

ORACLE



# Harnessing the Power of Optimizer Hints

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# Harnessing the power of Optimizer hints

## Expectations

This session will not instantly make you an Optimizer hint expert!  
Adding hints won't magically improve every query you encounter



Optimizer hints should only be used with extreme care

# Program Agenda

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- 1 What are hints?
- 2 How to use Optimizer hints
- 3 Useful Optimizer hints to know
- 4 Why are Optimizer hints ignored?
- 5 If you can hint it, baseline it
- 6 Managing an existing hinted application



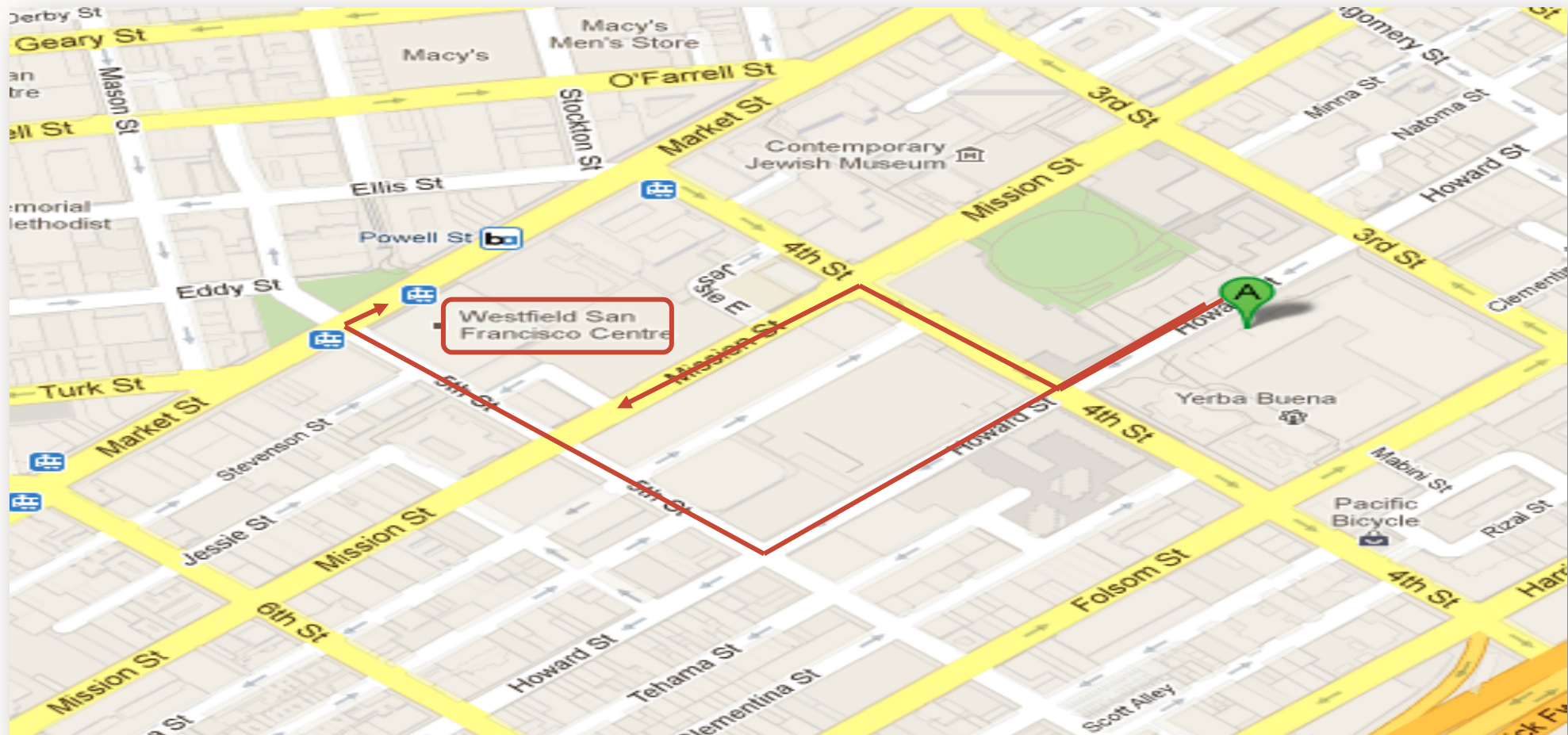
# What are hints?

