

# Oracle DBA Mentor

## Succeeding as an Oracle Database Administrator

**Brian Peasland**



Apress®

## ***Oracle DBA Mentor: Succeeding as an Oracle Database Administrator***

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Printed on acid-free paper

*This book is dedicated to my three boys: Chay, Jace & Jenner*

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# About the Author



**Brian Peasland** is a seasoned Oracle database administrator with well over 20 years working with all Oracle database versions since Oracle 7.1 was released. He is a constant contributor to the My Oracle Support and Oracle Developer communities as well as other forums. Brian has been writing for SearchOracle.com since 2001. He has B.S. and M.S. degrees, majoring in Computer Science for both. Brian is the author of *Oracle RAC Performance Tuning*.

Brian and his wife reside in Fargo, ND, where they are very busy raising their three kids and shuttling them from one sport to another. During the summer, he can often be seen on the baseball diamond, and in the winter, it's in the hockey rink.

# About the Technical Reviewer



An Oracle ACE since 2017, **Mike Donovan** currently serves as CTO for Dbvisit Software, a New Zealand-headquartered company focused solely on Oracle replication. Having worked there for the better part of a decade he has held numerous technical and customer-facing roles, developing considerable knowledge and experience in this domain, building on his technical consulting and Oracle database administration background.

Mike is an enthusiastic advocate of Oracle technologies, who also loves exploring new tools and solutions like Kafka and cloud-based offerings, and is increasingly taking on an evangelist role championing these areas of interest. Mike enjoys writing and speaking on these topics and has been fortunate to have been invited to present at user groups and conferences all over the world, such as Oracle OpenWorld, IOUG Collaborate, RMOUG Training Days, NLOUG Tech 17 and 18, and dbtech showcase (Japan), amongst others.

An avid reader and voracious learner, Mike enjoys running, listening to music, and cooking in his spare time.

# Acknowledgments

I dedicated my first book, *Oracle RAC Performance Tuning*, to my late father. As I was working on that book, I was creating outlines for a few more books. One of the ideas I had was to create this book that provided mentorship advice to database administrators. There are so many books on the market that teach you a wealth of introductory information, but none of them teach you how to learn Oracle on your own other than to buy another book. I wanted this book to be about more than just the introductory information. I wanted to give the reader the tools to be able to take charge of their career and grow in the direction they desire. Oracle Real Application Clusters requires advanced skills from the DBA. Similarly, Oracle performance tuning requires advanced skills. Putting both of them together really requires you to know your craft. My first book is for the seasoned Oracle veteran, and who better to dedicate the book to than the seasoned influence in my life, my father? This book is more entry level and, as such, I have dedicated this to my three boys, Chay, Jace and Jenner. Parents have no greater role than to mentor their children to grow up to be responsible adults and be able to find their own way in this world. We cannot teach them everything they need to know to succeed in life, but we can give them the skills they need to figure things out on their own. Dedicating this book to my sons seemed natural. I mentor them through the early stages of their life, analogous to my attempts at mentoring readers on a professional level.

I would like to thank Jill Balzano and Jonathan Gennick at Apress for their hard work on this book. I would also like to thank anyone else at Apress who worked behind the scenes.

The best books have great technical reviewers keeping the author honest. Thanks to Mike Donovan for his hard work. He made me think of ideas that were not in the original manuscript, which just made the book a better product.

I want to thank anyone that reads my work, be it this book, articles I write for websites or my blog, or answers to questions on many different forums. As you will learn later in this book, I write a lot to help enhance my career. You'll have to read more to understand. If I did not have anyone to read my work, then I would not write as much, and my career growth would suffer. So, thanks for reading. It helps me out a great deal and I hope it helps you as well.

# Introduction

Over the more than two decades I have been working as an Oracle database administrator, I have been both a mentor and a mentee too many times to count. This book is a collection of the things I have learned that have worked for me, as well as the advice given to me and given by me over the years. In a standard mentor/mentee relationship, both parties are in the same location, working hand in hand with face-to-face contact. Today's world often dictates the mentor/mentee relationship be more distant. We are constantly learning from others how to improve our craft, often from strangers with no formal mentorship relation. For example, we may be mentored by someone giving advice in a discussion forum. We may be mentored by reading a highly regarded Oracle professional's blog. We may even be mentored just by reading the advice someone has taken time to write down in a book, as you are about to embark on today. Thanks for reading!

This book is intended for those starting out in their career as an Oracle database administrator. Even those with a few years of experience will find helpful information here. If you want to advance to the top level of this profession, the information in this book will help you get there. I know of many database administrators that wished they had the information in this book to jumpstart their careers. Non-Oracle database administrators will still find this book useful. Except for the Oracle-specific information, the other advice in the book can be used to enhance your career. I was able to quickly and easily learn how to administer SQL Server and other database platforms by following the advice I give here.

*Oracle DBA Mentor* does more than teach you how to administer an Oracle database. I could have easily written a book that said, "do this, that, and the other," but then it would be like all the others on the market. The biggest differentiator of this book and anything else I have seen so far is that this book teaches you how to expand your knowledge after you are done reading. After you have learned that this, that, and the other do not solve your problem, where do you turn next? This book helps you figure it out.

I use the words "I," "you," and "we" a lot in this book. This style was chosen on purpose because I wanted you to feel as if we are in an actual mentor/mentee

## INTRODUCTION

relationship even though I am not there in person. I am talking directly to you, the reader, as I write the words here.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce some soft skills to help you succeed in this job. For many of us, this information is already known. Just in case, I make sure you understand the database administrator's most important role is to be the data guardian and I suggest how to interact with others over the course of your career.

In Chapters 3 through 8, we set up a testbed server, install Oracle, create a database, and implement security and backups. We need this system to be able to explore more as we read the next chapters in the book.

Chapters 9 through 12 show you how to use the Oracle database. Most books tell us the steps to connect to an Oracle database. We will see how it all works. Chapter 10 discusses the importance of testbeds and developing test cases. We created a testbed for our use and now it's time to start using it. Using a testbed is the first thing we can do to help us help ourselves in learning more about Oracle.

Chapters 13 through 16 are the meat of the book. This is where you learn the different avenues for getting answers to questions not found in all of the Oracle books you could ever buy. As you will discover, I strongly recommend you read the Oracle documentation, as most of your answers are written there. Chapter 13 helps unlock the voluminous documentation set. Chapter 14 explores the data dictionary, Chapter 15 explains My Oracle Support, and Chapter 16 examines the benefits of social media.

Chapters 17 through 19 help us maintain a database system once we have it set up. We explore how to apply patches in Chapter 17. We discuss how to upgrade a database in Chapter 18. Chapter 19 covers capacity planning.

Chapters 20 and 21 conclude the book. These are overviews of the Oracle architecture and advanced options, respectively. So much more could be written here. The idea is that you learn some of the high-level concepts so that when you need the information in the future, you already have an introduction.