

Application Information

PART ONE - CONTACT

1. Please provide your contact information:

[redacted]

Years of Experience in SQL Server: 13

PART TWO - EDUCATION

2. Education (list all appropriate types of educational experience - Degree, Diploma, University - please detail location):
LLB Business Law Degree 2.1 with Honours. London Guildhall University (now London Metropolitan University)

PART THREE - COMPANY/PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

3. Describe your company's business:
The Big Bang Data Company
Professional Services company delivering strategic and architectural guidance and education for SQL Server – specifically in the arenas of Data Warehousing and “Big” Data Solutions.
4. Please provide your current job title:
Director
5. Please describe your primary job responsibilities:
As the owner of a small professional services company my role extends into most areas. I am primarily responsible for building the company sales pipeline in addition to ensuring the quality of delivery for my customers’ projects and solutions.

PART FOUR - STATEMENT OF INTENTIONS (Short Essay Format)

(Please note that these answers should relate to your public campaign platform)

6. How do you believe PASS can better serve the SQL community in the next five years?

In the next five years, PASS has an opportunity to reach new audiences and engage more people to strengthen our community. These new people are represented in different geographic regions and in new emerging technology areas.

I envision the future of PASS as a well scaled community organisation capable of supporting the world wide SQL Server community. PASS will need to grow internationally and be able to provide the same level of support for the international community as it does in the US and Canada. The opportunity for PASS to be the “red cross” to the world wide SQL Server community is there. The demand for PASS events overseas is at an unprecedented level and PASS has a duty of care to the community to act.

SQL Server itself is also changing and has been re-inventing itself on the cloud and in Big Data paradigms. For PASS to remain relevant to the data professional it will need to ensure that it embraces these new market shifts. PASS also needs to be able to support its membership and attract new membership as users move away from on-premise data management and traditional DBA or even accidental DBA scenarios towards new architectures and platform opportunities - all of which exist under the banner of SQL Server.

7. What do you perceive is the current state of PASS?

PASS is a community organisation that is in transition. It is a tough one to make – especially in the harsh economic times that we find ourselves. PASS is taking important steps to change and needs to be brave.

An example I'd like to cite is the upcoming Business Analytics Conference.

Historically, PASS' strength in membership has been founded in the DBA community. However, industry and technology is changing focus and is investing heavily in the manipulators of data rather than the managers of data. I liken DBA's to the guardians of data. They are like defenders in soccer or defensive line in American Football; they manage the data and they protect it. However, a newer group has emerged. They are more like your soccer midfielders or your offensive line. They are the analysers of data. Finally there are the visualizers of data – they deliver the knockout punch and are your strikers or your wide receivers. The SQL Server community are all these personas and more. The challenge PASS has is to appeal to these new groups, be relevant to them and provide them with support. PASS needs to adapt to these industry trends and more importantly help the community through the transition. PASS needs to help today's data professional be the soccer captain or the quarterback; to help them call the shots and shape their organisation's data strategies.

8. Tell us about your accomplishments in other volunteer organizations; detail the key things you learned from these experiences:

For the last few years I've been a member of the SQLBits Organising Committee responsible for fundraising through our partnerships with a diverse group of organisations. Over the last six events we have successfully raised almost \$750,000 to support the UK SQL Server Community through SQLBits events. In April 2012 SQLBits was very fortunate to be invited by Microsoft to be the Technical Launch event for SQL Server 2012 here in the UK. SQLBits X set a number of records:

- The largest on premise launch event in the launch calendar for the 2012 launch anywhere in the world
- The largest SQLBits event in our history with over 1600 attendees spanning three days
- The largest SQL Server Product Group presence in the UK ever with almost 50 members of the SQL Server team under one roof

However, the fact I am most proud of is that Microsoft was able to launch SQL Server 2012 with a three day event in Central London for a fraction of the costs than if they were to do it themselves. In partnership with the community and the supporting ecosystem the UK was treated to a truly memorable occasion. To me the trust shown and the reward received demonstrated the truly amazing power of community and I was delighted to play my part in making that happen.

