With DBAs scarce, SaaS firm outsources Snowflake administration to pros at Pythian

Overview
An international SaaS company serving commercial real estate and property management needed dedicated resources to optimize their Snowflake-powered solution. Instead of hiring a full-time database administrator, they opted to outsource to Pythian. This approach keeps their internal developers focused on product enhancements, while simultaneously ensuring their proprietary platform operates at peak performance.

Pythian team helps startup strengthen security, improve performance and optimize operations on its proprietary platform

Commercial real estate is everywhere, from office complexes and shopping centers to healthcare systems and restaurants. Behind all those spaces lies a complex collection of technologies that property managers use to regulate everything from lighting to temperature to building access.

Managing all these disparate tools and systems takes time and effort. It led a savvy Boston-based startup to create a proprietary platform that can streamline building management and improve the tenant experience.

Built on a Snowflake data warehouse and hosted through Amazon Web Services (AWS), the cloud-based solution took off quickly, attracting users across the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Pythian

Business Need
An international SaaS company experienced rapid growth on its proprietary platform, a Snowflake-based solution that serves commercial property managers and their tenants. They needed a dedicated resource to handle day-to-day database operations, as well as review their overall approach to ensure architecture, security, performance and availability were optimized for future growth.

Solution/What We Did
The tech company first tried to hire a full-time database administrator, but struggled to find top talent in a competitive job market. Instead, they outsourced to a team of highly specialized resources at Pythian

Pythian's work included:

- Analyzing current database and virtual warehouse configurations
- Deploying appropriate database monitoring and alerts to support company SLAs
- Collaborating with the internal development team to support a multi-region infrastructure, including GDPR compliance
- Providing a complete security assessment of users, privileges and roles
- Creating actionable recommendations for improvement

Platform growth prompts need for dedicated admin resources

Rapid user adoption meant platform growth and the need to scale. The SaaS company realized they needed a dedicated database administrator (DBA) to optimize and manage their Snowflake data warehouses.

Initially, they recruited for a full-time DBA in the Boston area. However, with a tight job market in play, they struggled to find qualified candidates. When Pythian reached out with an alternative approach, they quickly realized that outsourcing to a dedicated team of experts could provide even greater value to the organization.

The company needed resources with experience in Snowflake and MySQL to handle day-to-day database operations. They also valued an outside perspective from experts who could review their overall approach and ensure their platform's architecture, security, performance and availability were optimized for future growth.

Outsourcing provides team of specialized Snowflake experts

Pythian deployed a team of specialized resources to support the international SaaS company. This enabled the company to tap into various skill levels and specialists, based on each project's specific requirements.

Pythian began with an analysis of their current Snowflake database and virtual warehouse configurations, then provided actionable recommendations for improvement. Because the SaaS company serves commercial property managers across the European Union, an immediate demand was ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Pythian helped them implement a multi-region infrastructure where they can segment and store data appropriately to meet these rigorous requirements.

The Pythian team set up database monitoring with automated alerts to ensure appropriate uptime and performance. This makes it easier for the company to meet its service level agreements (SLAs).

An initial assessment also showed opportunities to tighten security and access to their Snowflake environment. Pythian provided recommendations and helped enact appropriate controls for platform users, privileges and roles.

Result/Key Outcomes

In just a few weeks, Pythian identified and implemented a number of improvements to streamline Snowflake database operations, enhance security and compliance, and increase performance. At every stage, Pythian subject matter experts worked closely with the internal team to educate and transfer knowledge. The company gained more confidence in their platform and better positioned its solution for future growth.

Team approach results in strong and scalable data platform

Across all these tasks, Pythian's Snowflake experts collaborated with the SaaS company's internal team, providing regular updates as well as knowledge transfer sessions, best practices and training.

As a result, the company gained more confidence in their platform and beefed up their internal skill levels.

Outsourcing proved a winning combination. Pythian provided ongoing and experienced resources focused on Snowflake operations and performance. This allowed their internal developers to stay focused on product enhancements, while simultaneously ensuring their proprietary platform operates at peak performance.

Pythian's comprehensive review and assessment of their data environment means their platform is better positioned for future growth.

linkedin.com/company/Pythian   twitter.com/Pythian   Contact us at +1-866-798-4426 or info@pythian.com

ABOUT PYTHIAN

Founded in 1997, Pythian is a global IT services company that helps organizations transform how they compete and win by helping them turn data into valuable insights, predictions and products. From cloud automation to machine learning, Pythian designs, implements and supports customized solutions to the toughest data challenges.

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