## Overview

- Hints allow you to influence the Optimizer when it has to choose between several possibilities
- A hint is a directive that will be followed when applicable
- Can influence everything from Optimizer mode to every operation in plan
- Automatically means the Cost Based Optimizer will be used
  - Only exception is the RULE hint, but it must be used alone

# What are hints?

Example - directions to the mall



# What are hints?

Hints only evaluated when they apply to a decision that has to be made

Should I walk or drive to the mall?

- Best plan would be to walk

Should I go up 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> street?

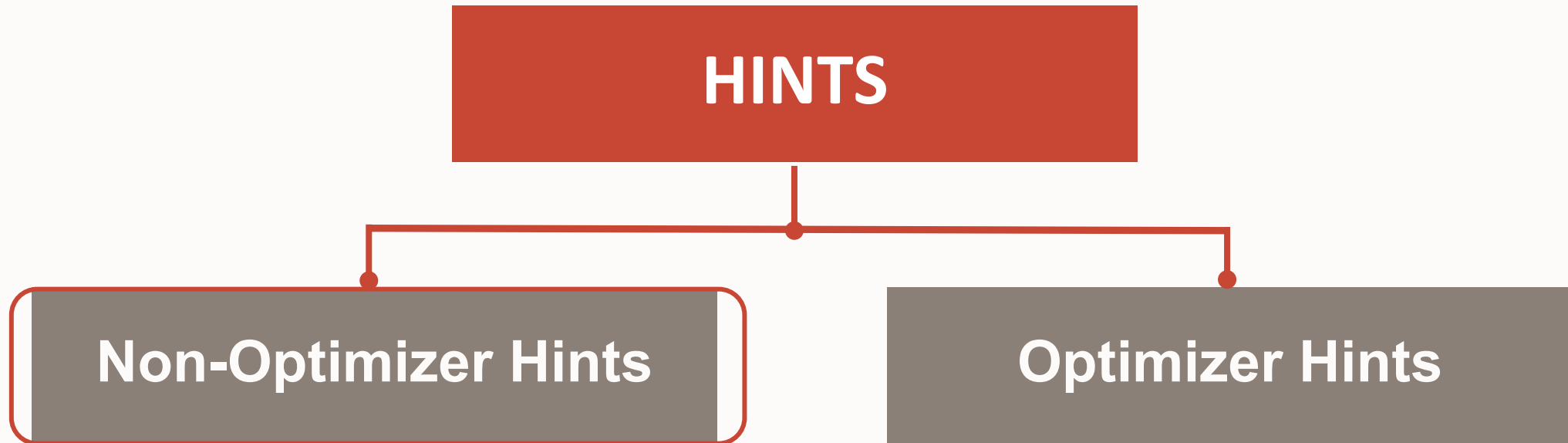
- Best plan would be to go up 4<sup>th</sup> street

Should I go in the front or the back door of the mall?

- Best plan would be to go in the back door

Telling me the cheapest parking is at 5<sup>th</sup> and Mission garage is irrelevant since I decided to walk

# Two different classes of hints



# Not all hints influence the Optimizer

## Overview

The hint mechanism is not exclusively used by the Optimizer

Several other functional areas use hints too

- Direct path load can be controlled by `APPEND` hint
- Parallel statement queuing can be controlled by `STATEMENT_QUEUING` hint
- Data management in buffer cache can be influenced by `CACHE` hint
- What SQL statements get monitored by SQL Monitor can be controlled by `MONITOR` hint
- Use of In-Memory column store can be controlled by `INMEMORY` hint
- Take advantage of new fast ingest for IoT controlled by `MEMOPTIMIZE_WRITE`

# Checking cardinality estimates

GATHER\_PLAN\_STATISTICS hint

```
SELECT /*+ GATHER_PLAN_STATISTICS*/  
        p.prod_name,  
        SUM(s.quantity_sold)  
FROM    Products p, Sales s  
WHERE   s.prod_id = p.prod_id  
GROUP BY p.prod_name;
```