9. If elected to the PASS Board, what goal would you set to contribute to the benefit of PASS? How would you work within the current PASS organization to accomplish that goal? How would this benefit the SQL Server community?

There are two areas where I would look to contribute moving forward:

PASS Community Partners

The first is to develop the strength of the network between PASS and its commercial partners such as Fusion-io, Dell and SQL Sentry. I would like to work more closely with them, to strengthen the bond and to also help develop new relationships as we strive to grow PASS support of the community across the world.

Scaling the number, range and location of our portfolio of events is a challenge for us but it is also a challenge for our partners. We receive fantastic, loyal support from companies large and small, global and local. Most, if not all, have a direct connection to SQL Server. They all contribute massively to our collective success. However, as we grow and expand into under-served regions we need to recognise that we will need to find new partners whilst continuing to maximise the benefit of partnership with our existing team - without whom we'd have struggled to have enjoyed the success and growth that has been witnessed within the community in recent years.

We will also have the opportunity to attract a different and more diverse set of partners. We need to grow the team. Our new team members may or may not have a direct relationship with SQL Server. However, they will have a direct relationship and desire to support our work, our community.

To me, community is our strongest brand and our greatest asset. Every day people are coming together to connect, share and learn about SQL Server. These social hubs and hives of activity are incredibly empowering, virtuous circles that we could and should be doing more to support and recognise their value to our partners both existing and prospective. We need to be widening our thoughts to include companies like Coca-Cola who have a strong community connection http://www.thecocacolacompany.com/citizenship/foundation_coke.html

PASS Global Growth

This year I've been responsible for the development of PASS Global Growth Portfolio. I would be very keen to continue to build on the work we've begun this year and would set myself the goal of ensuring that every major region has representation on the board during my term in office.

However, let's be clear about what this means. It does not mean that a person from the UK sits on the board and bangs the drum for the UK. No – that is not what they are there to do at all. The job is to broaden the experiences of the board to the world wide community and PASS' role in supporting it. Every portfolio we have has an international component – they are all international portfolios. By bringing together leaders from across the world to help shape the strategy for PASS the intent is to inform the board and to provide input into the leadership of all the portfolios that provides opportunities for issues that arise outside of English speaking nations.

PART FIVE - LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (Short Essay Format)

10. Please describe your management and leadership background, listing specific examples of teams or projects:

In the last fifteen or so years I've worked both as a consultant and also in-house as part of a development team. As a consultant I've led teams of DBA's on \$100m projects for companies such as Ford Motor Company and also led the entire development effort for \$5m e-commerce solutions such as www.riverisland.com. Other customers have included The Conservative Party, Chevron, Boots and Deutsche Bank all where I've acted in the role of Architect. As an in-house Database Architect and Production Systems Manager I also oversaw some of the most significant transformational projects at www.cheapflights.com where I set the strategic vision for the technical platform and helped to implement it. During my time at Cheapflights I also recruited most if not all of the companies' development team and was at one point responsible for finding and hiring 10% of the company staff during my tenure – many of whom are still there today.

These days I run my own boutique consultancy here in the United Kingdom – The Big Bang Data Company. My desire is to build once more; a new team of consultants all with the same shared ethics and values, a place where it's both fun and challenging to work, where mutual respect is a given and one where all success is shared.

11. Are you or have you been a member of any board (volunteer or professional)? Please describe: Yes.

I have served on the SQLBits Organising Committee for the last four years where I have been responsible for managing all sponsorship programs in partnership with Tim Kent.

The Committee is currently comprised of eight members of the UK community. Simon Sabin, Chris Webb, Chris Testa O'Neill, Tim Kent, Darren Green, Allan Mitchell, Martin Bell and I are all SQL Server MVPs past and present. The team is broken down into areas of responsibility – Speakers, Finance, Marketing, Venue, Community, Partners and Technology Platform. Each member has a role in one or two of these areas. As mentioned my role in this group is to engage our partners and to work collaboratively with them to create the best, most compelling event for them and for the community.

