

APPLICATION FORM**PART ONE: CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name: Jen Stirrup

[Redacted]

Years of experience with Microsoft data platform technologies: 15

PART TWO: EDUCATION

1. List all relevant educational achievements (Degrees, Diplomas) and include institution name and location:

Degree	Awarding Institution	Subject	Year of Graduation
M.A.(Hons)	Glasgow University, Scotland	Psychology	1996
Post graduate Diploma (Pg. Dip)	Aberdeen University Scotland with Université de Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris VI, Paris, France	Applied Artificial Intelligence	1997
M.Sc	Birmingham University, England	Cognitive Science	1998
M.Sc	Aberdeen University	Applied Artificial Intelligence	2000

PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

2. Describe your employer's business:

In 2010, I founded Copper Blue Consulting Ltd as Business Intelligence consultancy, focusing on business as well as technologies such as Microsoft technologies including SQL Server, SharePoint and Excel.

In 2011, I needed to grow the company to meet demand, and to add breadth to Copper Blue offering. At this point, Allan Mitchell (SQL Server MVP) joined me as joint owner. We then took on another SQL Server DBA / Consultant as an employee.

Copper Blue are an information organisation: meeting business information needs, served by technology. We have expertise in various technologies including SQL Server, Oracle, Hortonworks distro of Hadoop, Tableau, SQL Server Azure and MarkLogic.

3. Describe your primary job responsibilities:

As the owner of a small company, it means that I wear 'many different hats' in order to meet customer deadlines and project requirements. Here are some highlights:

Financial Ownership: I 'own' the accounts for the Company, which means that I am responsible for the financial minutiae such as expenses, right through to negotiating contracts with vendors and suppliers. I also 'own' the financial reporting for corporate statutory regulations under the laws of England and Wales, such as tax.

Partner Management: As a small organisation, Copper Blue Consulting Ltd are dependent on partner organisations and associates to help deliver projects successfully, within budget and on time for customers. At a high level, this can involve strategic decisions whereby we ensure that our selection of partners is in line with our company direction. On a daily basis, this activity means I need to have effective communication with partners and customers in order to deliver projects as a blended team. As part of this process, it is necessary to conduct negotiation with the end client and the partner in order to ensure that mutual expectations are in order, and the financial aspect of the project is specified.

Technical Delivery: In addition to the strategic and management aspect of my role, I also deliver technical aspects of projects, usually involving SQL Server or related data management systems. As I am an MVP, I often find that I am often parachuted in by customers because their problems are particularly difficult, or they have not been able to resolve them in-house.

PART FOUR: STATEMENT OF INTENTIONS

4. How can PASS better serve the Microsoft data platform community in the next five years?

PASS can achieve something which Microsoft hasn't done well, or easily, so far: be in touch with the nebulous group of Business Analysts, Decision Makers and Big Data practitioners. Earlier this year, PASS took the brave step of reaching out to the Business Analyst person 'on the ground' who is using data, SQL Server and Office products such as Excel.

5. Please state your perception of the PASS organization today.

6. If elected to the PASS Board, what goal(s) would you set for PASS? How would you accomplish that goal? How would this benefit the PASS community?

Goal 1: Form a more cohesive group for the BA community

SQL Server is being re-shaped to include end users, with the advent of technologies such as Power Pivot and Power View. PASS are well-placed to help the emerging BA community who are being introduced to this toolset, which is within the broadening remit of SQL Server.

This goal would benefit the PASS community by helping to formulate, support and grow the BA community in its early, formative stages when it needs particular direction. PASS can be the enabler of this community, which traditionally has been difficult to reach.

The benefit for the whole PASS community is the sharing of perspectives as BA sits next to DBA, learns from keynotes, and catches nuggets of information from emails, for example.

I would accomplish that goal by a concerted 'reach out' program which would aim to touch the community in a number of ways:

- Webinars – continued support and promotion of the BA Virtual Chapter
- Free E-Books – ask volunteers to write brief e-books on a particular topic. This could be branded as the PASS Series throughout, and downloaded from the PASS BA VC community website for logged-in PASS members only
- Google groups and 'hang outs' dedicated to BA topics.
- More local events such as the User Groups, specifically aimed at Business Analysts topics. This do not have to be particularly formal in nature. In the UK, I was involved with the UK Tableau User Group and we have had informal 'Unconferences' or 'unplugged' events whereby people meet very informally in a pub, and simply connect, share Tableau dashboards and so on. Another example is from the Big Data community in London, who are organising 'Big Data lunch in the park' whereby registered attendees are invited to turn up, get into groups to discuss topics over a picnic lunch that they have purchased, and the sponsors buy ice-creams! These informal events are eye-catching and memorable with a sense of fun, and even if people don't attend, they are memorable in themselves, which might help to attract footfall.
- PASS BA Conference – continued support and promotion of the BA Conference. This was a great success this year, and it would be great to build on this success for next year.

