Microsoft
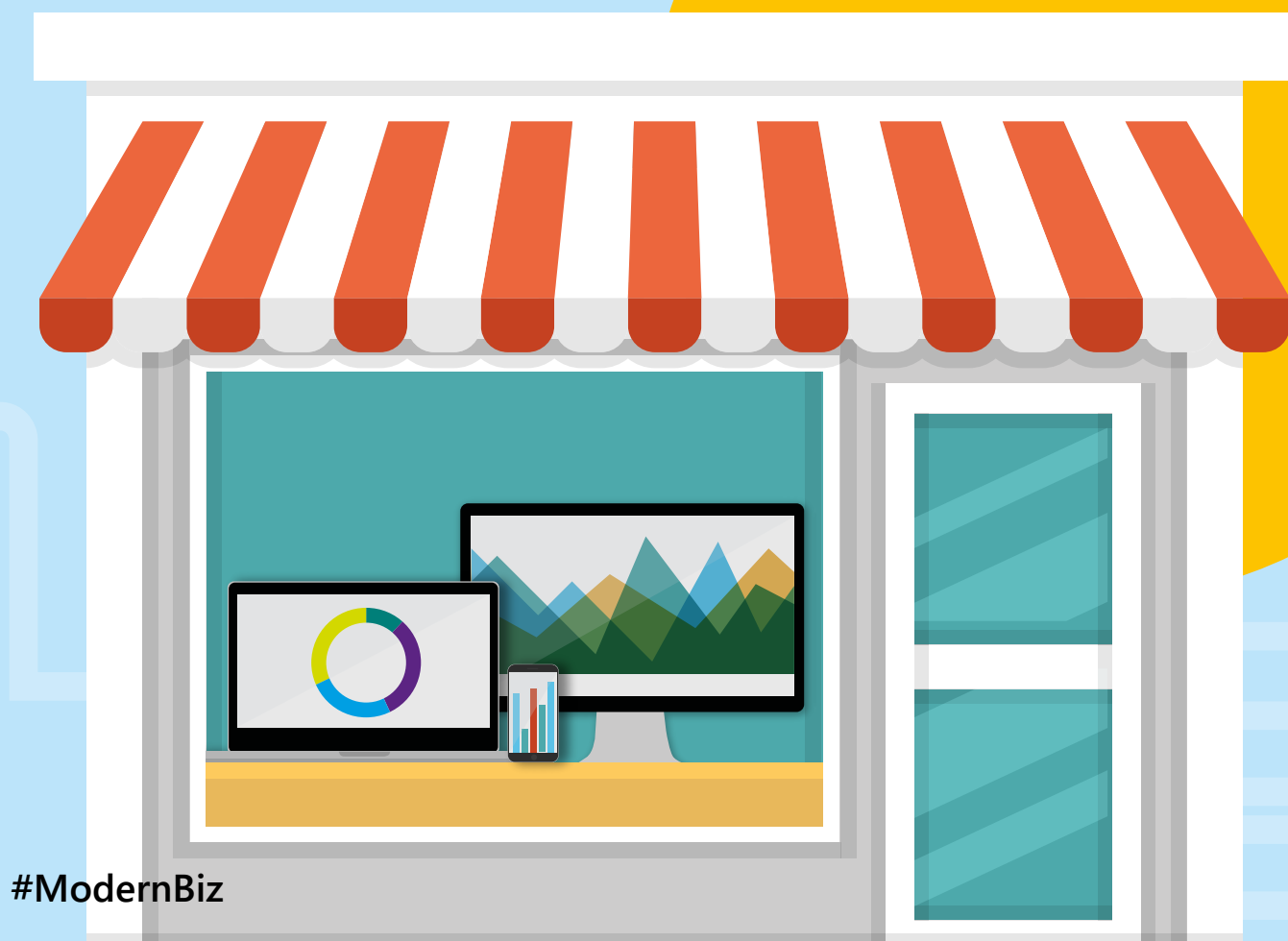
Your guide to unlocking business growth with data

Discover how your business can be transformed using one of the most valuable resources already at your disposal - data. This eBook explains how, cost effectively and with minimal disruption, you can enhance efficiency and productivity while growing your organisation effectively.