# Checking cardinality estimates

GATHER\_PLAN\_STATISTICS hint

```
SELECT * FROM table(  
DBMS_XPLAN.DISPLAY_CURSOR(FORMAT=> 'ALLSTATS LAST' ) );
```

Id	Operation	Name	Starts	E-Rows	A-Rows	A-Time	Buffers	OMem	lMem	Used-Mem
0	SELECT STATEMENT		1		71	00:00:00.57	1638			
1	HASH GROUP BY		1	71	71	00:00:00.57	1638	799K	799K	3079K (0)
* 2	HASH JOIN		1	918K	918K	00:00:00.85	1638	933K	933K	1279K (0)
3	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	PRODUCTS	1	72	72	00:00:00.01	3			
4	PARTITION RANGE ALL		1	918K	918K	00:00:00.37	1635			
5	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	SALES	28	918K	918K	00:00:00.20	1635			

- Compare estimated rows returned for each operation in plan to actual rows returned
- A-Time allows you to see where the time is spent

# Checking cardinality estimates

## MONITOR hint

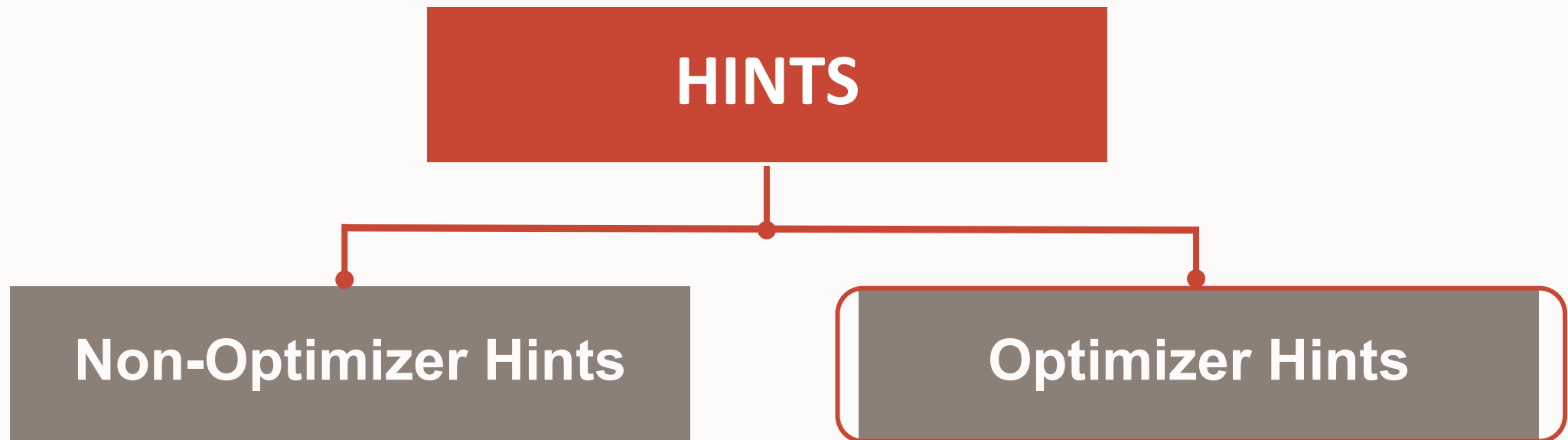
```
SELECT /*+ MONITOR*/ CUST_LASTNAME, SUM(AMOUNT_SOLD)
FROM   Customers c, Sales s
WHERE  s.cust_id = c.cust_id ...
```

L...	Operation	Name	Estimated Rows	Actual Rows	Cost
0	SELECT STATEMENT			13	
1	HASH GROUP BY		1	13	7
2	NESTED LOOPS		1	16	6
3	TABLE ACCESS FULL	CUSTOMERS	1	13	5
4	INDEX RANGE SCAN	SALES_CUST	2	16	1

