

Introduction

It's not uncommon for modern enterprises to puzzle over the sources of out-of-control IT spend, but the Microsoft SQL Server poses a particular mystery.

SQL Server is a powerful and popular database management system (DBMS). However, it also comes with notoriously complex licensing considerations and nuanced versioning that can leave even the most mature IT teams and cloud financial management (FinOps) practitioners wondering where to start and how to get spend under control.

Organizations rarely employ the kind of experts that can grasp the complex and ever-changing nature of SQL Server. It's a tricky balance of aligning technical and license optimizations that takes seasoned pros who have seen and helped mitigate the costliest cases.

Understanding the SQL Server enigma often requires an outside professional who can act like a detective, shining a light on:

- **Outsized spend**
- **Mismatched IT needs**
- **Outdated strategy**

If the investigation is thorough, it will also reveal opportunities for teams to collaborate and operationalize a better data strategy, leading to cost optimization and efficiencies.

“Understanding the SQL Server enigma often requires an outside professional who can act like a detective.” 🔍



The SQL Spend Dossier

It's easiest to get SQL Server spend under control — for good — within a FinOps framework, where teams work together to create a cycle of continuous improvement and cost optimization.

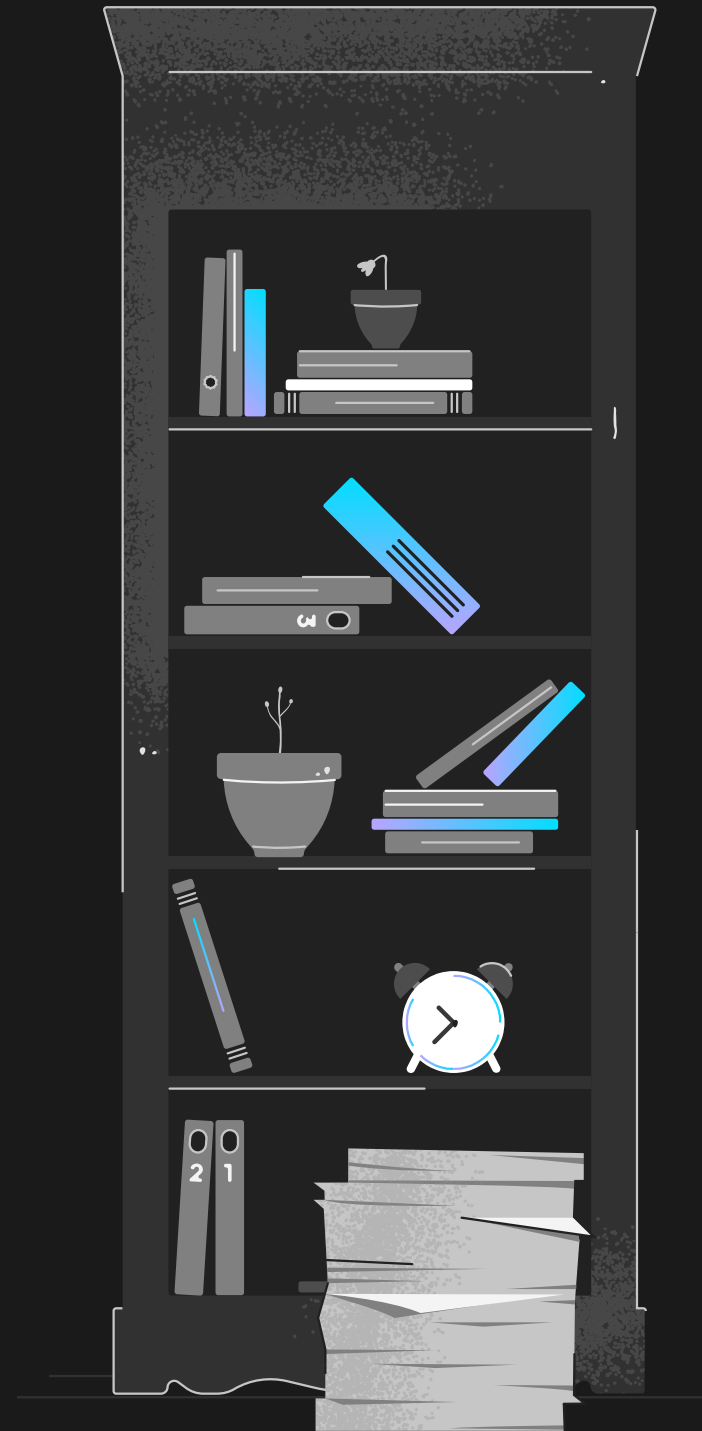
However, database management through SQL Server can cause **breakdowns between IT asset management (ITAM) and other teams, leading to overspending.**

Why? Red flags often aren't raised until someone stumbles on a tell-tale clue. By then, significant budget has been wasted.