#ModernBiz

Contents

Would you like to talk to a Microsoft partner about upgrading to SQL Server? Yes I'd like someone to contact me.

Connecting the data dots

You may have heard about how data is revolutionising business, the value of data and the way in which modern organisations capture and interpret it. But what does that mean in reality? What are the immediate benefits? And how can your small or midsize organisation do the same without significant disruption and cost implications? This eBook is designed to provide answers to those questions and explain how you can grow your business in a simple and cost effective way, transforming it into an efficient, data-centric organisation.

Understanding your Data – The Shop Window

Think of a shop window on the high street. It showcases the best products to entice customers inside where they can browse and shop further. If they can't find what they are looking for, they can ask the shop assistant who might be storing some products in the store room at the back. This is how we think of data. Businesses of all shapes and sizes need to be able to analyse data quickly and easily to make decisions, and this is possible with Microsoft Technology. The shop window is like Microsoft Power BI, and the store room is like Microsoft SQL Server.

Read on to learn more.

Part 1: Grow your business and unlock new opportunities with data

The Shop Window – Power BI
"Stock" (your data) from the store room can be displayed quickly and easily for everyone to see. This is the visualisation of your data from Power BI that enables you to see patterns, links and relationships across all of your data sources. You can choose what you display, according to which audience you are targeting.

Part 2: Help your business to work better

The Store Room – SQL Server
At the back of the shop is the store room. This is where all of the "stock" is kept in its raw form and gathered from many different sources. It remains here securely, ready to provide information regarding your customers when accessed.

The Result

By visualising data, you can make better business decisions, improve customer relations and create demand for products and services, just as a shop window does. Read on to find out more and start your data journey.

Part 1: Grow your business and unlock new opportunities with data

Enter the age of a data centric culture

For businesses today, data opportunity comes when you achieve a data centric culture, with data filtered through all parts of your company. Data is the new currency and it has become a major competitive differentiator that applies to businesses of all sizes. This success is based on a set of behaviours that we will cover in this guide. So what does a data centric culture entail and how can you achieve it?

Data differentiates today's leading companies

Diverse data   +   New analytics   +   More people

+ Speed

$53b
opportunity

- Employee productivity
- Operations improvement
- Product innovations
- Higher sales

"Only 0.5% of all data is ever analysed"

Source: MIT Technology Review Senior Editor Antonio Regalado 2013 article

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What are the characteristics of a data centric culture?
Companies that:
- Harness diverse data, i.e. not just relational and internal data
- Look at historical data but also use new analytical models to help predict the future based on that historical data
- Use data insight broadly across the organisation
- Do all of the above at speed or even near real-time

As a result, these companies also tend to be:

- More productive and operationally efficient
- Innovating faster, leading to higher sales verses their competition

Benefits available to your business through a data culture:

- Increased revenue: 69%
- Improved productivity: 43%
- Lowered costs: 66%

These benefits come from an approach that looks at data in all its forms, not just big data, in order to access better data-driven decision making through business analytics solutions. Further benefit can be delivered by embracing the new realities of our data driven society and breaking from the status quo of limited data and analytics availability, as well as narrow user participation with business analytics technology and processes.

What's new in the era of data and analytics?

- Asking new questions, using new data and new analytics and delivering new insights to new users at the right time. Today, there is an opportunity to combine existing and new technologies, data sources and analytics to embrace change and drive innovation
- Organisations must consider the value that analytics projects provide by helping reduce costs, enhance revenue, and improve employee productivity

"By investing in a comprehensive approach to data and analytics, any organisation has the opportunity to realise 60% greater value from its data"

Source: IDC White Paper, "Capturing the $1.6 Trillion Data Dividend" (May 2014) [Sponsored by Microsoft]
Erik Brynjolfsson, Lorin M. Hitt, and Heekyung Hellen Kim, "Strength in Numbers: How Does Data-Driven Decisionmaking Affect Firm Performance?"
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management and University of Pennsylvania, 2011.
Thomas H. Davenport and Jeanne G. Harris, Competing on Analytics: The New Science of Winning, Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2007

What does a data superstar look like?