12. Do you have formal management or leadership training? If so, please provide details of this training and an example of a time this training was directly beneficial:

No I haven't. My approach to management and leadership is entirely organic and essentially learned "on the job". My philosophy is to encourage and develop those around me, to help them be the best that they can be. I believe in the team ethic. Success is something to be shared. Likewise challenges are best overcome by maximising the strengths around you. If we don't succeed then we go down fighting – together. Thankfully that hasn't happened too often but it is as important to experience failure as a team because it's a true test of a team's character.

13. Have you participated in any strategic decision-making processes? Please provide details of specific instances:

As a current serving member of the PASS Board I've been responsible for the Global Growth Portfolio in 2012. This portfolio is a strategic body charged with defining the strategic objectives for PASS. My role has been to shape those objectives, communicate the vision and help to engage the community in soliciting feedback.

For SQLBits I've made many strategic decisions regarding the approach we take towards our partners. Our retention of partners has been fantastic and I consider that this has been a validation of our collaborative approach.

In my day job I am often brought in by my customers to help them make strategic technology bets and to drive platform choices. Whilst I can't comment on these specifically for commercial reasons my customers rely on my ability to see the gaps and to also help connect them to the right people.

14. Please describe your background/experience in dealing with organizational finances, including the size of the organization and sizes/types of budgets involved:

At SQLBits my primary responsibility is to provide partnership opportunities that provide an important source of revenue for the community but also maximise exposure for our partners. As mentioned earlier, in the four years since I've served in this position the team has raised approximately \$750,000 through partnerships.

PART SIX - ACTIVITIES (Special Interest Groups, Committees or other activities)

15. Please describe your past volunteer history with PASS. Who from PASS (HQ and Board of Directors) did you work with? How did you interact with them to meet your volunteer objectives? Community Development in the UK

Through partnering with SQLBits I've been able to work in collaboration with Karla Landrum and Craig Ellis to help re-acquaint the UK SQL Server community with PASS. We have worked hard together to demonstrate support, value and team spirit. PASS now play an important role in the "Community Corner" at SQLBits events and help to create the hubbub that helps to keep our community user groups thriving.

Since we engaged on this program the number of PASS Chapters has grown exponentially in the UK and is now about to host its first SQL Saturday which I am delighted about. The UK Community has embraced PASS and likewise PASS, I feel, has benefited too.

I would also like to stress that whilst Karla, Craig and I were able to create the window of opportunity that the PASS UK Regional Mentors and the Community leaders have been the ones to step through and make the most of it.

16. Please give an example of a project you worked on for PASS that you followed through to completion. Describe how your specific contribution has benefited the PASS organization:

At the time of my appointment to the board the Global Growth Portfolio had been operating as a series of mini-projects. There were a number of streams of activity but it wasn't aligned into a coherent program of work. It required rationalisation. My focus was to get us all working toward an agreed set of goals. We

streamlined the activity, shutting down work streams that overlapped with other areas of PASS and focused on the areas where we felt we would make the most impact and had the most priority. It's been a great team effort. The number of late night calls has been numerous. Discussions have been forthright and passionate yet remained respectful and considerate. The piece I am proudest of is the process we are in right now – our open consultation with the community. We are working hard to make sure that we are making the right steps both for PASS and for the wider Community. We've laid everything out at the global growth [site](#) and invited feedback. We are listening. What comes out at the end might be a validation of our original thinking but it might not. If it's not then we will re-visit, re-evaluate and re-present. We are committed to making the right decisions and the right investment.

My involvement has been to help shape the vision and to drive and challenge the team. However, this is a team, a big team and it's been a team effort to get us to this stage. The whole board and many of PASS HQ have been involved in the Global Growth portfolio at some stage or other. For details I'd urge you to read the vision [document](#) and the sub-committees section. Their support has been immense.

17. Detail your participation in other volunteer organizations/boards (be specific about your contribution and in what capacity):

Aside from my commitments to PASS and SQLBits I have not participated in any other volunteer organisations in a meaningful or substantive way.

18. Please provide details of your social media presence

I would not describe myself as being an effective user of social media. If I was to receive a school report for my social media activity it would definitely be in the C+ "Could do better" category.