Goal 2: Form a platform for people to understand cloud and Big Data technologies better

SQL Server is diversifying into cloud and 'Big Data' technologies, and this necessarily involves a huge shift in the required skill set for SQL Server professionals who embrace the change. PASS are well-placed to support the community of traditional on-premise SQL Server specialists who need to extend or transition their knowledge to cloud technologies. Further, as PASS have the opportunities to reach out globally to new cloud and Big Data technologists who interact with SQL Server but for whom, SQL Server may not be their core skill – the 'Accidental DBA'

Goal 3: Support the PASS community globally via embracing diversity

PASS can continue the efforts that have taken place in Europe, which have focused on reaching out to minority groups in technology, mainly Women in Technology. Whilst I am a supporter of the Women in Technology movement, it would be within the ethos of PASS as an organisation if this remit would be broadened to include Diversity; thereby being an organisation which is inclusive to people from different backgrounds, cultures, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

I regard this activity as a long-term goal, and it should not interfere with the existing great work that has taken place for WIT across the globe. Instead, it would be good if we could add a 'light touch' so that the PASS community are aware that WIT is for everybody, not just women. By extension, visible diversity and WIT programs help to evangelise PASS is for everybody.

Ultimately, leadership members in organisations have to be sensitive to diversity and WIT issues in their organisation, in order to lead effectively. I see the WIT movement as a good thing in itself, and I also see it as tied closely to leadership and career development since evidence shows that diverse teams perform better, troubleshoot faster, and ultimately can affect a company's bottom line. Leaders need to be aware of these issues in order to manage their teams effectively, whilst also ensuring that the team 'asset' is mined properly in order to progress the organisation financially.

I'd like to see PASS being 'in tune' with that message in order to help people move up the career ladder in their profession; putting the 'Professional' into PASS.

Goal 4: Continued efforts to enable PASS as a whole to deliver Goal 1,2,3 and 4.

To achieve Goals 1,2 and 3, PASS needs to be mindful of key 'enablers' that will help to progress these aims. To summarise, these include a. Social Media Strategy and B. Volunteer support

a. Social Media Strategy

PASS need a better defined social media strategy and presence. For example, it was only recently that a 'SQLSaturday' twitter account was opened.

A higher profile social media presence would act as a great evangelist for the organisation, attracting new members. The PASS membership may benefit by an increased number or diversity of new sponsors. Sponsors are often very sensitive to measuring social media presence, and a successful social media strategy means that PASS are 'talking the same language' as the sponsors, thereby understanding their needs better.

Social media presence is not simply a formula of Facebook + lots of tweets. There are other routes of meeting the community via social media:

Google groups and 'hang outs' which could be set at specific times as an addition to the online chapter meetings

Twitter 'surgery' hours whereby community members can drop in, over Twitter, and use a hashtagged word in order to contribute to a conversation

Be more forthcoming about offering 'vouchers' and special offers from sponsors. For example, if a book sponsor has money off book sales, then perhaps PASS could pick this up and put this information on the site, or on an email. This proactive approach might be appreciated by the sponsors.

Flickr – share your SQLFamily photos on a Flickr group, for example, photos from a SQLSaturday event.

b. Volunteer support

One key success area for PASS is the dissemination of expert knowledge of SQL Server to the wider community. However, in order to achieve the goals mentioned as Goals 1, 2, and 3, we have to take care of our volunteers.

I'd like to propose a 'Volunteer Support Program' that helps new – and existing – volunteers to do things better and more easily. This would involve webinars on different topics such as 'how to drive people to

attend your UG' and 'how to use the PASS websites to give you traction with attendees', just to name a few examples. These could be run on a volunteer-to-volunteer basis, whereby more experienced volunteers spread their knowledge to new volunteers.

One example of this is the VC and UG websites, which require .Net Nuke skills. I know from personal experience that this has turned out to be non-intuitive and difficult, and I have not been successful enough with the website for using it with my own PASS chapter based in Hertfordshire, which is a pity. The reason for this is that the ramp up to use the website has been difficult, and the wiki information seems to be out of date. Whilst some of the PASS members and Karla have kindly offered to take me through this site, this is ad-hoc and it would be good to disseminate this information and knowledge more formally to volunteers, through webinars for example.

