

TWENTY YEARS OF PERFORMANCE TUNING

by Chris Lawson



TIP #2

Root Cause First, Solution Second

This is so obvious that one might wonder why I even mention it. But this logical error is pervasive. It is most common with bright young engineers with limited experience. Jumping to a solution is easy, fun, and takes no competence in the subject matter; anybody can do it! Truly finding the root cause, however, takes labor, time and competence. That's no fun!

I often get requests to solve a performance issue where the requester already assumes some type of solution. For example, he or she might say, "Please check indexes on Table X," or "Please make sure we have good stats on Table Y." At other times, the in-house customer has already decided that more CPU is needed, since the processors are maxed out all the time

Typically, I don't give much credence to suggestions like these, because they are really just *guesses* at the root cause. Maybe they're right, but probably not. In these cases, my approach is to say something like, "How about I go find the root cause first?" When stated this way, almost everyone sees the logic in this approach.



Chris Lawson is the author of *The Art & Science of Oracle Performance Tuning*, as well as *Snappy Interviews: 100 Questions to Ask Oracle DBAs*. When he's not solving performance problems, Chris is an avid hiker, runner, chorister, Amazon reviewer, and geocacher. Chris writes using the penname, "*Bassocantor*."

Twenty Years of Performance Tuning is a series of tips based on the author's experience solving performance problems over the last 20 years.