Understand what it takes to become a data superstar and uncover new and beneficial uses for data throughout your organisation. You'll discover that it doesn't mean you need to be surrounded by numbers all day or learn a bunch of Excel shortcuts, it's actually an exciting and very visual process that is, dare we say it, fun!

What behaviours should you exhibit to become a data superstar?

- Make decisions based on data
- Set up data processes from the start
- Make data interesting to other people (visualise it so that someone who is not into data can understand)

Data superstars use data to:

- Substantiate business decisions
- Improve business processes
- Improve products or services
- Improve customer service and experience
- Identify new business opportunities
- Understand customers

TAKE ACTION
Identify someone in your organisation who you believe exhibits Data Superstar behaviour.
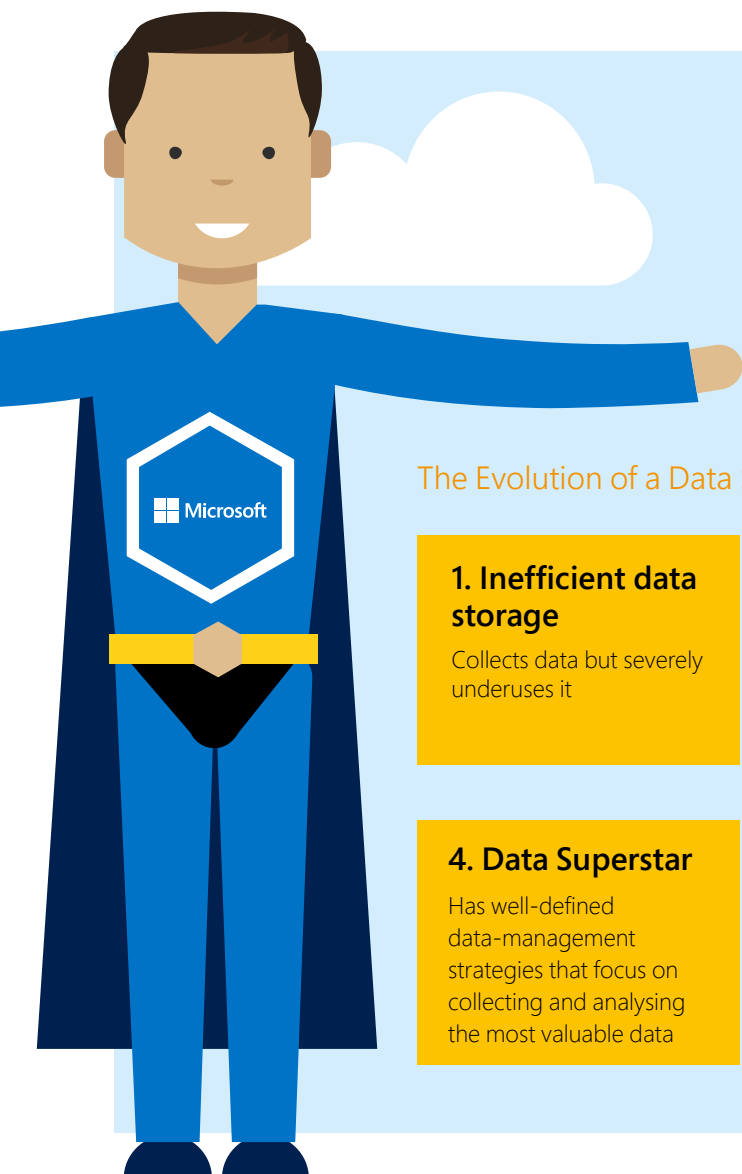
The Evolution of a Data Superstar

1. Inefficient data storage

Collects data but severely underuses it
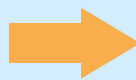
2. Data coordinator

Collects data but doesn't consistently maximise its value

4. Data Superstar

Has well-defined data-management strategies that focus on collecting and analysing the most valuable data

3. Aspiring data manager

Appreciates the value of data and gathers resources to take better advantage of it

What is Power BI?