Without an ally who understands the true nature of the SQL Server riddle, engineers, procurement team members, ITAM, finance, and other elements of FinOps operations are left pointing fingers at one another when overspend is discovered.

Top 5 Causes of Inflated Costs

- 1 Mismanaged** capacity planning
- 2 Misguided** licensing decisions
- 3 Mistakes** in scale and data growth
- 4 Missed** negotiation opportunities or vendor lock
- 5 Misunderstandings** of SQL Server sprawl



How do you uncover the clues to SQL Server overspend?

Let's get out a flashlight. 

Good detectives must have all the facts before they start searching for the culprit of this kind of overspend.

Specifically, your organization should start by assessing its current SQL Server inventory. This process aims to give you visibility into the entire SQL Server ecosystem, which can balloon beyond any one person or team's oversight.

Assessment Checklist



Provide an accurate count of the whole organization's current SQL Server instances



Establish the editions and versions of the SQL Server your IT team is running



Identify servers and instances that can be decommissioned or consolidated



Pinpoint each instance's workloads and their purpose



Map the components and features used in each instance

Magnifying strategy

Following a comprehensive assessment of all IT assets related to SQL, it's time to take a magnifying glass to where spend is misaligned and use is suboptimal.

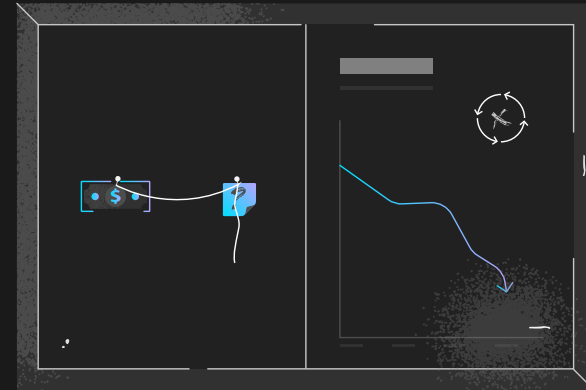
There are two approaches to this, focusing on **usage** and **rate**.

Just like in a good detective tale, discovering evidence of hidden SQL Server licensing spend isn't the end of the story. The discovery process is only the beginning of the trail, leading down a rabbit hole of further mystery, trickery, and unnecessary expenses.

The SQL Server Detective Case Files

We dug into the case files our SQL Server experts have encountered during real-life optimization engagements. There, we found themes to help you identify whether your spending has gotten out of control or if it's time to upgrade your cloud-based SQL Server solution.

These case files contain all you need to know about identifying common SQL Server mistakes that lead to overspending and clues to help everyone in your FinOps practice solve them.