Twitter [@jrowlandjones](#)

LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jrowlandjones>

PART SEVEN - OTHER ACTIVITIES

19. Detail other professional certifications:

MCDBA – probably should do something about that

20. Detail any awards received:

I've been fortunate to have been awarded SQL Server MVP for my services to the SQL Server Community. I first received this award back in October 2008 and am proud to say that I've been re-awarded ever since.

21. Detail some of your more recent published professional articles, books, etc.:

I co-authored "SQL Server 2008 Internals and Troubleshooting" with Christian Bolton, Brent Ozar, Justin Langford and Steven Wort.

PART EIGHT - REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECK

Volunteer References

22. PASS volunteer reference #1 (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Jen Stirrup**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

I believe James is the right person for PASS Board of Directors; he brings skills and experience that are unmatched. He brings to this role his SQLBits leadership experience, which has grown to be the most successful, and largest, European community SQL Server conference. He already has self-reliant business acumen, gained from years of delivering hard projects as part of both large and small organisations. The global growth of PASS is going to need a steady hand and careful steering - and I believe that James has consistently shown these qualities, and has the evidence to support it. Therefore, I believe he is the right person to be on the Board of Directors.

I know James in a number of capacities; one, as a friend; secondly, in my volunteer work for SQLPass in organising WIT events across Europe, and thirdly, as a SQLBits speaker and organiser.

With respect to SQLBits, James has worked successfully with sponsors for a number of years now. This role involves retention of existing sponsors, and recruitment of new sponsors. It can be a difficult to strike a balance between managing existing sponsors whilst ensuring that new sponsors are looked after, and James manages both sets of sponsor needs extremely well. I personally believe that this is because James has excellent listening skills, and this can often be a rare skill in the IT world generally.

Working with the sponsors is a hard job since they all expect undivided, devoted attention and this role often involves very long hours. Although the sponsor role involves strategy and communication, James has always been on hand to help in a practical way as well. I remember one particular occasion at SQLBits in the UK, where I was giving a precon and the candidates were melting in the heat; the room was like a greenhouse. I'll never forget the welcome sight as James walked in the room carrying 40 ice-creams for the delegates in order to cool them down - he really does think of the detail as well as the 'bigger picture'!

James and I touch base every so often in order to discuss the WIT events across Europe, and I know that I can approach him for any assistance with the small part that I play in assisting with the organisation. This is one area in particular where PASS can have an active and visible contribution to the SQL Server community outside the US, and James is already familiar with the work that I've been trying to do here in Europe.

The last election cycle was difficult and unfortunate, and I think that lessons have been learned all around and I hope that everyone will move forward. James has consistently demonstrated that he can do this role, and I believe that his good work should be allowed to continue.

I personally believe that this election should be about voting for the right person with the right skills to take PASS to the next international level. Given the issues at the last election cycle, James' measured and reasoned response was impressive, and he has had to step up to the PASS plate with a harder start than other Board members. Despite this, he's helped to ensure that everyone's voices were heard in the discussions around the global growth of PASS, which I think comes back to my earlier comment about his listening skills and an ability to look at problems in different ways.

To summarise, I fully support James' application for the Board of Directors and I believe he has proved that he the right skills, experience and attitude to help take PASS to a global level.

23. PASS volunteer reference #2 (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Andre Kamman**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

James has been a tremendous help over the years.

He has coached me personally, very pro-actively and without his knowledge and contacts our Dutch SQL Saturdays would not have been the success they are right now!

James has demonstrated great passion about helping the various European communities benefit and learn from each other.

His skills to bridge cultural differences and not just showing vision but executing on that time and time again make him what we all look for in a true community leader!

24. PASS volunteer reference #3 (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Chris Testa O'Neill**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

I have worked with James extensively in the area of community development in the UK, both within the capacity of SQLBits and SQLPASS. Within SQLBits, we have both worked hard in creating the Community Corner and promoting community engagement. This has provided the platform for Chapter leaders to promote their chapters. In my opinion this has been an important tool in helping grow the UK SQL Server Community. We are currently working towards the first Community Engagement Day. A critical day for community stakeholders to get together and share ideas due to the increase in SQL Server community activities in the last 6 months.