Power BI is a suite of business analytics tools to analyse data and share insights, enabling you to monitor your business and get answers quickly with rich dashboards available on every device. As you will have seen with the Shop Window analogy at the start of this eBook, the combination of Power BI and SQL Server enables you to collect and organise your data so you can focus on what matters to you, stay in the know, spot trends as they happen and push your business further.

TAKE ACTION
Go to <u>PowerBI</u> to start bringing your data to life.

PowerBI in Action

About Xero

Xero is a beautiful, easy to use online accounting software for small businesses and their advisors. Microsoft Power BI complements Xero financial data to deliver powerful analytics and compelling data visualisations. And you don't need any IT support to make it work. With the click of a button your financial data in Xero can be paired with data from other sources – such as CRM, marketing and support systems – to surface new insights.

Scenario

Jim a business owner, has recently secured several large national contracts. Whilst these new contracts provide a significant opportunity for growth, Jim is concerned whether he has the necessary cash flow to fund the staff and machinery required to support the expansion.

Jim uses Xero to manage his finances. He connects Xero to his bank account to automatically feed the transactions into Xero on a daily basis, allowing him to stay on top of his cashflow in real time. He decides to connect his Xero data to Power BI to provide these key financial insights.

Jim can now create visualisations for the most commonly tracked small business metrics including cash position and return on investment. Armed with this analysis and the functionality provided by Xero and Power BI, Jim can make informed financial decisions to support the future success of his venture and assess whether he can go ahead with the expansion.

"Xero is deeply invested in the potential of big data for small business. We understand that the true value of data lies in the ability to extract insights and the story it paints around the health of their business. Microsoft Power BI can now be accessed with a click in Xero to surface new insights, and give precious time back to our customers to focus on their customers."

Angus Norton, Xero's Chief Product Officer

Unlock new opportunities through your data today

Want to reap the benefits of a data centric culture, enhance productivity, boost revenue and unlock new opportunities like Jim? You can access tools like Power BI with a simple upgrade to the latest version of SQL Server - it doesn't require significant investment or cause disruption to business.

Discover how simply you can become a data superstar. Talk to your IT director or IT partner about upgrading to the latest version of SQL Server.

Part 2: Help Your Business To Work Better

Data relationships matter

More than anything, what transforms raw information into insight is spotting the relationships between disconnected data sets. But connecting and analysing that data needn't be a disruptive or expensive exercise. Much of the infrastructure that you require is likely already in your environment or available quickly and easily via cloud technologies.

TAKE ACTION
Consider a key strategic challenge your business is facing, how can a modern data platform address that challenge?

The key benefits of a modern data platform

Cost control
According to Forrester, consolidating on virtualised or cloud platforms and using modern, policy based administration and automation tools could reduce the cost of provisioning, management, security and database administration by up to 20%, creating opportunity for further investment.

Enhanced security
Modern data platforms implement a range of technologies to combat threats to your data, from encryption to audit mechanisms and advanced administration, to prevent many forms of cyber attack and data leakage.

Advanced capabilities
Transform your business with capabilities including built in business intelligence and reporting, integration and data quality services, in-memory technologies and advanced analytic tools to power your data driven growth.

How would a modern data platform benefit me?

A modern data platform brings different benefits to different roles, whether you're focused on developing the business itself or the IT infrastructure within it.

As an IT Decision Maker you care about...
- Improved and scalable data storage infrastructure
- Reduced cost
- Increased efficiency and security
- Less down time and simplified maintenance
- Apps that can talk to each other
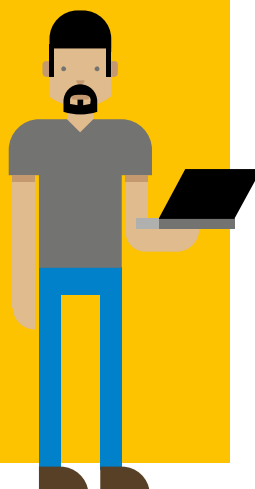
While the Business Decision Makers in your organisation are focused on...
- Lower costs
- Improve Security
- Better understand customers and deliver a better experience
- Enhance the customer's digital experience
- Plan and execute business more effectively

SQL Server enables you to achieve all of these goals for minimal investment, so you can focus less on infrastructure and maintenance and more on growing your business.