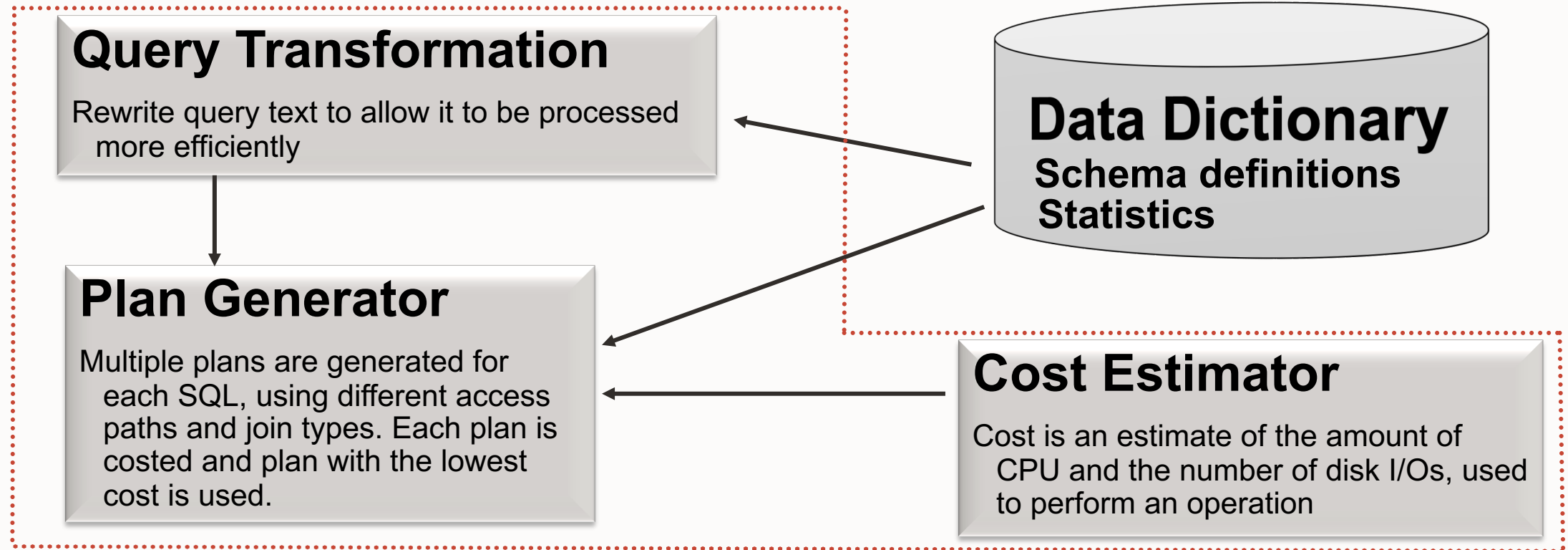
- Compare estimated rows returned for each operation in plan to actual rows returned
- Timeline allows you to see where the time is spent



# Two different classes of hints



# Inside the Oracle Optimizer



# Hints influencing Query Transformations

## Overview

First thing the Optimizer does is try to transform (rewrite) your statement

- The goal is to allow additional access or join methods and join orders to be used

Some transformations are always done but some are cost-based

Hints can be used to influence the transformations the Optimizer does

- NO\_QUERY\_TRANSFORMATION
- MERGE
- USE\_CONCAT
- REWRITE
- STAR\_TRANSFORMATION
- UNNEST

# Hints can also influence all aspects of a plan

## Overview

### Hints to influence cardinality

DYNAMIC\_SAMPLING

CARDINALITY

### Hints to influence join methods

USE\_NL\_WITH\_INDEX

USE\_HASH

### Hints to influence access paths

FULL

INDEX

### Hints to influence join order

LEADING

ORDERED

Most hints have corresponding negative hint preceded by word 'NO\_'

More information on hints can be found in chapter 3 of [SQL Reference Guide](#) & chapter 19 of the [SQL Tuning Guide](#)

# Hints Classifications

## Overview

**Single-table** - hints that are specified on one table or view

- FULL , INDEX or USE\_NL

**Multi-table** - hint that can be specified on one or more tables or views

- LEADING or ORDERED

**Query block** - hints that operate on single query blocks

- STAR\_TRANSFORMATION or UNNEST

**Statement** – hints that apply to the entire SQL statement

- ALL\_ROWS or OPTIMIZER\_FEATURES\_ENABLE

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# How to use Optimizer hints

## Overview

Hints are inserted in a SQL statement in the form of a comment with an additional + sign

They go immediately after the keyword (SELECT, INSERT, etc)

```
SELECT /* This is a comment */ count(*) FROM Sales;
```

```
SELECT /*+ This is a hint */ count(*) FROM Sales;
```