This would also build a sense of community for volunteers, and this is a way of retaining volunteers once they have been recruited to help. Also, if people don't use the PASS website, this may impact your knowledge of actual membership since people may not be registering at the PASS website. Therefore, this would be a good use of time and effort and might help to drive registrations. We could also offer little 'badges' or 'points' like TechEd offer to community contributors to put on their profiles. This might encourage volunteers to attend the webinars, and perhaps even offer prizes to attendees, volunteers who have attended > 5 sessions or something similar.

PART FIVE: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

7. Please describe your management and leadership background, listing specific examples of team and/or project work:

As part of my consulting activities, most of my work is project and team work. Here are some examples from my consulting background

Technical Team Lead for delivering a Data Warehouse for the University of Cambridge

I managed a team of 6 people with varying skill sets in order to deliver a data warehouse for the University of Cambridge. The project lasted six months. During my time as Technical Team Lead, unfortunately I ran into an issue whereby two of my team members had continual conflict due to deeply-felt religious and historical convictions on behalf of both parties. Their discussions were extremely heated and uncomfortable for other team members. I managed the situation by speaking jointly to both team members, and resolved it quietly before it was escalated to senior management by asking for respect and a focus on the end goal – from both parties – whilst maintaining a neutral ground on the deeply-held convictions on both parties. I also erred on the side of caution by making sure that their activities were as separate as possible in order to minimise conflict, and to ultimately deliver the project.

Technical Team Lead for delivering a Data Warehouse for the Ginsters, a snack food firm

I managed a project that involved a small group of people to deliver a data warehouse. I picked up a failing project with poorly defined requirements, and managed to deliver a solution by an emphasis on open communication and an emphasis on the end goal.

Women in Technology and Diversity in Technology Event Organisation in Europe

I have organised events in the UK across Europe, which are focused on Women in Technology within the SQLPass umbrella. For SQLBits, I help the Committee by 'owning' DiTBits, which is 'Diversity in Technology'. For both of these strands of activities, I am dependent on local teams and resources to help me to put the pieces together to put the event in place. For example, I am dependent on logistical help to confirm a space for the event. Further, Women in Technology events in particular can be contentious amongst community members, and I require strong local support from a local sponsor to garner support to hold the event.

As an example of this, I have worked well with Niko Neugebauer and Oliver Engels who have been amazingly supportive of the Women in Technology events in Europe. We have a shared vision of PASS as being a welcoming, diverse community of SQL Server practitioners from any background, and a passion for growing membership within our local communities in Europe.

8. Are you, or have you been, a member of any board (volunteer or professional)? If so, please describe:

I am one of the current SQLRelay organisers. This is a UK SQL Server event, in which the User Groups try to encourage membership by offering consecutive SQL Server events during the day in a 'tag' manner. The series of events are supported by Microsoft.

My role is responsibility for the sponsors: sponsor recruitment, retention and day-to-day management before the event, and post-event follow-ups. I am responsible for all aspects of sponsor involvement for the event from negotiating arrangements with potential sponsors, to ensuring that SQLRelay are compliant in delivering on the agreements that have been made with individual sponsors.

9. 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 beneficial:

No, unfortunately not. My learning has been shaped by experience in running teams to deliver projects, plus managing staff, plus running my own business. It is something I would like to do in the future as a self-development opportunity.

10. Have you participated in any strategic decision-making processes? If so, please provide details:

In my role as joint owner of a small consultancy, I am directly responsible for the strategy and decision-making of the organisation, and executing on the basis of the agreed strategy. I recognise the importance of give-and-take when negotiating the actual steps involved in delivering a strategy, and that sometimes you have to move back a step in order to move forward to deliver the overall strategy. In other words, you have to 'give a bit to get a bit'.

I'm also a believer in getting people on board, and feeling that they have ownership of their activities and that they are actively contributing. Part of this is the old adage of 'fail to plan, plan to fail' and whilst it is important to respond to events in flight, it is also important not to be dragged around by a vocal minority. Communication is vital as part of this process of preserving the long view of the journey.

I also believe that the hard decisions are the worthwhile decisions, in the long run. This may involve the brave step of 'fail fast' – in other words, if something is clearly not working, it is important to conserve resources for the way forward.

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

Having run my own company for three years, I have managed to grow my small company from starting with nothing but myself and a laptop, to a growing organisation with a turnover of XXX for our last financial Year (2011 – 2012) and we are in the process of finalising accounts for the FY 2012 – 2013. I've grown the company from one person to having a joint owner, official partners, a six-person office in Hertfordshire, and employees at various times. I am looking to hire at the moment since I am back down to two people.