# Introducing SQL Server Enterprise – not just for big businesses!

SQL Server: The business data platform of choice

SQL Server is the most widely deployed relational database platform in the industry. In fact, about half of all deployed relational databases are SQL Server, which means it is also one of the most widely supported in terms of skills, applications and 3rd party tools. This translates into cost savings due to wide availability of skilled staff and, as a complete data platform, SQL Server Enterprise has everything built in, which means no confusing and expensive options, and simple integration of components, reducing the cost of implementation.

Enhanced data security

SQL Server Enterprise has had the lowest reported number of vulnerabilities of any major database platform since 2009, according to NIST. In addition, SQL Server Enterprise supports Advanced Threat Analytics and Auditing to allow you to monitor and protect your database from unauthorised access, plus encryption, authentication and masking technologies to secure data when at rest and in transit.
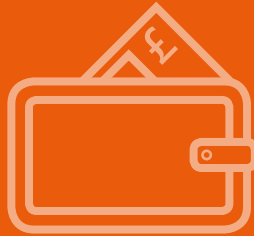
Low cost, high availability

SQL Server Enterprise has a number advantages that allow you to keep down the costs. This includes Software Assurance that provides unlimited virtualisation, allowing you to build a flexible, low cost data platform that makes maximum use of your hardware, enabling you to get the maximum work done for minimum cost.

Accelerated insights

Access and process data up to 100x faster than traditional databases, and use built in reporting and dash boarding technologies to deliver interactive and static reports to your business at no additional cost. SQL Server also integrates the most widely used advanced analytic language, R, right into the engine, allowing you to operationalise your analytic workloads to deliver maximum benefit to you customers and partners.
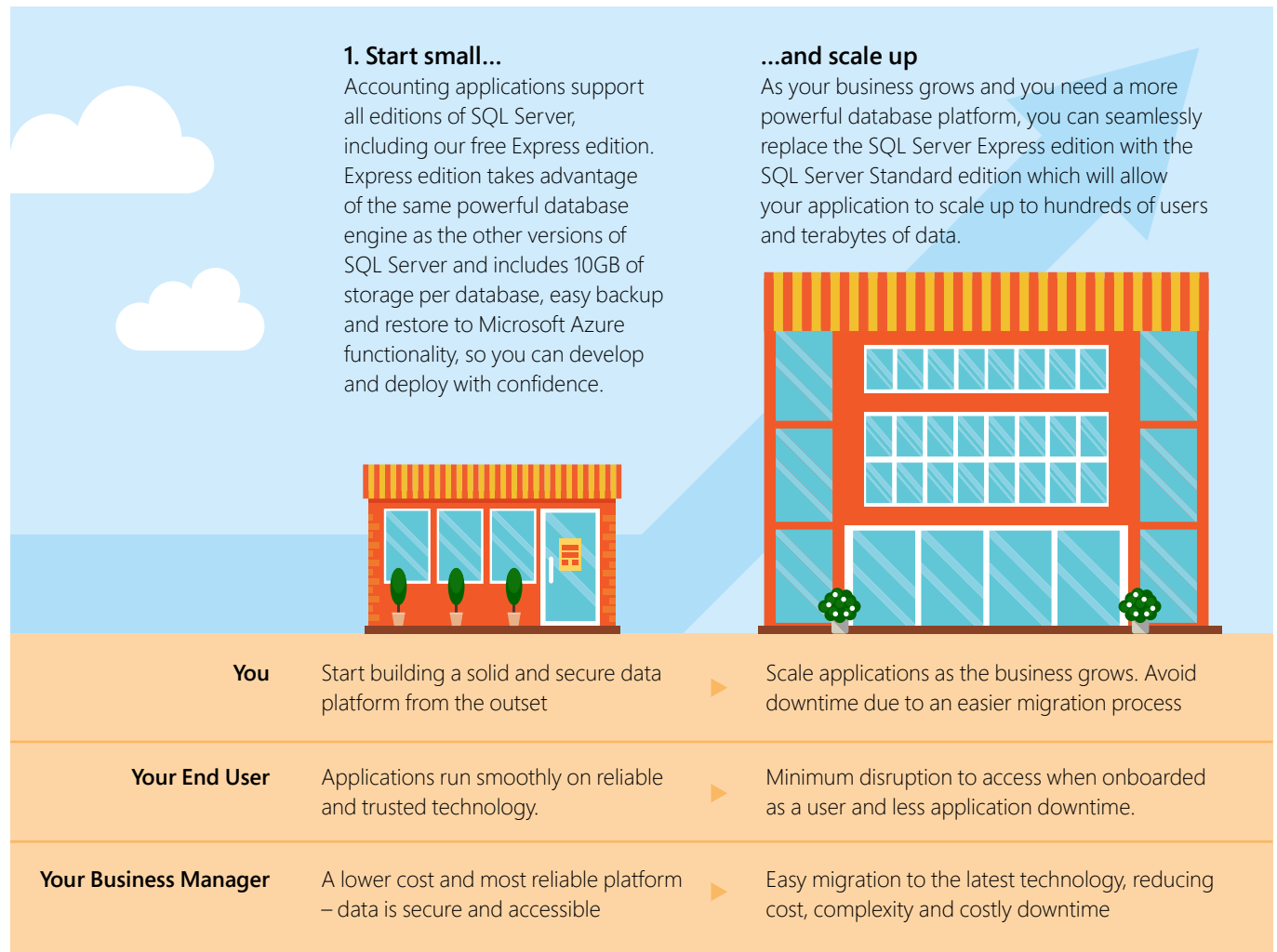
TAKE ACTION
Look into what platform your apps are currently running on.