Hint syntax is correct, but it is not a valid hint so is treated as comment

# How to use Optimizer hints

## Overview

Hints and comments can be combined

But best practice is to keep comment and hints in different blocks

- Comments can be put anywhere in a SQL statement not just after keyword

```
SELECT /*+ FULL(s) and a comment*/ count(*) FROM Sales s;
```

```
SELECT /*+ This_is_a_comment FULL(s) */ count(*) FROM Sales s;
```

```
SELECT /*+ FULL(s)*/ count(*) FROM Sales s /* comment */;
```



# How to use Optimizer hints

## Correctly identifying the object in the hint

Which one of the following hints will trigger the pk\_emp index to be used in this query?

```
SELECT /*+ index(scott.emp pk_emp)*/ * FROM emp e;
```

```
SELECT /*+ index(emp pk_emp)*/ * FROM emp e;
```

```
SELECT /*+ index(pk_emp)*/ * FROM emp e;
```

**None of them**

# How to use Optimizer hints

## Correctly identifying the object in the hint

If you use a table alias in the query than you must specify the table alias name in the hint

Otherwise the hint is not valid

```
SELECT /*+ index(e pk_emp) */ * FROM emp e;
```

# How to use Optimizer hints

Hints only apply to the query block in which they appear

```
SELECT /*+ FULL(e) FULL(d) */ e.last_name, e.dept_id
FROM   employees e
WHERE  e.dept_id in (SELECT d.dept_id
                     FROM   departments d
                     WHERE  d.location_id=51);
```

Id	Operation	Name	Rows
0	SELECT STATEMENT		5
* 1	HASH JOIN		5
2	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID	DEPARTMENTS	
* 3	INDEX RANGE SCAN	DEPT_LOCATION_IX	1
4	TABLE ACCESS FULL	EMPLOYEES	107

The dept table only appears in the sub-query, which is treated as separate query block.  
Hint has no effect.

# How to use Optimizer hints

Hints only apply to the query block in which they appear

```
SELECT /*+ FULL(e) */ e.last_name, e.dept_id
FROM   employees e
WHERE  e.dept_id in (SELECT /*+ FULL(d) */ d.dept_id
                    FROM   departments d
                    WHERE  d.location_id=51);
```

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	By
0	SELECT STATEMENT		5	
* 1	HASH JOIN			
* 2	TABLE ACCESS FULL	DEPARTMENTS	1	
3	TABLE ACCESS FULL	EMPLOYEES	107	1177 3 (0)

The hint on dept now has an effect as it appears in the correct query block, the sub-query

Only exception are statement level hints

# How to use Optimizer hints

## Query block names

Oracle automatically names each query block in a SQL statement

- sel\$1, ins\$2, upd\$3, del\$4, cri\$5, mrg\$6, set\$7, misc\$8
- Displayed using '+alias' format parameter in DBMS\_XPLAN procedures

Query block names can be used to specify which block a hint applies to

- `/*+ FULL(@SEL$2 D) */`

The QB\_NAME hint can be used to explicitly labels each query block

- `/*+ QB_NAME(my_name_for_block) */`

# How to use Optimizer hints

## Query block names

```
SELECT /*+ FULL(e) FULL(@MY_SUBQ d) */  
       e.last_name, e.dept_id  
FROM   employees e  
WHERE  e.dept_id in (SELECT /*+ QB_NAME(MY_SUBQ) */  
                    d.dept_id  
                    FROM departments d  
                    WHERE d.location_id=51);
```

# How to use Optimizer hints

How do I know if my hints are used or not?

Any valid hint will be used

Can check if a hint is valid in hint section of 10053 trace

Dumping Hints

=====

atom\_hint=(@=0x124360178 err=0 resol=0 used=1 token=454 org=1 lvl=1 txt=ALL ROWS )

atom\_hint=(@=0x2af785e0c260 err=0 resol=1 used=1 token=448 org=1 lvl=3 txt=FULL ("E"))

===== END SQL Statement Dump =====

ERR indicates if there is an error with hint

USED indicates the hint was used during the evaluation of the part of the plan it pertains to  
Doesn't mean the final plan will reflect it



# How to use Optimizer hints

Example showing how hints are used

## SQL Statement

```
SELECT c.cust_name, sum (s.amount_sold)
FROM   customers c, sales s
WHERE  c.cust_id      = s.cust_id
AND    c.cust_city    = 'Los Angeles'
AND    c.cust_province = 'CA'
AND    s.time_id      = '09-SEP-18'
GROUP BY c.cust_name;
```



