Tune your data estate to seize big-data opportunities

Many commercial organisations are successfully using big data analytics to improve services while cutting costs. NHS organisations can do the same, and the first step is to get a clear picture of your current data estate. The Northdoor SQL Server Advisory Service shows you what versions and editions of Microsoft SQL Server are in use, where they are being used, and which features are being exploited. Our expertise can cut through the complexity, showing you where you are today and what you need to do to complete your journey to becoming a digital-first organisation.

Tackling complexity

When properly exploited, data can transform operations and boost efficiency. The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee has estimated that the NHS could achieve anything from £16 billion to £66 billion in cost savings through big data analytics. Obtaining the necessary insights depends on gaining an enterprise-wide view of data.

For the typical NHS organisation, the complexity of the existing data estate is a significant barrier to digital-first operations. The lack of a coherent strategy over the years may have contributed to a sprawling mix of different systems. Equally, historical licensing rules from Microsoft permitting great latitude in deployment practice may have led to the deployment of many different versions of SQL Server across multiple platforms.

Increased complexity means higher management and maintenance activity, and can also lead to incompatibilities, security policy exemptions and "special case" treatment for older versions, all of which adds up to more cost. Meanwhile, SQL Server itself has continued to evolve greatly, such that organisations can benefit from significant added value and insight when they upgrade.

Northdoor has significant, proven experience in the selection, deployment, exploitation and maintenance of Microsoft SQL Server. Our objective is help you stay in control through a service featuring regular reviews backed by access to our senior consultants.

As a result, you will have a greater understanding of your estate, regular re-evaluations of its capabilities, deeper insight into the capabilities of the latest version of SQL Server, and assistance when you need it to deliver the change your organisation wants. In a nutshell, the Northdoor SQL Server Advisory Service helps you *understand*, *evaluate* and get ready to take *action*.

Understand

Before you can decide what you want to achieve, you must understand where you are. Using proven tools, Northdoor will provide high-level documentation of where you use SQL Server today and the capabilities of that technology. Focusing on your key systems, we will compare your current capabilities with the functionality available in the latest version, so that you understand exactly what you have and the potential available to you.

Possibilities include:

- Always-On High Availability
- Always Encrypted
- Row-Level Security
- SSRS Web Portal
- SSRS Mobile & Paginated Reports
- Stretch Database
- R Integration
- Temporal Tables

Northdoor's expertise can cut through the complexity, showing you where you are today and what you need to do to complete your journey to becoming a digital-first organisation.

Evaluate

Northdoor will help you determine the spread of SQL Server technology within your organisation, identifying opportunities to decommission unused resources, consolidate under-used resources and repurpose idle investments to deliver new objectives.

Our evaluation will cover:

- Hardware
- Licences
- Security
- Backup
- Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

Northdoor will look at the benefits that consolidation could bring to your SQL Server estate, providing a detailed report on implementing best practices around data in three key areas:

- Stability
- Scalability
- Security

You will receive a detailed consultancy report on how you can benefit from advances in data analytics and how these can be specifically applied to your organisation.

Identify opportunities to decommission unused resources, consolidate under-used resources and repurpose idle investments to deliver new objectives.

Action

Not only will our technology-certified subject matter experts (SMEs) provide understanding and evaluation, but also the same skilled individuals will be available to help you deliver beneficial change. We will make recommendations and provide advice as your team delivers an efficient and manageable SQL estate.

Delivering the service

The annual service has two components:

1. The report

Twice a year, Northdoor will perform a four-day consultative engagement, discovering the extent of your estate in the first instance and then, after discussing our initial findings with you, focusing on your key systems to aid your understanding of their function within your organisation. We will provide a clear evaluation of where you stand today versus where you could be if you adopted the latest SQL Server functionality. We will talk you through the report and provide you with an opportunity to discuss the content with an SME.

2. Drive the outcome

The Northdoor service includes a set number of consultancy hours to be used to help you obtain the outcome you need. As you work through the conclusions from the report, our SME will act as advisor or back-up to your staff, helping out when you need additional support to push projects over the line.

For more information

Speak to Northdoor today to find out how the Northdoor SQL Server Advisory Service can help your organisation modernise its data estate and unlock the benefits of big data.

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