ORACLE

Maintaining Application Support

Understand the benefits of Oracle Premier Support and the risks and limitations of self-support and third-party alternatives. While support for business applications is critical for maintaining availability and security, companies may look to alternative and seemingly less expensive options to vendor supplied support—namely self-support or engaging a third party. However, cost is only one of many considerations, and it is important to clearly understand the benefits, risks, and limitations of all options. Oracle Support provides you with important support and security updates for your Oracle products. Only Oracle can deliver security enhancements to the software itself and more comprehensive protection against new hacking threats.

Trusted
- Oracle's solid business reputation is built on more than 40 years of providing award-winning service to customers globally to help ensure their technology investments are effective, efficient, risk-resistant, and competitive.
- Oracle helps to protect your Oracle investment, including rigorously tested updates, innovative upgrades, and security patches.
- More than 430,000 customers choose Oracle, and rely on Oracle Support, to protect their technology investment.

Secure
- Security features at every layer of the software stack.
- Security patching is essential and is standard operating practice- Oracle has the tools, owns the source code, and has the ability to develop security updates.
- Regression testing across the full stack at the core application/ database code level.

Comprehensive
- Leverage consistent, ongoing, unparalleled innovation.
- Rely on Oracle to deliver integrated support and product updates with a single point of accountability.

THE VALUE OF ORACLE SUPPORT

- Oracle regularly provides updates to its software products. Customers who have active support agreements can take advantage of these updates.
- Updates are not just individual bug fixes, but may include introductions of significant new features and functionality that Oracle makes generally available to supported customers.
- For certain software products, Oracle issues tax and regulatory updates multiple times per year. These tax and regulatory updates are critical to help customers manage compliance with fast-changing legal and regulatory obligations related to HR, payroll, tax, benefits, and other areas.
- Customers with active support agreements may upgrade to new versions of Oracle's branded software delivered as part of support.
- Oracle allows customers to access and modify some of the application source code, pursuant to customer license agreements. Much of the source code, however, is Oracle's proprietary, copyrighted software that customers and third parties cannot access, modify, or update.
- My Oracle Support, Oracle's award-winning support web site, delivers knowledge articles, communities, bug information, product training, and more. An active support agreement is required to gain access to the wealth of intellectual property within.
- In addition, My Oracle Support provides a wide range of proactive support tools that help customers pinpoint, diagnose, and resolve issues. For full details of these offerings, see Oracle Premier Support: Get Proactive! (Doc ID 432.1).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELF-SUPPORT AND THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT

Customers who do not maintain their support agreements with Oracle but continue to use their software have two basic choices for support that are consistent with their license agreements with Oracle: choosing to self-support or engaging a third party to provide support for their software. In neither case does the customer, or any third party, have access to the benefits of Oracle's Support Offerings, therefore limiting the ability to support Oracle Applications. Customers can only operate under their individual license and, should they not maintain their support agreements with Oracle, they will be responsible for various aspects of storing, protecting, and accessing the licensed assets and information. Customers need to consider the significant cost and risk of this administrative requirement.

Oracle Provides Unmatched Market-Driven Enterprise Software Innovation

Oracle delivers complete, dependable, fully-integrated, and tested products for your business now and for what's next, on-premises and in the cloud.

Oracle Premier Support

Oracle Premier Support provides essential support services, including 24/7 technical assistance, powerful proactive support resources, and product updates.

With global coverage, 38,000 developers and engineers, and 2,000 customer support and service specialists, Oracle delivers complete, dependable, fully-integrated service through Oracle Premier Support for Software and Oracle Premier Support for Systems.

ADVANTAGES OF VENDOR-PROVIDED SOFTWARE SUPPORT

Oracle can and does introduce new features to its software products to revise existing functionality, improve performance, and more. Because Oracle is the owner of all of its software products' intellectual property, Oracle can create updates and new features once and make them generally available to all customers. Oracle's updates are designed to work for as many customers as possible across the individual software product's user base, and Oracle tests its updates across a broad set of customer use cases.

Oracle's software licenses do not allow a licensee to use one customer's environment to support multiple customers. This means that a third party cannot develop and test its own updates to Oracle's software using one environment if the resulting modifications or extensions are then provided to multiple customers. Instead, to comply with customer licenses, third-party updates should be developed and tested independently for every customer.

- A federal court has ruled that Rimini Street violated Oracle's PeopleSoft licenses and infringed Oracle's PeopleSoft copyrights by creating copies of one customer's PeopleSoft software to develop and test fixes and updates for multiple customers.
- Oracle believes that Rimini Street continues this practice today, and Oracle is involved in continued litigation against Rimini to prevent further copyright infringement.

Oracle's software licenses also prohibit third-party support providers from creating a central repository of support materials for use with multiple customers.

LIMITATIONS TO NOT HAVING ACCESS TO ORACLE SUPPORT OFFERINGS

- If a customer cancels support, the customer cannot access any bug fixes, security fixes, or new versions that Oracle created after the customer's maintenance end date.
- A third party that relies on a customer's license never has more rights than the customer whom the third party is supporting.
- No third-party support provider can provide Oracle's fixes and updates to the customer after the customer's maintenance end date: If the customer does not have access, the third party should not either.
- Some third-party support providers have represented to customers that they can download all available software and patches before the customer cancels Oracle Support, and the customer can then perform the upgrade at a later date. Customers will not have access to any patches and updates or knowledge created by Oracle after the customer cancels Oracle Support. The lack of the latest patches and updates could impair the customer's ability to successfully and securely implement any upgrades.

"Oracle Premier Support is the expert on where we need to go, from doing the upgrade through how to utilize the new technology and features. They help us stay proactive."

-Arkalgud Venkatesh
IT Manager, Alameda County

STAYING ON THE PATH OR BUILDING A BRIDGE TO NOWHERE?

Some customers may be considering (and some third-party support providers may suggest) a strategy of staying on an older version of a software product for a few extra years, using third-party support to extend the life of that older version at a lower apparent cost, and then upgrading at a later time. This strategy has hidden costs and risks.

- Oracle requires that returning customers pay back support before re-instating a support contract. Most customers who upgrade enter into or re-instate a support contract with Oracle. Customers planning to use third-party support for a few years and then return to Oracle may find that any expected cost savings from third-party support is illusory. Customers should be wary of any representations third-party support providers make about Oracle's current or future pricing practices.
- Oracle's new versions of and major upgrades to its software products are designed to complement Oracle's prior updates. Unwinding a custom update could be costly.

Customers who maintain vendor support from Oracle are already on the correct path should they decide to upgrade. Because third-party support providers are not Oracle, applying third-party updates may turn out to build a bridge to nowhere, rather than a bridge to the next major release.

Learn more about the value of maintaining application support at oracle.com/support/trustedsupport.html.

> "We love the relationship with Oracle Premier Support. They understand the pain points for a big company and will come to us proactively to provide solutions for a particular issue. We use Oracle Patch Advisor and patch analyzers into our system. We run the patch through the analyzers and see the impact it will have into our system. The moment we run the patch analyzer, we know what surprises are coming and can take care of them before we apply the patch."
>
> **-Rajesh Dayal**
>
> Manager, Oracle DBA team, AECOM Technology

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