Oracle EPM Application Managed Services:
A new approach to managing your Oracle EPM applications

blu marble
MANAGEMENT GROUP

BluMarble's Oracle EPM Application Managed Services

Technical support is difficult and stressful. When things are going well, support personnel are "doing their job". When trouble arises, it is support that feels the wrath of the user community. It's not a surprise that the average tenure of support personnel industry wide is between 12-18 months.

With Application Managed Services, BluMarble has crafted a suite of services tailored to fit an organization's need for business continuity, expert resources, and professional support. Our focus is keeping our client's Oracle EPM applications functional: fixing issues as they arise, providing system administrator support, and delivering expert advice.

How do Application Managed Services work?

BluMarble's Managed Services philosophy is consistent with that of our implementation model. Relationships are the most important element in getting things done, and this is true of Managed Services. To ensure a quality service, our support model requires a central point of contact from both BluMarble and our clients. These individuals are responsible for all aspects of the support. From BluMarble, an Account Manager (AM) fulfills this role. The AM is entrusted with the ownership of the client's success.

The client assigns a Client Co-ordinator (CC) who manages the relationship from the client side. The CC communicates with the AM to establish client priorities and define work and action plans for both incidents and scheduled tasks. The CC is responsible for ensuring that the client's methodologies and processes are consistent with the guidance provided by Oracle.

During the on-boarding process, our AM and support technician(s) carefully familiarize themselves with the client's applications and environments, build relationships with the client's staff, and are the resources that solve the client's issues. The better our teams get to know each other and develop trust, the better we can work through difficulties and deliver the best resolution. Contacting our Support Centre and talking through an issue with a technician who knows you and your applications is Best Practice. There can be NO wasted time when time is of the essence.

To efficiently manage incidents, tasks, and activities, our ticketing process handles all support requests. This process facilitates collaboration between the client and BluMarble, and manages key tasks such as problem identification, prioritization, assignment, and resolution.

When applications are down, it's often a business or mission critical situation and a speedy resolution is vital. Our expert resources are focused on their Oracle EPM specialty. Once engaged, they will have a good understanding of what the root cause of a problem is likely to be. We utilize "Teams" for conference calls with the client's resources that may be required to help troubleshoot the problem. And we keep working until we resolve the issue.

What's included in Application Managed Services?

There are three (3) key components to BluMarble's Application Managed Services: Incident Management, Application Management, and Insurance Policy. We bundle these services and estimate the effort to deliver these services. We then offer our client a fixed-priced subscription-based cost model for the duration of the Support Agreement. As opposed to billing for hours utilized, and the management and justification of these hours, a fixed cost model is affordable and predictable. It encourages more client interaction with our support resources without worrying about the consumption and tracking of billable hours.

About BluMarble:

We are a Canadian provider of Oracle Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) implementation and Managed Support Services.

We understand FP&A and best practices from both the domain and technical perspectives.

Managed Services is a focused business service line for our firm.

Our skilled resources have 10+ years average tenure with the Oracle EPM product set.

We have a battle tested, EPM specific methodology & support model.

Our key operating principle:

Developing long term relationships with our clients builds trust and that trust builds relationships.

This way of operating makes us both successful.

1) Incident Management

BluMarble contractually commits to response times (Service Level Agreements or SLAs) for Incident Management. This provides our client with the peace of mind that should anything happen with their Oracle EPM applications, especially during critical times in their financial cycles, that we will work through the issue until it is resolved.

Application Incidents are handled on a "break/fix" basis, on the severity level of the issue, and our contracted SLAs. Should a supported application cease to function as expected in the client environment, BluMarble personnel will diagnose the problem and mobilize the right resources to address the problem. We will work to successfully resolve the issue and then recommend a solution to bring the application back online in an expeditious manner.

The time to resolve an issue can vary depending on the Oracle EPM product and the complexity of the issue. The time spent on bringing incidents to resolution may be impacted by other factors such as the availability of software patches/updates as well as the promptness with which Oracle, the developer of the software products, releases workarounds, patches, fixes, etc.

2) Application Management

A once-a-year budget cycle can be stressful. Quarterly forecasts can be challenging. These activities tax FP&A, IT, and budget owners. This is when our investment in learning your applications and our expertise in Oracle applications, as well as budgeting, forecasting, ad hoc analysis, and reporting, are most valuable. We help set up your new year models, guide your staff, and answer difficult questions as they arise. We train and mentor new client admins as they come on-board. **BluMarble Managed Services mitigates business risk**.

Application Management includes assisting the client with software patching (periodic version patches). Whether Oracle EPM is installed on-premise or in the Cloud, there are specific processes that need to be followed in order to successfully apply patches, test, and then put the system back into production. A related process is Life Cycle Management (LCM): migrating EPM objects across physical environments (eg. Dev to Test, or Test to Production). We understand these Oracle capabilities and share our expertise with our clients.

3) Insurance Policy

Managed Services act as an insurance policy. The value of this insurance is that the interests of the organization remain protected from circumstances such as the un-availability of critical EPM systems at the most inopportune time. BluMarble's goal is to minimize the client's risk by responding quickly to support requests with expert resources that know the client's applications and can troubleshoot issues in a professional and expeditious manner.

BluMarble Managed Services also protect our clients from unexpected staff related issues. This would include vacation coverage, sick time, or employee separation. Our dedicated resources build relationships with your people, get to know your system, and learn your processes. **We bridge the gap and provide stability.**

And finally, BluMarble's Managed Services deliver peace of mind. We are available. We contract our Service Level Agreements to your needs. And we deliver our services on a fixed-priced subscription-based cost model.

SLA Definitions:

Severity 1: The problem causes complete loss of service. Work cannot reasonably continue, the operation is mission critical to the business, and the situation is an emergency.

Worked around the clock until solution, workaround, or defect is found.

Severity 2: The problem causes a severe loss of service. No acceptable workaround is available however, operation can continue in a restricted fashion.

Worked during business hours until solution, workaround, or defect is found.

Severity 3: The problem causes minor loss of service. The impact is an inconvenience, which may require a workaround to restore functionality.

Service requests are responded to within the next local business day.

Severity 4: The problem causes no loss of service. The result is a minor error, incorrect behavior, or a documentation error that does not impede the operation of the system.

Service requests are responded to within the next one to two local business days.