Case File No. 1

The Great Capabilities Caper

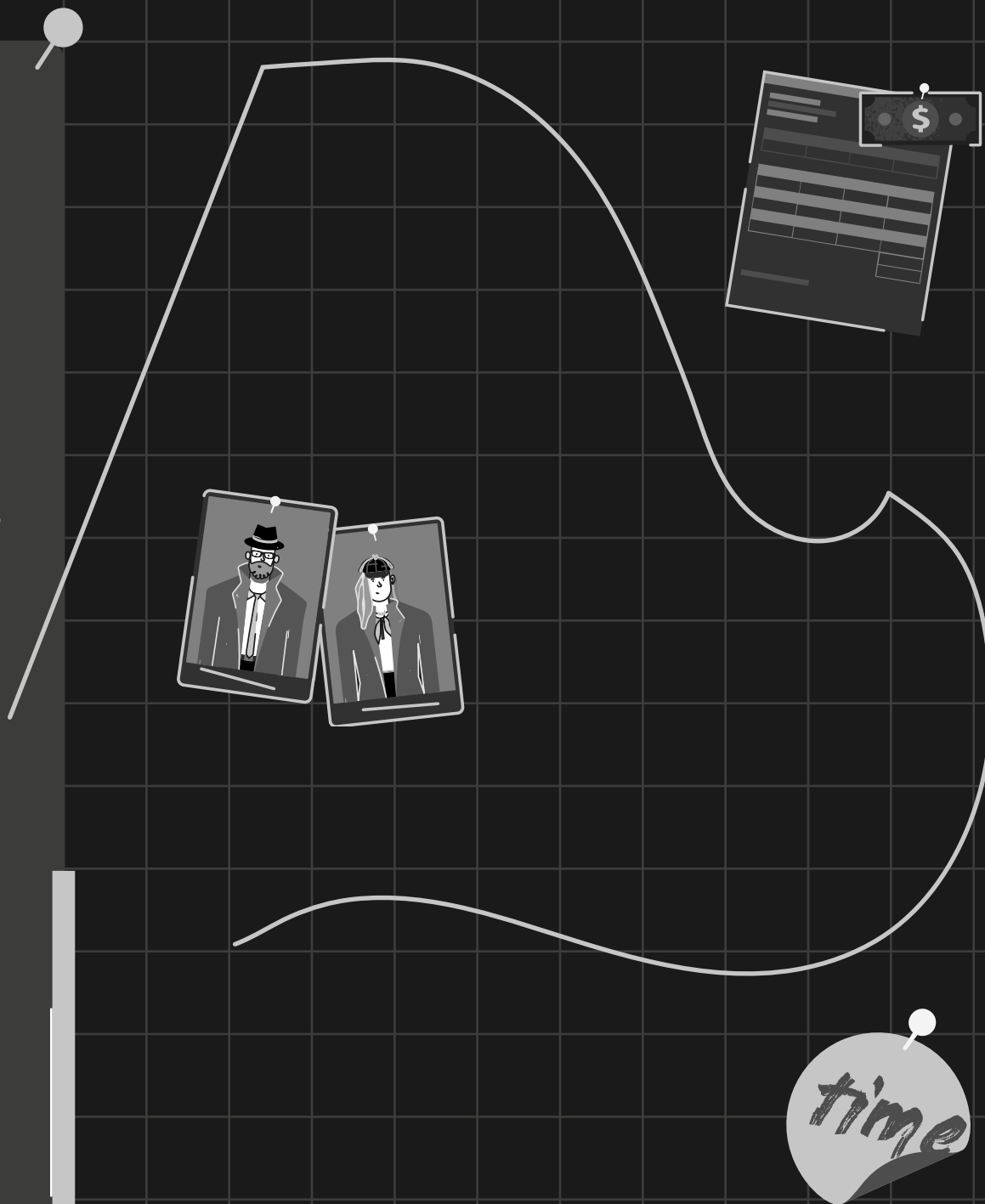
Scenario

After assessing their SQL Server capabilities, organizations often find a mismatch between what they **have** and what they actually **need**.

This can take many forms, such as too many servers, overpowered functionality, or using a paid license version when a free one would suffice.

Clues

The following hints can help a FinOps practitioner determine if there is a misalignment of capabilities in their organization's SQL Server strategy:



Case File No. 2

What's the Core Question?