Within PASS we are both frequently engaging with both Chapter and Non Chapter leaders to bring them up to date with the latest developments in PASS. The theme recently has been about the Global Growth strategy. I have to thank James for going the extra mile beyond his normal activities as well. James's

advice was invaluable in helping me understand how to register chapters that led to 8 Chapters forming within the UK within one year.

James is a very patient and strategically minded fellow, who understands the demands of all community stakeholders and is able to provide solutions that pull everyone in the right direction. He is also sensitive to situations.

These skills are vital in performing the important tasks within the PASS Board of Director role.

Public References

25. PASS public reference #1 (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Nick Harshbarger**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

James is an engaging, enthusiastic and community-minded individual, who has long been dedicated to improving the reach and quality of PASS, for the benefit of the entire worldwide SQL Server user base. I make this statement based on the 5 years I have known and worked with James on numerous SQLBits events throughout the United Kingdom on behalf of SQL Sentry. As one of the organizing members of SQLBits, he has been an integral part of their growth and success by applying his ability to listen and lead. Year after year, James has successfully maintained the primary focus of providing the highest quality, community-based educational events that deliver content reflecting the needs of those attending. He achieved this through regular, open and professional communications with the both the SQL Community and vendors supporting the event.

True to his background as a SQL Server consultant, James is relentless in his desire to thoroughly review an existing situation, analyze the outcomes and recommend action items for continued improvement. Through his most recent PASS Board position, he has not shied away from his passion to focus on the global growth of PASS, and has fully supported development of educational programs that are original while embracing proven components of previous events. I know James will bring his unbridled energy and optimism to all of the PASS programs he is involved in for the betterment of the global SQL Server community.

26. PASS public reference #2 (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Brent Ozar**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

James is an experienced community builder. I first met James when he was organizing SQLbits and I was an evangelist for Quest Software. The Quest team loved working with James because he understood how to provide value for both software companies and the community. He created win-win opportunities for both sides, and he was a pleasure to deal with. It's been exciting to watch SQLbits grow, and as a sponsor and a speaker, I know James was personally responsible for much of that success.

More than that, though, James is a bridge builder. Rather than bringing SQLbits to the US and fragmenting the SQL Server community here, he joined forces with PASS and worked to unify the community. During the last contentious PASS election cycle, James demonstrated his bridge-building skills again by making wonderfully calm, reasoned responses to rash outcries from community members. He didn't lose his cool, and kept working to bring people together. I'm glad James has the patience and time to deal with the rest of us wackos in the community, and I'm so happy he's willing to continue blazing a trail.

27. PASS public reference #3 (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Chris Webb**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

I've known James for a long time now through his involvement with SQLBits and the SQL Server community in general in the UK. For the whole of that time he has impressed me with his organisational skills, his commitment to the SQL Server community and his integrity. The way he has dealt with managing the sponsorship for SQLBits has been exemplary: he has successfully brought on board major sponsors like Fusion-io, whose money has been key to allowing us to run large-scale events, but more than that he has maintained the relationship over several years and ensured that these sponsors have stayed with us in the long-term. This would not have been possible without the passion, dedication and diplomatic skills that James displayed. It is for this reason that I believe James would be an ideal candidate for the PASS Board of Directors.

Personal Reference – Optional

28. Personal reference (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Simon Sabin**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

I first met James at a SQL Server 2005 launch in London. 7 years later we were at another SQL Server launch event at the same venue. This time the event was not a Microsoft event, but an event built and run by the community, SQLBits X. The event was huge, more people, more sessions, more speakers, more SQL Server product team, more sponsors, more everything than any previous SQL Server event in Europe. Was this down to James? In part, yes. Whilst it was a team effort, SQLBits works due to a balance of funding support from sponsorship and attendees. James has been instrumental in building relationships with our sponsors. The key phrase there is "building relationships". SQLBits has a true relationship with its sponsors, one built on understanding and cooperation where everyone benefits. It's not been about getting the most swag, the most sponsors or the most funding. It's been about getting the right balance. Ensuring SQLBits is successful for them as much as we get the support we need. In today's climate this has been crucial and James ability to listen, learn and act has been instrumental to this. Building strong relationships is what's going to take PASS to the next level and help drive a global sustainable community and is one of the items James will contribute to PASS.