I also organised SQLSaturday Edinburgh, with a budget of £9,000. I ran it on the basis that the event should pay for itself as a community event and it was not run in order to make a profit, but to minimise cost. Ultimately we lost just under £1,000 on the event, partially due in fact to one sponsor, based in Birmingham, who did not pay. We also had some issues to a 'policy' change by the venue at the last minute, which meant that they changed the rules over certain aspects of having a cash bar in the evening, and unfortunately this did not work in our favour. We will take those lessons away for the next event.

I am also the sponsor organiser for SQLRelay in the UK, and thereby responsible for raising as much funds as possible for the execution of the event. My target is £19K and I have just started to raise funds.

PART SIX: VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

12. 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.
I organised SQLSaturday Edinburgh in June this year, and I was the chief organiser from inception right through to post-event finalisation. I was very lucky to have the support from people like Karla and Niko and I cannot thank them enough for their wise words and experience during that time.

This event helped PASS because it increased PASS membership in an area of Europe where membership was traditionally very low. Further, by holding a SQLSaturday event, it helped to clarify in the minds of the community that these events are distinct in their own right, and emphasised the localised nature of the community.

I have also organised Women in Technology events across Europe, and I give details of these in the next section.

13. Detail your PASS community participation within your region (US/Canada, EMEA, APAC or LATAM). Be specific about your contribution, the location, the reach (local, regional, national or international), your volunteer capacity, and goals achieved.

I've held Women in Technology events in Europe for places as far apart as Sweden, Poland, Portugal, Munich, and the UK at SQLSaturday Exeter. I have also offered the same support to other events, including Denmark, Dublin, Bulgaria, the Ukraine and other places in the UK such as

Cambridge, but the option wasn't taken up for various reasons at each event. Our recent event at the Rheinland fell through due to logistical events on the day, which was a pity, but I'd received great support from the team in Germany and I look forward to working with them again in the future.

I've also offered to support places such as Albania, Trinidad and Tobago, but they've said that they would prefer to focus on getting the 'core' SQLSaturday formula correct first before embarking on other items. The answer from them was 'not now' rather than a 'no', so I look forward to helping them in the future.

This year, I am helping SQLRally Nordic and SQLRally Amsterdam to have Women in Technology events. Each organiser, Johan Ahlen and Andre Kamman, have both agreed to events and we will arrange specifics as we draw closer to their events. Personally, I am very excited that we will have two events in Europe, and I'm glad that WiT is a central part to both events. I hope that this will help to grow membership further throughout Europe. Exciting times!

I support the events by:

Mentioning WiT as an option for their event – some team leaders had not considered it before
Helping the local teams to choose topics

Helping the local teams to choose a format e.g. a small informal roundtable, a coffee corner, a buffet lunch, or a Panel

Publicising the event e.g. social media, helping to try and get news on the WiT Page, help with setting up and administering a Facebook page or a twitter account. I am an administrator on the Facebook page for the Polish Women in Technology event, and the women are very friendly although I must admit I cannot read many of the comments because they are in Polish!

Facilitating and organising the event on the day

Helping to find speakers and arrange logistics such as a meeting area

14. Tell us about any involvement and accomplishments within other volunteer organizations.

For SQLBits, I own DiTBits, which is a 'Diversity in Technology' event, which is a small group meeting aimed at discussing 'people' issues in technology. Our inaugural meeting was held at the last SQLBits in Nottingham with a small panel. We managed to get 19 attendees from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities. It's a small success that I'd like to build on for further events. Our panel included Denise and it was superb to have her experience and data-oriented perspective on board to help us, particularly since it was the first DiTBits event at SQLBits and there was no guarantee of success. I was very fortunate to work with Allan Mitchell, Martin Bell and James Rowland-Jones of the SQLBits Committee, who listened to my ideas and helped me to put them into action. and I'd like to gratefully acknowledge that the SQLBits Committee, at James' suggestion, also funded the event as well by provisioning a large room and cheese and wine nibbles to attract delegates to us. We also had further PASS support because my local Regional Mentor, Mark Broadbent, stood up to the plate as my male representative on the Panel, and he was a great Panellist who put a lot of effort into the conversation whilst it was 'in flight'.

For me, this was an accomplishment because we had never had an event like this at SQLBits before, and it was a risk because it became clear that not everyone was supportive of the idea. I am very glad to say that the precedent has been set to have future Diversity events at SQLBits, and it will be incumbent on people to find reasons not to hold similar events; not resting on me to find reasons to host another one. Onwards and forwards!

