build and tune SQL queries**, stored procedures, views, triggers.
- **Consolidate servers** into virtual machines (VMware) to **cut infrastructure costs** and **improve DR / HA**.
- Take the **lead on projects** and/or tasks to relieve pressure on the IT operations team.
- Identify Corporate IT initiatives to **streamline processes**.
- Manage **daily workload activity** of IT operations team.
- **Track and produce upstream reporting metrics** for productivity and long-term strategy.

2004-2010: DBA, Systems Admin, Project Management for UTC (Redhawk Division)

MSSQL 2000-2005 | Server 2000-2008 | VMware | Dell SAN | Cisco | Citrix | Oracle | C# | Visual Studio | Power Shell

I started as a systems engineer, and here is something you do not hear every day: I ended up managing a multi-million-dollar video IP and access control project. This was a remarkably interesting environment, I built, deployed, and maintained high profile security systems for locations like Chicago's Field Museum, Northern Trust Bank, and the Chicago Federal Reserve. I worked closely with

software vendors and in many cases identified solutions to performance and hot fix issues that their staff struggled with. I brought enough value to the business that I was trusted to participate in nearly every aspect of the operation.

Typical Work:

- Designed and implemented **large scale security software** projects
- Provided on a continual basis; **remote and on-site technical support**, SQL administration and systems build-out.
- Developed and led **instruction of customer training** for security software with typical class size of 5-20.
- **Technical consultant** for the sales team including system design and specification.
- **Project management** of large-scale deployments involving technology.
- **Design and management** of customer databases including **integration** of existing applications and systems.

2000-2004: Owner, Operator, and everything else for Java Hut Coffee

I figured Depaul University was the answer (see below), but I needed a job where I could make a lot of money and not have to work. I decided to open a coffee shop, it worked out for Starbucks, so I authored a business plan, made some connections, and hit the kitchen to whip up some treats that would make my business a success. I came to an ugly realization, running your own business takes dedicating each moment to success and the type of financial planning that leaves very few digits on the left side of the decimal point. After years of learning the hard way, which was actually kind of fun in hindsight, I ended up with three locations and plenty of time along the way to study .NET languages, computer science and build a few applications to pay the bills.

1996-2000: CNC Maintenance programmer for General Electric

MSSQL 6-7 | Server NT | CAD-CAM | Robotics | Lotus Notes | Lucent

After Pla-Net, Inc shut its doors to the pressure of AOL's pricing, I fell back on having taken machine shop in High School and with a background in computers, I thought working with computers that run machines was a perfect fit. I aimed to become a systems admin and CNC programmer overnight, then busted my tail to make it happen. I made it – if you can call managing distressed 386 systems “making it”. Supporting CNC systems means relying on the dedication of union machinists who are constantly churning through the organization. It’s all about training: making sure every machine operator and every maintenance man always feels comfortable using your system. While I loved the work, I wanted to be somewhere with longer-term potential and less pollution. I knew I would need more knowledge, and I had success in programming, so I figured I needed to go to college full time, I cashed in my 401K and went to work for myself.

1993-1997: Technical Support for Planet, Inc.

Cisco | Server NT | Visual Basic | HTML | DOS

I knew how computers worked inside-out but I was not a big Star Trek fan, so I was the odd man out here. Pla-net, Inc was a start-up ISP in Northwest Indiana just about the time people thought the Internet would never make money for anyone. I helped maintain customer computers and answered the phone for technical assistance at our little office in Merrillville Indiana, plus my own self-study if time allowed. Since I had to make up for my lack of interest in Sci Fi, I arranged LAN parties and ran for snacks. I trained on systems when the "smart guys" wanted to show me how smart they were, and as it turns out they were geniuses. The funny thing is, I learned some of my most important IT lessons in this little shop. First, treat your job as if it is your own company because if your company fails, those who depend on your business also fail. Second, the gap that separates techie's and non-technical people can be easily bridged with one common principal; listen to understand.

Typical Work:

- Provided **help desk phone support** to customers for nearly everything you can think of.
- Built **desktop systems** for customers and staff.
- Provided **desktop repair** for customers and staff.
- Maintained **help desk ticket system** and served as L1, L2 and L2.5 (L3 did not want to be bothered) support.

1992-1993: Purdue University

After graduating high school in Indiana, I wanted to move out of the house and get busy being a college student. I did not want to get too far away, so Purdue Lafayette appealed to me. They had acres of desktops connected to the Internet, thousands of on-campus students, and a friendly College staff. I wanted to major in Mechanical Science, drop a few patents in the robotics field, and make a fortune.

I left after just one semester, bored out of my gourd. I could not relate the theoretical class stuff back to practical real-world use. I wanted to get busy being busy and as for learning about all those computers, nope, if you wanted a Microsoft certification, you had to study on your own.

That weakness stays with me today, and I have turned it into a strength. I teach others actionable stuff, and I build teams based on demonstrated skill and not exam trivia. Good people deliver good work regardless of their credentials, it is just more difficult to spot them.

Learn more about me at: http://www.linkedin.com/in/prolson