# How to use Optimizer hints

Example showing how hints are used

Default plan is a hash join between sales and customers

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)
0	SELECT STATEMENT				250 (100)
1	HASH GROUP BY		1	64	250 (4)
* 2	HASH JOIN		4	256	249 (4)
* 3	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	CUSTOMERS	3	138	226 (3)
4	PARTITION RANGE SINGLE		535	9630	23 (18)
* 5	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	SALES	535	9630	23 (18)

But we want the query to use a nested loops join

# How to use Optimizer hints

Example showing how hints are used

Hinted SQL statement

```
SELECT /*+ USE_NL(s) */  
       c.cust_name, sum (s.amount_sold)  
FROM   customers c, sales s  
WHERE  c.cust_id      = s.cust_id  
AND    c.cust_city    = 'Los Angeles'  
AND    c.cust_province = 'CA'  
AND    s.time_id      = '09-SEP-18'  
GROUP BY c.cust_name;
```

# How to use Optimizer hints

Example showing how hints are used

Even with the hint we still get a hash join plan

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT				9 (100)	
1	HASH GROUP BY		1	52	9 (23)	00:00:01
* 2	HASH JOIN		1	52	8 (13)	00:00:01
3	PARTITION RANGE SINGLE		2	34	2 (0)	00:00:01
* 4	TABLE ACCESS FULL	SALES	2	34	2 (0)	00:00:01
* 5	TABLE ACCESS FULL	CUSTOMERS	13	455	5 (0)	00:00:01

Why did it not use the hint?

# How to use Optimizer hints

## Example showing how hints are used

Let's look in the 10053 trace file

```
Dumping Hints
=====
  atom_hint=(@=0x13c6e7e20 err=0 resol=1 used=1 token=924 org=1 lvl=3 txt=USE_NL ("S") )
===== END SQL Statement Dump =====
```

Hint is valid and was used

Why did it not change the plan?

We only hinted the join method we didn't hint the join order

Hint only valid when sales is on right side

Hint considered ONLY when join order was customers, sales

# How to use Optimizer hints

Example showing how hints are used

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT		1	64	9 (100)	
1	HASH GROUP BY		4	256	9 (23)	00:00:01
* 2	HASH JOIN		3	138	2 (0)	00:00:01
3	PARTITION RANGE SINGLE		535	9630	2 (0)	00:00:01
* 4	TABLE ACCESS FULL	SALES	535	9630	5 (0)	00:00:01
* 5	TABLE ACCESS FULL	CUSTOMERS				

Predicate Information (identified by operation id):  
  
 2 - access("C"."CUST\_ID"="S"."CUST\_ID")  
 4 - filter("S"."TIME\_ID"='30-DEC-99')  
 5 - filter(("C"."CUST\_CITY"='Los Angeles' AND "CUST\_S...

Hint Report (identified by operation id / Query Block Name / Object Alias):  
 Total hints for statement: 1 (U - Unused (1))  
  
 4 - SEL\$1 / S@SEL\$1  
   U - USE NL(s)

New Unused hint info under the plan in 19c with DBMS\_XPLAN.DISPLAY\_CURSOR



# How to use Optimizer hints

## Example showing how hints are used

Hinted SQL statement with both join method and join order hints

```
SELECT /*+ ORDERED USE_NL(s) */  
       c.cust_name, sum (s.amount_sold)  
FROM   customers c, sales s  
WHERE  c.cust_id      = s.cust_id  
AND    c.cust_city    = 'Los Angeles'  
AND    c.cust_province = 'CA'  
AND    s.time_id      = '09-SEP-17'  
GROUP BY c.cust_name;
```



# How to use Optimizer hints

Example showing how hints are used

Hinted plan

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)
0	SELECT STATEMENT		1	64	292 (7)
1	HASH GROUP BY		1	64	292 (7)
2	NESTED LOOPS		4	256	291 (6)
* 3	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	CUSTOMERS	3	138	226 (3)
4	PARTITION RANGE SINGLE		1	18	22 (19)
* 5	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	SALES	1	18	22 (19)

# How to use Optimizer hints

## Guaranteeing the same plan every time

Partial hints can't guarantee the same plan every time

Only way to guarantee the same plan every time is with a full outline

A full outline is a complete set of hints for all aspects of a plan

Full outline for a plan can be displayed using '+outline' option with FORMAT parameter in DBMS\_XPLAN.DISPLAY\_CURSOR

```
SELECT * FROM
```

```
TABLE(DBMS_XPLAN.display_cursor(format=>' +outline' ));
```