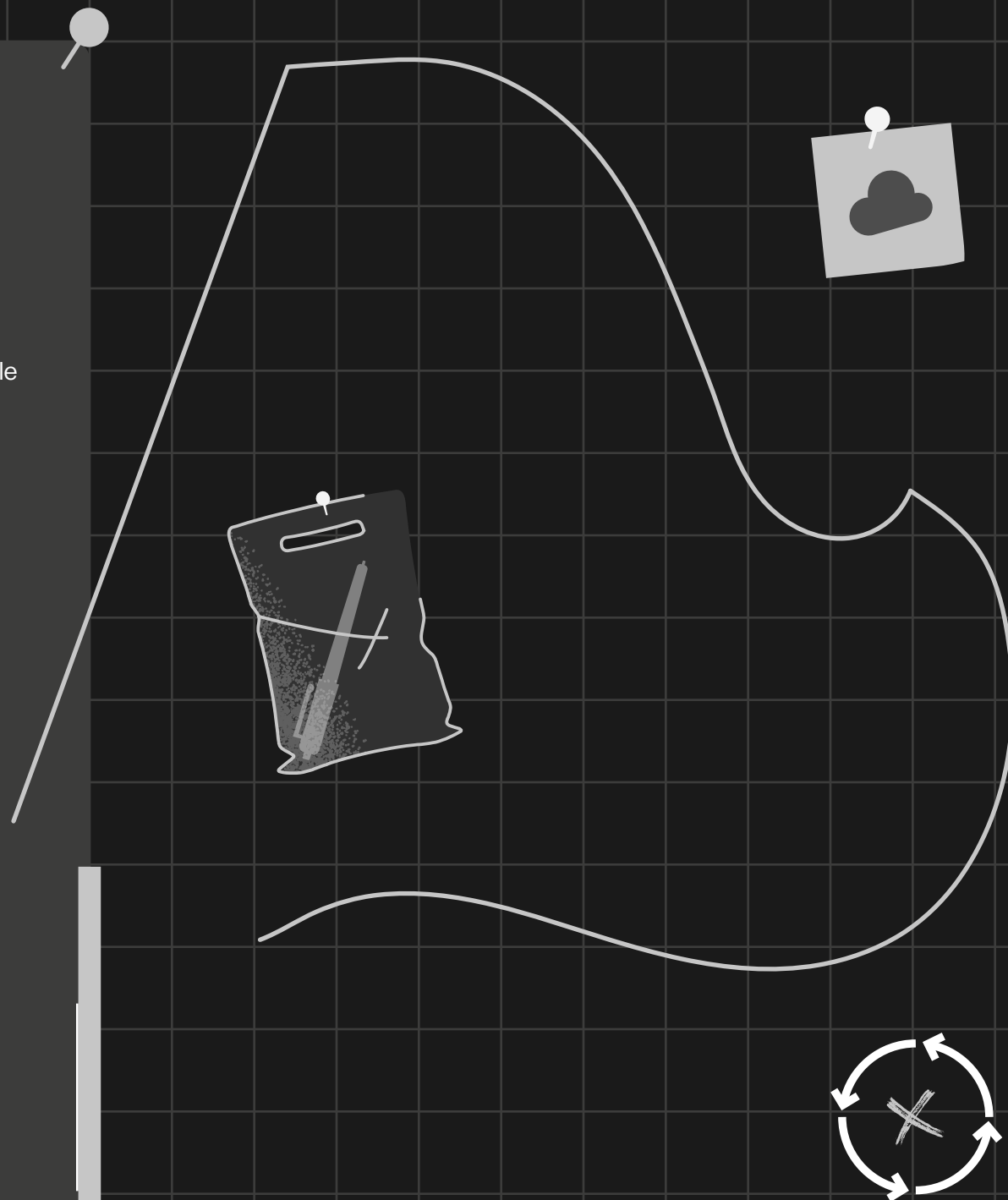
Scenario

Even a hardened detective can struggle to untangle the complexity of SQL Server licensing. It's often the case that organizations are using the wrong licensing model for their needs or misunderstand the pros and cons of one model over the other.

Ultimately, this scenario boils down to a numbers game: Can costly server cores be reapportioned within the organization to serve everyone's needs better?

Clues

FinOps practitioners can detect when SQL Server licensing and related core costs need to be re-examined by looking for the following:



Case File No. 3

It's All Just a Big Misunderstanding

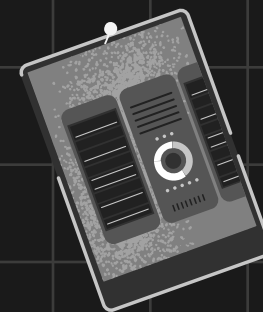
Scenario

Organizations should aim to pay for usage, not deployment — but that's not always the case. Temporary workloads or apps that support short-term events are frequently run on permanent servers. Legacy SQL Servers are also left running when they are no longer required.

This indicates there is an opportunity for IT to better understand the intent of each of these instances. A misunderstanding of long and short-term needs can also cause warning signs outside of IT.

