








London & Partners Executes a Multi-Version Postgres Upgrade While Migrating to the Cloud




LONDON & PARTNERS

London & Partners Executes a Multi-Version Postgres Upgrade While Migrating to the Cloud

Key Takeaways

-  With EDB's guidance, upgraded Postgres from version 9.1 to version 12 in the midst of a comprehensive cloud migration to Azure without any disruption
-  Frees internal time to focus on innovation and visitor experience rather than database management and maintenance
-  Eliminates the stress and burden of maintaining an always-on, always-performant application
-  Ensures 24/7 support coverage and broader technical expertise, knowledge, perspectives and experience than could be achieved with an in-house DBA resource
-  Supports the complex search behaviors of more than 2 million visitors

Products

-  **EDB Community 360**
-  **EDB Remote DBA (RDBA) Service**

Industry

-  Travel + Tourism

About London & Partners

London & Partners is the business growth and destination agency for London. Their mission is to create economic growth that is resilient, sustainable and inclusive. London & Partners does this by supporting international and domestic businesses in high-growth sectors to scale through their investment, trade, growth and innovation programs; and by attracting visitors and events and developing London as a world-class destination.

A social enterprise funded by the Mayor of London and commercial partners and a portfolio of venture businesses, London & Partners is the first organization to bring together tourism and convention outreach with efforts around investment and economic and business growth. As part of that leadership, the agency relies on technology and innovation to generate and deliver a consistent, rich and value-driven brand experience at every stage of a visitor's engagement.

Challenge

visitlondon.com is a cornerstone of that engagement, and most of London & Partners' domestic and international promotional initiatives drive traffic to the site. Given London & Partners' expansive remit, the website has been designed to meet a wide variety of needs, across multiple audiences, from leisure visitors to business travelers to event goers. As a result, the agency works collaboratively with partners and experts in different fields to create a comprehensive,

interactive and full-featured website, designed to help any and every traveler craft their perfect London experience.

"Regardless of which part of London's economy we're talking about, we want to speak with one voice and one brand," explains Steve Pugh, head of channels and innovations at London & Partners. "We want to use technology to help us create an experience that has more depth, that delivers more value, both to the user, but also to London as a city."

The highlight of the website is a robust, bookable product catalog of events, attractions and tours, as well as availability on venues, hotels and other accommodations. This complex product catalog is driven by a custom-built application that integrates, harmonizes and prioritizes data aggregated from five sources, including permission affiliates, partners (such as tourist companies with their offerings), hotel reservation services, review sites and more, into a single web record for visitors. The data sources may have different data on the same record (e.g. the data feed from the hotel bookings site may have hotel review information, but the application will prioritize review information from its review partner), all delivered with real-time availability.

Pugh describes it this way: "visitlondon.com is really a shop window for London, so it's imperative that we have a system that's fast, reliable and stable. Every time someone searches for events, hotels or places to eat in London, they're using this database, so we need that database to be up, available and responsive 100% of the time."

London & Partners had been using PostgreSQL for more than 17 years, so the team is very familiar with working with the database. However, when their in-house database architect left recently, they had an opportunity to reconsider the best team makeup for their needs. That's when they turned to 2ndQuadrant (now owned by EDB) for remote DBA help.

Solution

Around-the-clock database expertise

At the time, London & Partners had a mixed on-premises/semi-private cloud environment. That meant that every time the office building lost power (either planned or unplanned), that database went down, leaving visitors to visitlondon.com with stale data.

Nuria Cadavid Somoza, senior software development manager at London & Partners, recalls, "If it was a planned outage, we'd let the team know, and they would be there to check that the replication of the harmonized product catalog to the production website was back up and working properly again. If it was an unplanned outage, the monitoring would detect that the replication was failing, and they'd alert us to the problem and help us resolve it."

"The Remote DBA service gave us greater coverage and expertise," continues Pugh. "Instead of one person responsible for all DBA needs, we now had a team that was available 24x7 and never went on vacation. Their documentation is so good, that even when we work with someone new, they're already up to speed in understanding our environment."

In recent years, London & Partners has embraced a number of major technology changes in recognition of the shift to a digital-first world, including changes to their web content management system, a transition from their on-premises legacy customer relationship management system and, most impactfully, a complete cloud migration that transitioned their on-premises & semi-private cloud-based infrastructure to Microsoft Azure.