Click here to find out more about the differences between the different SQL Server versions and features.

From small business to big business via modern applications

Modern applications represent the most important opportunity for small business to become big business and, as a growing business, you want to invest all of your people time on delivering value to your customers, not managing internal process and reporting. With SQL Server, that dream can become reality. Take a look at how deploying applications that build on SQL Server can provide a number of advantages to small businesses:

1. Start small...
Accounting applications support all editions of SQL Server, including our free Express edition. Express edition takes advantage of the same powerful database engine as the other versions of SQL Server and includes 10GB of storage per database, easy backup and restore to Microsoft Azure functionality, so you can develop and deploy with confidence.

...and scale up
As your business grows and you need a more powerful database platform, you can seamlessly replace the SQL Server Express edition with the SQL Server Standard edition which will allow your application to scale up to hundreds of users and terabytes of data.

	Start small...	...and scale up
You	Start building a solid and secure data platform from the outset	Scale applications as the business grows. Avoid downtime due to an easier migration process
Your End User	Applications run smoothly on reliable and trusted technology.	Minimum disruption to access when onboarded as a user and less application downtime.
Your Business Manager	A lower cost and most reliable platform – data is secure and accessible	Easy migration to the latest technology, reducing cost, complexity and costly downtime

2. Dashboards at the click of a mouse
Many applications like Microsoft Dynamics CRM that use SQL Server also offer customers a one-click dashboard via Power BI Content Packs. Power BI Content packs provide standard, pre-configured dashboards that offer the most useful management information without requiring any additional development.

You	Your End User	Your Business Manager
End-to-end analytics, facilitated by a comprehensive data strategy, positions IT as a strategic business partner	Instant access to data insights enables data-driven decision-making, including customer information, to enable better customer service	Better measurement and reporting to diagnose challenges, identify key growth opportunities and aid strategic decision making.

Ready for the cloud: Deploy in hosted private clouds, your own servers or public clouds
Many small businesses are attracted by the convenience and costs of working with a hosting provider to deliver their IT infrastructure. SQL Server is offered by the widest range of UK hosting providers at extremely competitive rates. As your organisation expands and the scale benefits of public cloud environments like Azure become important, applications that run on SQL Server can easily be integrated with and deployed on Azure through the SQL Server engine that Azure provides. This means you can take advantage of a Hybrid Cloud environment from day one, choosing the right infrastructure for your business.