# How to use Optimizer hints

## Guaranteeing the same plan every time

```
SQL> select * from table(dbms_xplan.display_cursor(format=>'TYPICAL +outline'));
```

PLAN\_TABLE\_OUTPUT

SQL\_ID fbyb04j4qgpm8, child number 0

select e.empno, e.ename from emp e where empno <8000

Plan hash value: 169057108

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT				2 (100)	
1	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID	EMP	14	140	2 (0)	00:00:01
* 2	INDEX RANGE SCAN	PK_EMP	14		1 (0)	00:00:01

Outline Data

```
/*+
  BEGIN_OUTLINE_DATA
  IGNORE_OPTIM_EMBEDDED_HINTS
  OPTIMIZER_FEATURES_ENABLE('11.2.0.3')
  DB_VERSION('11.2.0.3')
  ALL_ROWS
  OUTLINE_LEAF(@"SEL$1")
  INDEX_RS_ASC(@"SEL$1" "E"@"SEL$1" ("EMP"."EMPNO"))
  END_OUTLINE_DATA
*/
```

Full outline for the plan

# How to use Optimizer hints

Guaranteeing the same plan every time

```
SQL> Select /*+
2      BEGIN_OUTLINE_DATA
3      IGNORE_OPTIM_EMBEDDED_HINTS
4      OPTIMIZER_FEATURES_ENABLE('11.2.0.3')
5      DB_VERSION('11.2.0.3')
6      ALL_ROWS
7      OUTLINE_LEAF(@"SEL$1")
8      FULL(@"SEL$1" "E"@"SEL$1")
9      END_OUTLINE_DATA
10     */
11     e.empno, e.ename
12 From   emp e
13 Where  e.empno<8000;
```

Cut and paste full  
outline for the plan

Easier to maintain a full outline using SQL Plan Management

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# Changing the Optimizer mode

The following hints control the Optimizer mode

- `ALL_ROWS` (default mode)
- `FIRST_ROWS (n)`
- `RULE`

`FIRST_ROWS (n)` choose plan that returns the first n rows most efficiently

- Use of old `FIRST_ROWS` hint is not recommended
  - Not fully cost based

`RULE` hint reverts back to Rule Based Optimizer (RBO)

- Not recommended as RBO is de-supported and severely limits plan options

# Changing the Optimizer mode

## Default Optimizer mode example

45% of the rows in the employee table have department\_id = 50

Default plan is a full table scan

```
SELECT e.emp_id, e.last_name, e.salary
FROM   employees e
WHERE  e.dept_id = 50;
```

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)
0	SELECT STATEMENT		45	855	3 (0)
* 1	TABLE ACCESS FULL	EMPLOYEES	45	855	3 (0)

# Changing the Optimizer mode

FIRST\_ROWS(n) hint example

```
SELECT /*+ FIRST_ROWS(10) */  
       e.emp_id, e.last_name, e.salary  
FROM   employees e  
WHERE  e.dept_id = 50;
```

Plan changed because the assumption is you are going to stop fetching after first 10 rows

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)
0	SELECT STATEMENT		10	190	2 (0)
1	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID	EMPLOYEES	10	190	2 (0)
* 2	INDEX RANGE SCAN	EMP_DEPARTMENT_IX			1 (0)

# Changing the Optimizer mode

## RULE hint

RULE hint specifies that the Rule Based Optimizer (RBO) be used

The RULE hint is not applicable if

- Other hints are specified in the stmt
- One or more tables are partitioned
- One or more IOTs are used
- One or more Materialized views exist
- A SAMPLE clauses is specified
- A spreadsheet clause is specified
- Parallel execution is used
- Grouping sets are used
- Group outer-join is used
- A create table with a parallel clause
- A left or full outer join (ANSI) is specified
- Flashback cursor (AS OF) is used
- .....