15. What key learnings have you taken away from your volunteer experiences?

- It can be harder to manage volunteers than paid employees. Volunteers do not need to give you their time and effort. It is vital to keep them involved and feel that they play a part in achieving the end goal. For this reason, I would love to see more volunteer support so that they have an identity and are supported in their efforts; in other words, make their efforts as easy as possible. From my experience with Women in Technology events both within and outside of PASS, I know that it has been much easier to deliver under the PASS umbrella than outside of it, due to the support, wisdom and 'beyond the call of duty' attitude of many of the PASS team members such as Karla, Wendy, James and Denise, who have been extremely supportive in different ways throughout this process.
- The enthusiasm of volunteers can sometimes lead to a 'hero' culture whereby individuals can sometimes feel that they are the only one who can deliver a certain item or activity, and go off and do their own thing. The phrase 'herding cats' springs to mind. Situations such as this can be difficult to manage, since the enthusiastic endeavours of a few can go against the main goal. That said, the 'personal touch' is very important – saying thank you is such a simple thing, but people can forget to do it, and it's extremely important.

16. Please describe your social media presence within the PASS community.

I am extremely active on Twitter, and have nearly five thousand followers. In the first half of 2013, I was named as a 'Big Data' influencer by [Big Data Central](#) (number 51) and [Onanalytica](#) (number 71).

I have a facebook page, which has over 150 friends and I share content to the SQLPass Facebook page regularly.

PART SEVEN: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

17. Detail your professional certifications:

18. Detail any awards received:

19. Detail recent published professional articles, books, etc. Please provide links to any articles or posts available online:

PART EIGHT - REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECK

A short statement of support from your references is recommended, and should be included in the sections below. At least one of your references below should be an individual from the same region (US/Canada, EMEA, APAC, LATAM) in which you reside and may represent.

Volunteer References

You must provide references from 3 PASS volunteers with whom you have worked with during your volunteer tenure at PASS.

1. PASS volunteer reference #1
 - a. Name: Oliver Engels
[Redacted]
 - b. Statement of support:
Jen is for me an outstanding volunteer. As PASS Regional Mentor for Germany I can confirm that Jen supported us having our first WIT @SQL Saturday 170 in Munich, she supports the German community as speaker and is a very good dialog partner discussing the development of the SQL Server community. Her social media activity is well recognized in Germany and a great resource for our German PASS Monthly Community Newsletter. Knowing Jen for several years now, I can confirm that she also has a very good understanding of the European SQL Server Community by meeting her on SQL Server Events across Europe helping these communities with the same enthusiasm then helping our community in Germany.

2. PASS volunteer reference #2
 - a. Name: Allan Mitchell
[Redacted]
 - b. Statement of support: Jen is one of the hardest working people in the SQL Server community it has ever been my pleasure to meet. I have always found Jen to be helpful. Jen enjoys the community and wants it to be about community, bringing on new speakers, introducing people to new learning and helping people to find their way. Her blog is an excellent resource for experienced professionals and people new to technology alike. Jen is very skilled in what she does but she is humble with it, she never looks down on anybody and never supposes she is better than them, she has time for everyone and anyone. Jen would make an excellent addition to the PASS board and would work hard for her portfolio.

Public References

You should provide references from people who agree to support you publicly. These references must review your application and provide a written statement of support that explains why they support your candidacy. (These may be the same or different people than your volunteer references above.)

3. PASS public reference #1
 - a. Name: Denny Cherry
[Redacted]
 - b. Statement of support:

As an organizer of her local user group, local SQL Saturday events as well as national events (SQL Relay) in the UK Jen has a great understanding of how to work with large groups of volunteers and how to successfully motivate and guide the team to the end goal. Additionally Jen runs her own successful consulting company which continues to show that she is able to see the big picture, be a forward thinker, and knows when to take risks as well as when to play it safe. Through her work with the various Woman In Technology events which she has been a part of throughout Europe I believe Jen brings a unique European perspective to the PASS Organization's Board as the PASS Organization continues to grow beyond the United States market were it was initially founded this perspective will be critical to ensuring successful growth.

Background Check / Time and Travel Commitments

4. Have you ever been charged with a felony? NO
If yes, were you convicted, and (briefly) what were the circumstances?

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

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

PART NINE – SIGNATURE

7. "I, Jen Stirrup, hereby certify, on this date, August 7, 2013, 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 of the PASS election process.

I agree to be considered a candidate for the position of Director-at-Large for PASS. 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, 2014 and ends December 31, 2015. 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.*