Anyone that has been involved in running an event, being on a committee, putting on a kid's birthday party, knows that the effort involved is huge. The more you put in the more you generally get out, based on that James should be getting a lot out of what he does. He is not only running his own company and coordinating sponsorship for SQLBits but also joined the PASS board last year. I'm sure the guy has found a time machine. You might think that he must be a workaholic, he is but he still finds time for his family including painting hundreds of soldiers for his son so they can go to War hammer competitions.

One of the other traits James has, to the dismay of many of our colleagues on the SQLBits committee, is his attention to detail. This isn't about being picky; James knows when details are important and when they aren't. A prime example is the evening event at SQLBits X. Making a drab square exhibition space look and feel like an English public house without spending much money was a true feat. Did it add to the sessions during the day? No it didn't. Was it important? Absolutely. The evening events are crucial to getting people talking, making connections and thus to the building of the community, without James attention to detail the event wouldn't have been the success it was. Just ask anyone that was there.

James is a great listener and has always got wise and helpful words of support. This is highlighted by an event last year. James decided to leave his job to run his own business; we were due to do that together. At the same time a client made me a very attractive offer to join them. My business was going strong, was about to venture on a new partnership with James, everything looked great so I was not considering the offer. That was until I got some advice that I really should seriously consider such an offer and not just dismiss it. That advice was from James. After much deliberation and discussions I took the offer, which left James high with no business partner but this highlights how totally unselfish his advice is. He always looks beyond the obvious and looks to the crux of the situation finding a problem and even if the solution doesn't suit him he'll still put it forward.

I consider James a true friend whom I am grateful for having bumped into him those 7 years ago, I definitely feel I am a better person because of him and PASS will definitely grow from strength to strength with him on board.

Work Related Reference – Optional

29. Work-related reference (please provide daytime phone and email)

a. Reference Name: **Niall MacLeod**

[redacted]

b. Statement of Support from Reference:

I have been grateful for the support that Fusion-io has received from James during the last three years. He was one of the first individuals to embrace and promote Fusion as a company when we had little to no presence in EMEA. He has been instrumental in helping Fusion gain significant market voice and adoption within the SQL community. He understood our technical fit, helped craft our messaging and introduced us to the community. It is with his efforts and guidance that we have been able to support SQLBits and create events such as CCG and the recent Casino night. The CCG event was so successful that we are often asked to repeat the event. Our CEO, David Flynn, holds the SQLBits relationship in high

regard. He has visited twice and spoken at both events. James was also able to facilitate David meeting with the SQL Server Executive; which has been strategically important to Fusion.

It is clear to me that James is highly respected in the SQL community. Fusion enjoys supporting the community and plans on continuing to do so. Currently, Fusion is rolling out a UK wide program to sponsor regional PASS meetings. We plan on expanding this across Europe and it's with James support and guidance that this will be possible.

Disclaimer

30. Have you ever been charged with a felony? If yes, were you convicted, and (briefly) what were the circumstances?

No

31. I agree to the time and travel commitments required for this office:

Agreed

32. My employer is aware of and agrees to the time and travel commitments required for this office:

Agreed

PART NINE - SIGNATURE

33. "I, James Rowland-Jones, hereby certify, on this date, 7th August 2012, that all information I have provided or will provide in this document is true, and I agree to abide by all the terms and conditions listed within this document.

I agree to be considered a candidate for the position of Director-at-Large for the Professional Association for SQL Server. I understand that my email address may be made available to select PASS bloggers - screened and approved by PASS - during the campaigning period for the purpose of blogger interviews with candidates.

I am aware that the term for which I am applying begins January 1, 2013 and ends December 31, 2014. If elected, I agree to fulfil the duties and obligations of the elected position to the best of my ability." *(Please answer yes or no to all of the above):*

Yes.