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Over-spending on Oracle software is more common than you think

Below is a very condensed version of a recent blog post. For the full post, head over to www.redwoodcompliance.com/pro-tip-blog/.

So you've carefully thought through your Oracle needs and bought licenses over time in a disciplined way. If you have a deep understanding of your company's needs at a global, cross departmental level, then you are all set. Your inventory of Oracle licenses should closely match your needs for Oracle licenses.

Unfortunately, that's not the typical case. It's not uncommon for Oracle customers to make routine purchases under different customer numbers, several different agreements, and through different Oracle Sales teams. As a result, it's easy to lose track of the company's full entitlement of Oracle software. The situation is further complicated when you have several different products and licensing metrics involved. Furthermore, keeping track of your actual licensing across all of your teams and departments is difficult and may mask the true extend of your licensing surplus (or license shortage!).

For example, say you have the following licenses for Database Enterprise Edition:

- 100 Processors
- 1500 Named User Multi-Server NL
- 2000 UPUs
- 500 NUPs

What does this mean? What is your bottom line entitlement for Database EE? Are you sure you aren't carrying surpluses and paying support where you don't need it? Can you mix and match metrics to address usage on the same machine? (hint: NO, you can't) Should you or can you migrate? How will your future growth in need for Oracle licenses play into all this?

Oracle charges a pretty penny for its annual support – 22% of the actual license fees, in fact. So if you have excess licenses on the shelf somewhere in your organization, you are paying annual support for licenses you don't need. So what do you do? Contractually, you cannot just drop support on a subset of the licenses due to Matching Support Level issues. Furthermore, without a clear picture of your actual needs, you cannot risk dropping support or terminating licenses either.

Having a clear and all-encompassing view of your inventory of Oracle licenses matched up against your usage (and planned growth in use) of Oracle licenses will put you in a position to not only minimize your compliance risk, but also identify opportunities for reducing your IT spend