Microsoft SQL Server in action

Discover how Microsoft SQL Server, alongside modern Microsoft solutions, has benefited very different organisations, from enabling business growth to improving day-to-day efficiency and productivity.

## West Kirby Grammar School

Sector
Education

Benefits
Replacing legacy applications with Office 365, Skype for Business, Windows Server 2012, SQL Server 2012 and powerful Windows 8.1 tablets, the teaching and learning experience at West Kirby Grammar School has been transformed with truly anywhere working. The school can confidently look to the future supported by a secure, cutting-edge platform that delivers unparalleled experience and the scope to develop and grow in line with the school's success.

View the full case study **here**

"We have an IT toolset and platform that has a future, a platform that we can build on and develop. The school is a more diverse and dynamic place as a result."

Liam Hayes, IT Strategy Lead,
West Kirby Grammar School
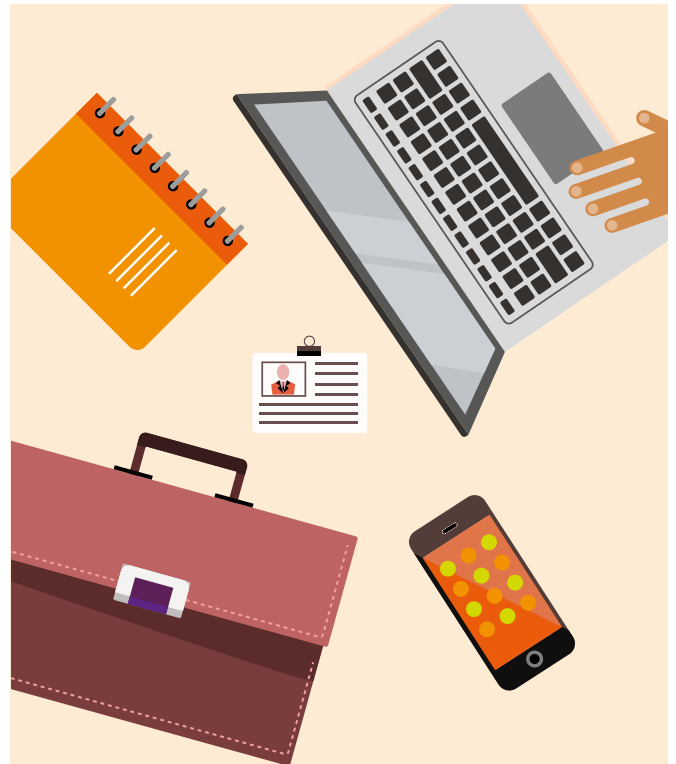
Spark Energy

Sector
Utilities

Benefits
Requiring a 360° view of its customers, Spark Energy achieved 100% year-on-year growth by implementing a solution made up of Dynamics CRM 2011 supported by Windows Server 2012, SQL Server 2012, Visual Studio, .NET and Microsoft Office. With a seamless data flow from SQL Server and Windows Server across all internal systems, it ensures that sensitive customer information remains protected with little chance of duplication or inaccuracy through locally stored versions, while improving day-to-day efficiency and processes, reducing licensing costs and speeding up new customer acquisition.
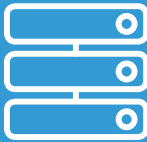
View the full case study **here**

