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Smarter Tools for Smarter People
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CASE STUDY

PrimeSource Building Products Succeeds with Brother-Panther® in a Challenging SAP Environment

About PrimeSource Building Products

PrimeSource Building Products is one of the largest purveyors of fasteners in the world and one of the largest distributors of building materials in North America. With 39 distribution centers and 1,200 employees across the US, Canada, and the Caribbean, their distribution network is larger and more comprehensive than any other in the industry.

By partnering with only the most recognized, reputable manufacturers, they lead the industry in providing exceptional product quality at the most competitive prices.
www.primesourcebp.com/us

Challenges

PrimeSource Building Product's database environment is unique, and some would even go so far as to call it rare. "When I was at IDUG last year, I only ran into two people that use SAP with DB2: One mainframe, one AIX." commented Dennis McClure, DBA at PrimeSource Building Products. His environment at PrimeSource Building Products is even more unique than his compatriots' at IDUG because he uses SAP with DB2/Windows. They initially licensed Brother-Panther® from DBI to help "boost" SAP. They quickly found out that Brother-Panther was very helpful in solving a mystery that had been plaguing their database, and confounding their teams.

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DBI CONTACT INFO.

VISIT DBI WEBSITE

Each night, SAP was trying to run batch processes. Agents were disconnecting, requiring a lot of manual intervention. The SAP engineers were convinced they needed to increase the number of CPUs. Dennis was not sold on this solution, and felt it was merely a band-aide and would cost the company a lot of money. Additionally, he had no evidence that there was memory overload. What he needed was a tool that would help him investigate the situation and provide proof to the SAP team that buying CPUs was not the right solution.

Additionally, Dennis had the task of translating between the SAP team and the DB2 team. SAP engineers talk in SAP specific terms, which is not necessarily an apples to apples comparison in a DB2 environment. Dennis took this opportunity to translate SAP into actionable language for the DB2 DBAs.

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How DBI Helped

Finding the root cause of why their clients could not connect to their database each night was of paramount importance to PrimeSource Building Products. Unhappy customers very often equates to lost sales. Customers are all too willing to jump ship and use a competitor's site. Solving this mystery was going to take several weeks of the team's time if they were going to have to do everything manually. However, using Brother-Panther as the investigation tool would speed up the process and pinpoint the exact cause in a matter of hours.

Using Brother-Panther's patented performance analysis, Dennis was able to show the SAP team what was going on between the database and SAP. Brother-Panther measures historical performance over time, tracking all changes to the database - a feature that SAP lacks.

Whether SAP installs the index, or it is done manually, everything is tracked by Brother-Panther. Using this tracking feature, and investigating all the possibilities, Dennis was able to make a fact-based conclusion. *The DB2 database was not the problem*. He was able to prove that the clients were not able to connect to the database due to an issue with the nightly back-ups. It turned out that high I/O utilization was being consumed by the back-up process. Therefore, adding more CPUs to the mix would not have been the right solution.

As an added bonus, they also discovered via Brother-Panther's analysis, that they could improve database performance significantly with accurate indexing. Queries that were taking several seconds or minutes could be reduced to sub-second! Traditionally, to identify queries that have the potential for time improvement, you would run suspected queries in the database and then run the SQL text through DB2 and get suggestions as to how to improve the query. This time consuming process is repeated several times until you get it just right, and this manual process can take many hours. Brother-Panther allows you to proactively identify those queries with a few clicks of a mouse in minutes. Dennis and his team no longer need to spend the time in a loop testing their code. Slow response times were eliminated, thus reducing end-user frustration.
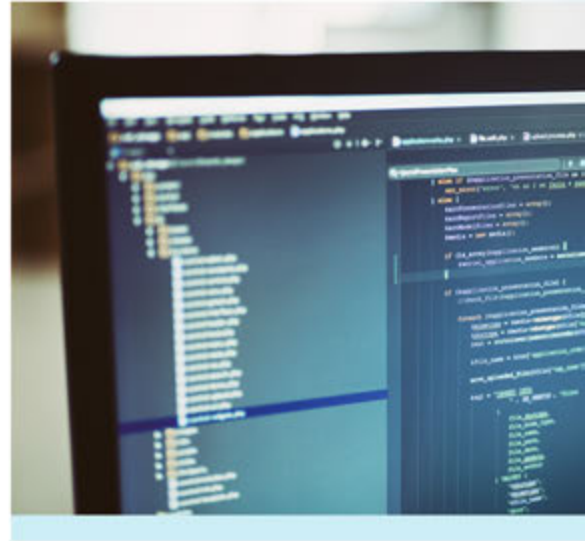
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Results & Future Plans

Not only did DBI's Brother-Panther help solve the nightly processing problem, it also helped PrimeSource Building Products run SAP four times faster with less than 24 man hours of effort! With problems solved and fantastic performance gains achieved, PrimeSource Building Products was able to avoid costly $300,000 hardware and license upgrades plus add their Canada division data and users to the existing SAP/DB2/Windows server!

PrimeSource Building Products loves how Brother-Panther identifies problems and facilitates improvements. Dennis and his team feel like they have only scratched the surface of what Brother-Panther can do in their environment. Their next challenge involves upgrading their database from DB2 9.7 to DB2 10.5, which may mitigate some need for indexes because V10.5 uses columnar organization. This may prove to be an issue with SAP, but they are confident that Brother-Panther and the team at DBI will help ease the transition. "I really appreciate how much DBI invests in their customers. They treat us like family," said Dennis. He knows that no matter what project is on the horizon, he has the right tools and the best people to help him navigate any challenges that arise.

(15) Second Challenge

*In **15 seconds**, our **patented**, **award-winning** systems will tell us exactly where the problem is, and if you give us the greenlight, we typically have the problem fixed in **two hours or less**. If we do not bring significant, measurable, and rapid improvement, there is **no charge** for our services and we will donate **$10,000** to the charity of your choice.*

How We Can Help.

Contact DBI today toll free at:
(866) 773-8789
to take the 15 Second Challenge.