



## How Oracle Exadata is supporting 24-hour global recruitment at SThree

### Key points

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| 1 | Oracle database underpinning a £750M-worth business                            |
| 2 | Cintra: Low-risk and three times cheaper than in-house Oracle database experts |
| 3 | 15-minute response time coupled with 24x7 service                              |

## Cintra helps SThree’s Database Services team reduce cost and risk, while underpinning £750M-worth of business



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Sajid Hussain  
Database Services Manager, SThree

### Introduction

People. They’re the foundation of every business, and finding the right ones can be the catalyst to rise above the competition and achieve your vision. Helping organizations find the right people is the business of recruitment giant SThree and its subsidiaries Computer Futures, Progressive, Huxley and Real Staffing Group.

### Going global

SThree was founded in 1986 focusing on ICT recruitment, and has since branched into other sectors, including banking and finance, engineering, energy, oil and gas and life sciences. Now turning over around £750 million, SThree’s brands employ more than 2,300 recruitment consultants globally, alongside 400 support staff.

All of these employees make extensive use of SThree’s core IT services, which include critical Oracle databases containing much of the data the company and its subsidiaries require to operate. These databases run on Oracle’s high-performance Exadata hardware and underpin SThree’s core recruitment and reporting activities.

### Critical databases

The estate consists of more than 20 active databases, ranging in size from tens of gigabytes to several terabytes.

Managing this critical part of SThree’s business is the Database Services team, whose job is to make sure the databases are available, optimally configured, adequately backed up and fully secure. Like any organization with an in-house services team, SThree faced the risk that knowledge of its databases and the Exadata hardware could be lost if staff left the business. Moreover, it didn’t have formal 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week database support cover, and with its increasingly global operations, the need for this was becoming greater.

### The search for a support partner

This was the backdrop for the Database Services Manager, Sajid Hussain, to go to market to find a partner that could extend SThree’s in-house Database Services team by providing ongoing expertise and 24-hour cover.

“

Cintra is helping my team deliver a great service to SThree and its customers, underpinning the company's global growth

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Hussain explains: “While we could find other Oracle support organizations to help with the operating system and database levels, Cintra provided expertise across the entire stack, including Exadata. They had everything we needed under one roof.

“What's more, I'm a firm believer in using best practises, and Cintra's blueprinted approach gave me the assurance that what we'd be doing would always follow this, from the databases down to the underlying architecture.”

### 24-hour support for critical databases

As a result, SThree brought Cintra in to complement its in-house Database Services team, with a remit to provide 24-hour cover for the critical databases, liaising with SThree's business-wide Operations team to resolve any issues that arose, day or night.

At the start of its involvement, Cintra did a detailed assessment of SThree's database estate, including the Exadata hardware and all the Oracle databases running on it. This was to ensure the setup followed industry best practise. Hussain was impressed: “We didn't have any major issues with our environment, but what was pleasing was how thorough Cintra was in its review. Its team picked up smaller issues, some of

which I'd become aware of by using the estate day-in, day-out. It was comforting to get this independent validation of what I wanted to do.”

Having agreed a change roadmap, Cintra's team proceeded to implement its recommended changes to the environment, which in turn enabled the Database Services team to streamline the way it worked and add more value to SThree as a result.

### Confidence in Cintra

Like any service provider, SThree's Database Services team has service level agreements (SLAs) to hit. Hussain reveals that Cintra's involvement has made it easier for his team to meet these: “We haven't had any critical issues with our databases for the last couple of years, but with Cintra on board, we have the confidence that if there was a critical issue, we'd still be able to meet our SLAs.

“There have been a few out-of-hours incidents with the databases in the last 12 months and Cintra's team has always responded promptly, which is fantastic. I've had really positive feedback from our other Service Managers about how we always get a reply from Cintra within 15-20 minutes, which is excellent and helps us fulfil our SLA requirements.



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“On one occasion, I sent an email to the Cintra support team and the CTO replied a couple of minutes later. This stood out for me and showed how Cintra, from top to bottom, is really on the case, all the time.”

### Cintra: Low-risk and three times cheaper

As well as improving the service the Database Services team provides to SThree and its subsidiaries, partnering with Cintra has proved cost-effective and removed a significant risk.

Hussain explains: “To provide the comprehensive 24-hour service that Cintra is delivering would cost us around three times more if we had to hire our own, full-time Oracle database experts.

“Even more importantly, with Cintra we get the support of an entire company, meaning we've mitigated the risk of knowledge being lost and the cost of having to recruit and train new staff. If someone from Cintra was to leave, I know there are others who are equally up-to-speed. And thanks to their good documentation, their people can always hit the ground running.”

### Outstanding knowledge and attitude

Hussain concludes: “I have only good things to say about Cintra. From the very first meeting we had with the CTO, it's been fantastic. From the management down to the technical teams we work with day in, day out, Cintra's knowledge and attitude is absolutely brilliant.

“Most importantly, it's helping my team deliver a great service to SThree and its customers, underpinning the company's global growth.”



### Outcomes

- 24-7 service
- Supporting databases that underpin £750M-worth of business
- Reduced the cost associated with recruiting and training new staff
- 1/3 of the cost of providing same capability in-house
- 15 minute response time

To find out more about Cintra and how we can help you:



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