"If we'd carried on where we were, it would have seriously constrained the business' ability to grow and improve. I would recommend taking this step to every business."
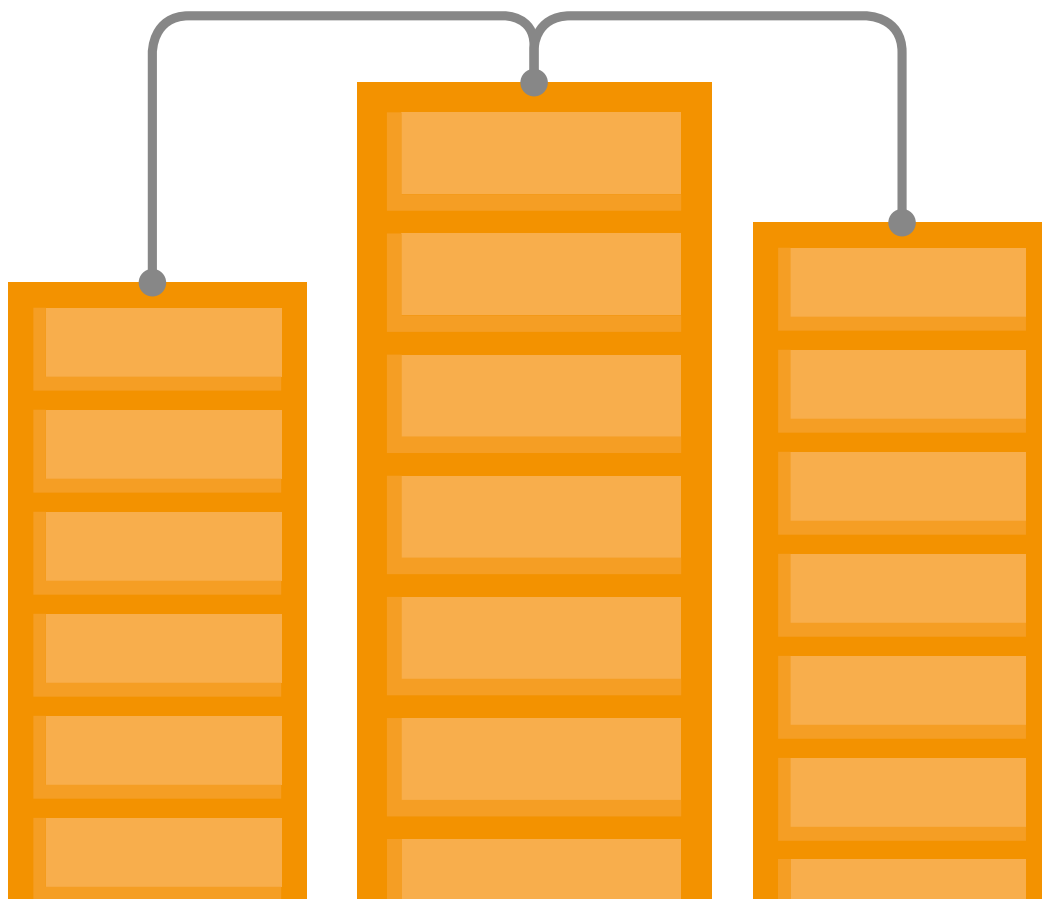
Dave Richardson, IT Director, Spark Energy

Why upgrade to the latest version of SQL Server?

As you have seen, a modern data platform can power business growth and unlock new opportunities from your data, with minimal disruption to your business and for limited investment. As of 12th April 2016, SQL Server will not be supported, so there's never been a better time to upgrade in order to continue to reap the benefits of a solid data platform while unlocking enhanced features and improved flexibility.

Why upgrade to SQL Server?

Maintain security and compliance	The least vulnerable database platform six years in a row*, engineered for **security** from the ground-up Manage **compliance** audit requirements Keep receiving **support**, security updates and hotfixes

Faster insights from any data	Easy access to data, big and small BI with the familiarity of Office; power of the cloud **A complete BI solution**

Achieve mission critical performance	Get up to 30x **faster** transactions and more than 100x query performance gains with in-Memory Experience the **9's you need** – greater HA and DR with AlwaysOn **Scale** across compute, networking and storage.

Optimize data infraestructure	**Virtualise and consolidate** your data platform for maximum performance at low Total Cost of Ownership Choose the best of on-premises and Azure with **hybrid cloud** Migrate web applications to **Azure SQL Database** to reduce administrative needs

*SQL Server Standard includes basic AlwaysOn Hight Availability. Basic includes 2 node Failover Clustering.

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