At the time, the PostgreSQL database London & Partners used was on version 9.1. Other priorities had taken precedence over upgrading the database, but as London & Partners continued to progress the cloud migration project, the EDB team raised security concerns due to the production version of the database and successfully convinced the team that it was the right time to perform the migration.

"We had concerns about conducting both migrations simultaneously, of course," remembers Cadavid Somoza. "We didn't want to introduce more risk to the Azure project, especially with a migration that would skip multiple versions. But by this time, we had been working with the EDB RDBA team for a long time and we had a lot of trust in their recommendations. We worked with the team as they came up with a plan and we successfully executed the plan in the midst of the other migration project without even a moment of disruption. That was a highlight for me."

A disaster recovery plan to rely on

One of the advantages of the new Azure-based environment was to set up a much more robust disaster recovery plan. While the cloud services provider that London & Partners was working with had proposed a disaster recovery plan for the database, they lacked expertise in Postgres. By relying on EDB services, the team was able to make dramatic improvements to the plan and provide greater coverage in the event of a disaster.

“Not only did EDB support the upgrade work in the midst of the cloud migration, they really pushed us to be more ambitious and comprehensive in our disaster recovery planning—including more frequent and robust testing—than we originally planned to be,” says Pugh. “It’s a great example of not only the expertise that EDB brings to the table, but also the fearlessness to challenge our assumptions of what is good enough without being condescending or patronizing. It’s exactly what you want from an expert.”

Results

The London & Partners team describes themselves as “very hands-on,” so it’s been surprising to them how much they now rely on EDB for both day-to-day support, as well as for periodic strategic review of their architecture.

“Every time we have an issue with the database, it’s been solved very quickly,” declares Cadavid Somoza. “Usually we don’t even have to tell them something’s wrong—they’ve addressed issues even before we’re aware of them. Every time we get an alert, someone is on it. It builds this trust. At this point, we know that anything database related, EDB has 100% covered, which frees me up to focus on something else. They’re like a seamless extension of our team. I don’t pay attention to the database because I know they will.”

The past few years have seen London as a focus of global attention—from the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, through BREXIT and COVID, to the Queen’s recently celebrated Platinum Jubilee—which makes London & Partners’ work that much more important. The Jubilee event, for example, prompted a 20-30% increase in website traffic. But for the development team, it was business as usual.

Cadavid Somoza remarks, “The best thing that a development team can tell you is that everything is normal. That hasn’t been the case in the past. For us we don’t even realize that anything is going on during these major events.”

Pugh puts it a different way: “One of the things we really like here is getting a good night’s sleep. Working with a team like EDB that can assure that is brilliant.”

Future

As London & Partners looks to the future, they're already thinking of new innovations to add to the website. As they continue to test and refine the brand experience, they'll also be considering how, whether and when the database infrastructure could be refreshed as well. The EDB team will be ready to step in to support that effort and make it a success.

Want to learn more? **Here's how to get started with EDB.**

Do you have an EDB Postgres success story you want to share? Get in touch with us via our **website** or at **success-stories@enterprisedb.com**



About EDB

EDB provides enterprise-class software and services that enable businesses and governments to harness the full power of Postgres, the world's leading open source database. With offices worldwide, EDB serves more than 1,500 customers, including leading financial services, government, media and communications and information technology organizations. As one of the leading contributors to the vibrant and fast-growing Postgres community, EDB is committed to driving technology innovation. With deep database expertise, EDB ensures extreme high availability, reliability, security, 24x7 global support and advanced professional services, both on premises and in the cloud. This empowers enterprises to control risk, manage costs and scale efficiently. For more information, **visit www.enterprisedb.com.**



London & Partners Executes a Multi-Version Postgres Upgrade While Migrating to the Cloud

© Copyright EnterpriseDB Corporation 2022
EnterpriseDB Corporation
34 Crosby Drive
Suite 201
Bedford, MA 01730

EnterpriseDB and Postgres Enterprise Manager are registered trademarks of EnterpriseDB Corporation. EDB, EnterpriseDB, EDB Postgres, Postgres Enterprise Manager, and Power to Postgres are trademarks of EnterpriseDB Corporation. Oracle is a registered trademark of Oracle, Inc. Other trademarks may be trademarks of their respective owners. Postgres and the Slonik Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of the Postgres Community Association of Canada, and used with their permission.

POWER TO POSTGRES

