

Victoria University of Wellington Cuts Costs, Minimizes Downtime with Active Support



Victoria University of Wellington
Wellington, New Zealand
www.vuw.ac.nz

Industry:

Education & Research

Annual Revenue:

US\$2 million to US\$100 million

Employees:

501 to 1,999

Oracle Products & Services:

Oracle Database
Oracle Financials
Oracle Purchasing
Oracle Projects
Oracle Grants Accounting
Oracle Advanced Customer Services

“We were faced with tying up our in-house resources in intensive technical training or hiring a database administrator. Oracle Advanced Customer Services solved these issues and provided predictable costs. Not only do we have Oracle experts monitoring our applications and technology around-the-clock, but we also benefit from stronger relationships within the Oracle support network.” – Grant Gullery, Financial Management Information Systems Manager, Victoria University

Founded in 1897, Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand has a reputation for education and research excellence. The institution encompasses four campuses catering to more than 20,000 students and staff.

The aggressive competition for students and status requires universities to constantly reassess their information management requirements and processes. With around 1,500 staff members, 19,000 students, and ambitious expansion plans, Victoria University knew it had to work smarter and establish more efficient operations.

One of the University’s main goals was to provide staff with around-the-clock access to its central system so they could work at any time and from anywhere. The institution also wanted to establish a robust financial management system to meet the growing reporting demands of the government-funded tertiary sector. In addition, it needed to implement efficient financial and research software solutions within tight budget constraints.

Victoria University deployed Oracle Database and Oracle Financials to take advantage of Oracle’s mature and stable database technology and streamline all basic financial and accounting functions. The University engaged Oracle to provide around-the-clock database and application management services.

“We were faced with tying up our in-house resources in intensive technical training or hiring a database administrator,” said Grant Gullery, financial management information systems manager at Victoria University.

Key Benefits:

- Ensured around-the-clock system availability with expert database and application support provided by Oracle
- Reduced IT management and training costs with predictable, low risk Oracle solution
- Eliminated the need to hire in-house database administrators
- Facilitated development of IT roadmap and achievement of strategic business goals

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Continuous Monitoring Enhances System Availability

Oracle Advanced Customer Services has managed Victoria University’s database technology since January 2001 and its Oracle applications since January 2002, when the University implemented Oracle E-Business Suite.

The institution’s staff lacked expertise in Oracle E-Business Suite, and providing technical training to in-house database administrators would have tied up critical in-house project development resources. There were also inherent risks associated with using outside contractors, so the benefits of strengthening the University’s relationship with Oracle—combined with reliable around the clock software management—sealed the decision to outsource its application management.

The University uses the Oracle Online DBA service, which provides expert, support services around its database and financial applications. The Online DBA team conducts regular health checks and provides system reports, patch application troubleshooting support, and migration. The University’s infrastructure is managed by Oracle in Auckland.

The Oracle team also works with the Oracle global development group when required. This leaves the University’s four administrators free to focus on maintaining and advancing the institution’s critical core systems functionality.

The result is continuous system availability across the University. Downtime is minimized so accounting staff is assured of around-the-clock access to financial applications, while lecturers and teaching staff can log in at any time and from anywhere to the university’s central administrative system.

“The Oracle team can fix problems before users even notice them,” said Gullery. “Their positive, take-charge attitude gives us full confidence in their ability to look after our systems.”

Proactive Advice Enables Smart Planning

The Oracle team is highly familiar with Victoria University's database and applications after six continuous years of support.

This enables consultants to provide strategic advice to the university, helping establish an IT roadmap and meet strategic objectives such as capacity planning.

Forecasting for future IT investment is now possible with Oracle's help.

"The Oracle consultants have a wealth of experience and knowledge of best-practice business processes in addition to extensive technical knowledge," said Gullery. "Combined with their understanding of our systems and objectives, what we have is a true partnership built on a common goal of optimizing our IT infrastructure."

Lower Staff Costs, Improved Uptime

Having Oracle Online DBA application specialists on hand eliminates the need for the University to hire additional IT staff.

"We don't have a specialized resource on the application side, and if we did have one, we would pay through the nose for it," said Gullery. "With Oracle, we get good value for money and consistent support when things go wrong."

Database and application uptime is around 99%, and the university has had very few outages. "The Oracle Online DBA team makes sure that any issues are resolved quickly," said Gullery. "When there is a really difficult issue, they help us work through it."

Why Oracle?

In the past, Victoria University enlisted the services of external consultants, which Gullery described as a "costly and unpredictable" solution.

"We looked at Oracle and Oracle's services as a long-term commitment that offered zero training overheads and a low-risk, assured success rating," he explained. "It was a safety net for us. Before we engaged Oracle Advanced Customer Services, we used Oracle onsite management services on an ad-hoc basis, so we were comfortable and confident with the services the company provided."

Implementation Process

The Oracle team oversees Victoria University's Oracle Database and Oracle Financials applications, providing regular health checks and system reports.

Familiarity with the university's processes and technology environment also enables the Oracle consultants to offer advice on strategic business objectives.

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