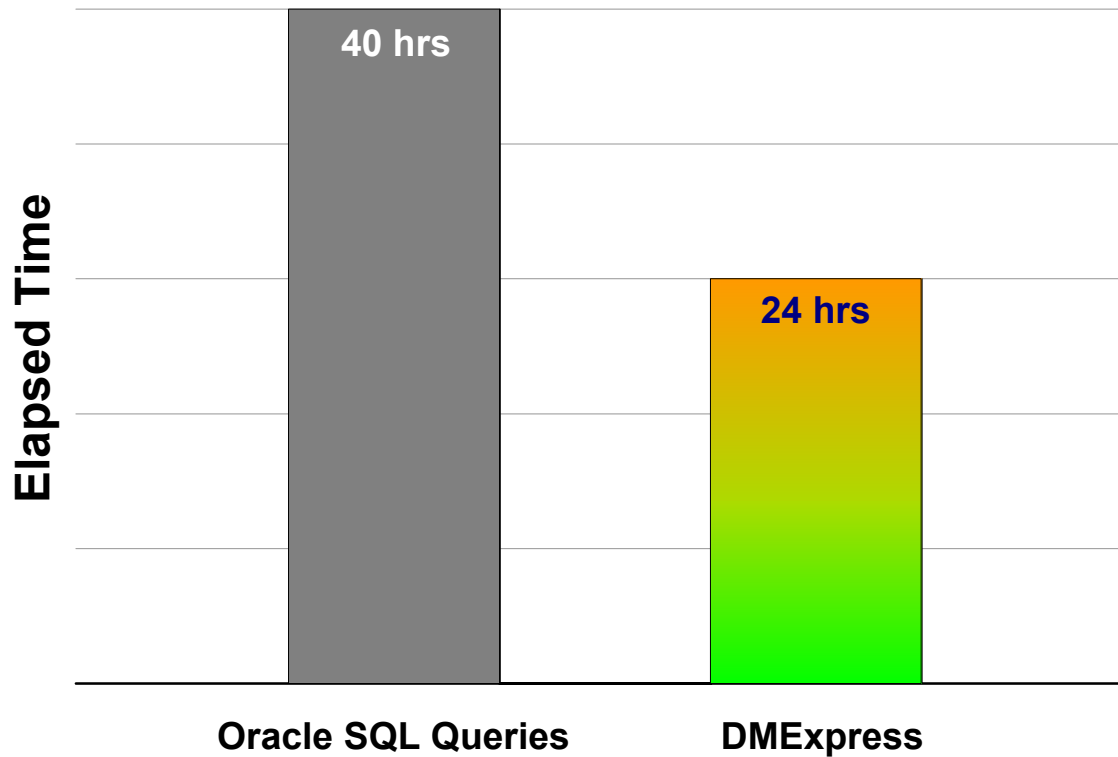


Large Consumer Electronics Retail Chain Boosts CRM Analytics with DMExpress



Organizational Profile

- Large retail electronics chain
- Measures and analyzes customer behavior and transactions to predict trends

Business Needs

- Proof of concept to process 1.3 billion records with over 250 variables in an Oracle database
- Significantly shorten the time for aggregating customer data for analytics

Environment

- Two Sun V880s with 8 CPUs
- Sun Solaris UNIX
- Oracle 9i
- SQL queries
- Teradata

Benefits

- Broaden the effectiveness of the CRM analysts by allowing them to run more queries and add more summarized variables
- Ability to easily scale either vertically or horizontally to meet increasing data volumes and more variables



Full Story →

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The Challenge

A major electronics retail chain needed to significantly improve the performance of the summarizations and aggregations its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) analysts were doing. The customer database contained a lot of detail level data, such as sales transactions, rebate transactions, call center talk time, and case time that needed to be aggregated up to the customer level for analysis. When the IT team deployed SQL programs to aggregate the data in the database, they found that they could not complete the processing in a reasonable amount of time. Their initial set of aggregations were taking more than 40 hours to complete and the analysts' requirements for levels of aggregations and variables extended well beyond this initial set.

To solve this problem, they looked for a software solution that could replace some of the SQL processing that was taking so long. They wanted an ETL solution that could read and write data from and to Oracle 9. After looking at a number of possible solutions, they chose DMExpress from Syncsort. They evaluated Informatica's PowerCenter as well, but determined it was not suitable for the extreme complexity of the queries.

The Solution

The team installed DMExpress as a proof-of-concept to aggregate an initial 1.3 billion lines of transactions with over 130 different variables. Since they were now using high-performance software, they decided to add three levels of aggregation with a total of 250 variables and 5 distinct outputs to the original initial phase and then run the test. Despite the considerable increase in aggregation requirements, DMExpress still completed the processing in 40% less time than the original phase of testing.

The DBA noted that because of the dramatic performance of DMExpress, they could even add further levels of aggregation and still stay within their time constraints. Adding additional levels of aggregation would broaden the effectiveness of the CRM analysts by allowing them to run more queries and get the benefit of more and more summarized variables.

The DBA created this solution with the help of only one other developer in the company, and the aid of the technical team at Syncsort, who worked with them building the original proof-of-concept program. The engineers at Syncsort were very helpful in the initial program, and helped them expand it, as they wanted greater levels of aggregation.

The Benefits

The success of this retail electronics company depends a great deal on knowing its customers. By giving more information to its CRM system analysts and providing this information in a timely manner, this company extends its ability to compete by using DMExpress.

Because of DMExpress's easy scalability, the IT team can expand the ETL solution as needed to meet the needs created by growing data volumes. There will be no need to re-architect a solution in the future. They can add more CPUs to the existing V880 server, or spread DMExpress across multiple servers as needed. By using DMExpress as their high-performance aggregation engine, they have nearly unlimited levels of scalability for any amount of growth in data volume and query levels.