

## 3 Questions: Data Infrastructure Management: A Sure Bet

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**Strategic Advantage**, Oct. 26, 2005

*With John Bostick, CEO of dbaDIRECT Inc., a Florence, Ky. based managed service that provides 24x7 monitoring, maintenance and on-demand support for critical data transaction systems across platforms.*

**Question: Why is "data infrastructure management" (Data IM) such an attractive outsourcing option for large companies?**

**Bostick:** Data infrastructure management is an attractive outsourcing option for two reasons. First, there is a reasonably high probability for success. A recent MIT study suggests that outsourcing arrangements with clearly defined repeatable processes and a mature set of best practices (often known as transactional outsourcing) enjoy a client/vendor success rate of 90 percent. In racing terms, it's a sure bet — 9 times out of 10, the Data IM horse will show. Admittedly, 90% takes the fun out of gambling — but do we want to gamble with our corporate data assets? The second reason for data infrastructure managements attraction is that customers can not only reduce cost in the near term but, in the longer term, they can avoid cost with a more agile and aligned infrastructure and staff.

**Question: What's the difference between a Data IM and traditional outsourcing ?**

**Bostick:** Large-scale traditional outsourcing often involves replacing a whole staff or department with a lower-cost provider — replacing a good seat with a much cheaper seat, if you will. With Data IM, on the other hand, the customer retains the physical possession of the corporate data assets, infrastructure and institutional knowledge. While some staff dislocation often occurs, more often staff is reassigned to higher-value strategic assignments. Data infrastructure is fast becoming a commodity, and there is always diminishing job security in a sector that is becoming a commodity. Smart management realizes this, and Data IM can help gradually mitigate this transition and retain high-value talent and irreplaceable business knowledge.

**Question: What trends do you see affecting the data management market in the future?**

**Bostick:** There are five trends, signs or pain points, if you will, that will drive the data management market in the future. The first is data volume growth. Data volume grows at about 1% per week. We must either manage data or be managed by data. The second trend is fragmentation. As hardware/software and technical skills grow and improve, they do not do it evenly, and this causes human and capital resources to be spread thinner and thinner. The third trend focuses on talent. In the long run, people are rational, and they will migrate away from fragmentation and toward scalable, creative solutions. The fourth trend is about 24x7 or assured availability, which translates into scalable, proven, automated processes and best practices that must be part of the solution to be globally competitive — even for moderate-sized companies. The fifth trend is about creating value. IT must create more value than expense.

Data IM is one part of the larger trend of technology infrastructure becoming a low-cost, more dependable platform for creativity, productivity and economic growth because it is managed as a service.