Clues

FinOps should look for the following hints and evidence that there is misalignment within SQL Server usage:



Part Three

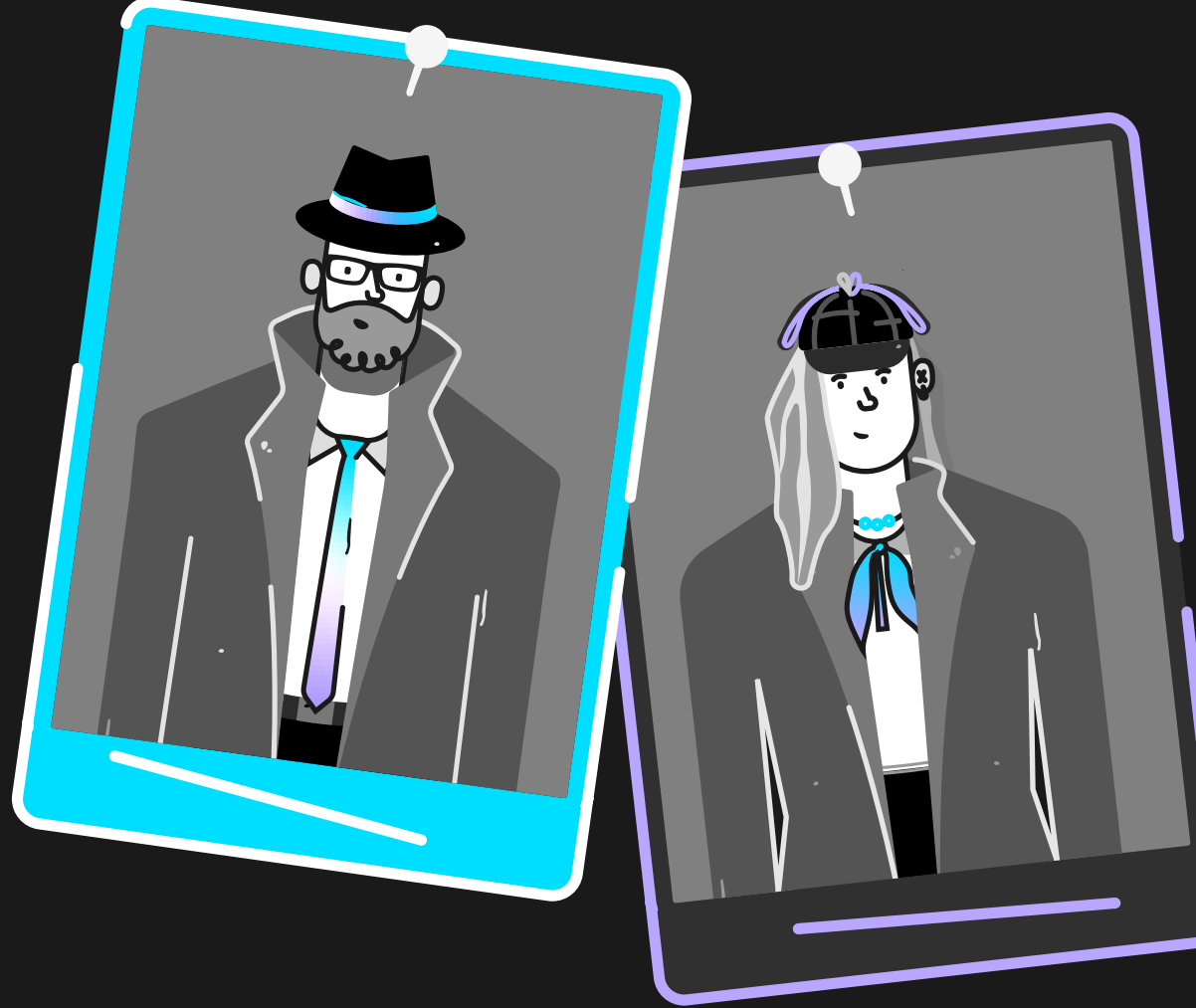
Stackable Savings Through Collaborative SQL Server Optimization

It may take a detective's cunning to uncover these hidden costs and spending misalignment, but the benefit of better collaboration and a focus on the cloud is obvious.

The above cases all have individual solutions. However, to achieve maximum savings, **teams need to work together and stack their optimization efforts.**

Let's take a look at an example where good, collaborative detective work leads to actual savings.

**Click the dashboard below
to reveal underutilization**



Time for a Cloud Detective?

Are you curious about how much you can gain and save by implementing a SQL Server cost optimization strategy?

With some detective work, experts can help your organization analyze, map, design, and enable the best path to an optimized SQL Server ecosystem. If there are clues to overspend in your IT, finance, or procurement operations, SoftwareOne can help.

Get a clue!

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