# Changing the Optimizer mode

## Rule hint

RULE hint ignored when partitioned table is used

```
SELECT /*+ RULE */ count(*)  
FROM   sales s;
```

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Cost (%CPU)	Time	Pstart	Pstop
0	SELECT STATEMENT			12 (100)			
1	SORT AGGREGATE		1				
2	PARTITION RANGE ALL		960	12 (0)	00:00:01	1	16
3	BITMAP CONVERSION COUNT		960	12 (0)	00:00:01		
4	BITMAP INDEX FULL SCAN	SALES_CHANNEL_BIX				1	16

RULE hint is ignored because SALES is a partitioned table therefore CBO is used

# Changing the Optimizer mode

## RULE hint

RULE hint prevents bitmap index being used and triggers full scan

```
SELECT /*+ RULE */ count(*)  
FROM   non_partitioned_sales s;
```

Id	Operation	Name
0	SELECT STATEMENT	
1	SORT AGGREGATE	
2	TABLE ACCESS FULL	NON_PARTITIONED_SALES

Note

- rule based optimizer used (consider using cbo)

# Changing initialization parameter for a query

## OPT\_PARAM hint

- Allows init.ora Optimizer parameters to be changed for a specific query
- Useful way to prevent setting non-default parameter value system-wide
- Only the following Optimizer influencing init.ora parameters can be set:
  - OPTIMIZER\_DYNAMIC\_SAMPLING
  - OPTIMIZER\_INDEX\_CACHING
  - OPTIMIZER\_INDEX\_COST\_ADJ
  - OPTIMIZER\_USE\_PENDING\_STATISTICS
  - OPTIMIZER\_USE\_INVISIBLE\_INDEXES
  - OPTIMIZER\_SECURE\_VIEW\_MERGING
  - Optimizer related underscore parameters
  - STAR\_TRANSFORMATION\_ENABLED
  - PARALLEL\_DEGREE\_POLICY
  - PARALLEL\_DEGREE\_LIMIT
  - OPTIMIZER\_ADAPTIVE\_PLANS
  - OPTIMIZER\_ADAPTIVE\_REPORTING\_ONLY
  - OPTIMIZER\_ADAPTIVE\_STATISTICS
  - OPTIMIZER\_INMEMORY\_AWARE

# Changing initialization parameter for a query

## OPT\_PARAM hint example

```
SQL> Select count(*)
2 From employees e
3 Where e.job_id='SA_REP'
4 And (e.salary*e.commission_pct)*12 > 13000;
```

COUNT(\*)

22

```
SQL>
SQL> select * from table(dbms_xplan.display_cursor());
```

PLAN\_TABLE\_OUTPUT

SQL\_ID 4vfmq488y8q0w, child number 0

Select count(\*) From employees e Where e.job\_id='SA\_REP' And  
(e.salary\*e.commission\_pct)\*12 > 13000

Plan hash value: 1756381138

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Byte	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT		1		2 (100)	
1	SORT AGGREGATE		1	22		
* 2	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	EMPLOYEES	2	44	2 (0)	00:00:01

Cardinality under-estimated due  
to complex expression  
Extended statistics would help

# Changing initialization parameter for a query

## OPT\_PARAM hint example

```
SQL> Select /*+ OPT_PARAM('OPTIMIZER_USE_PENDING_STATISTICS' 'TRUE') */ count(*)
2 From employees e
3 Where e.job_id='SA_REP'
4 And (e.salary*e.commission_pct)*12 > 13000;
```

COUNT(\*)

22

```
SQL>
SQL> select * from table(dbms_xplan.display_cursor());
```

PLAN\_TABLE\_OUTPUT

SQL\_ID 0b37sbu2rr7xp, child number 1

```
Select /*+ OPT_PARAM('OPTIMIZER_USE_PENDING_STATISTICS' 'TRUE') */
count(*) From employees e Where e.job_id='SA_REP' And
(e.salary*e.commission_pct)*12 > 13000
```

Plan hash value: 1756381138

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT				2 (100)	
1	SORT AGGREGATE		1	12		
* 2	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	EMPLOYEES	22	264	2 (0)	00:00:01

Create extended statistics &  
re-gather statistics as pending  
statistics  
OPT\_PARAM hint enables  
pending statistics for only this  
statement

# Changing Optimizer features enable

This parameter gets its own hint

OPTIMIZER\_FEATURES\_ENABLE parameter allows you to switch between optimizer versions

Setting it to previous database version reverts the Optimizer to that version

- Disables any functionality that was not present in that version

Easy way to work around unexpected behavior in a new release

Hint allows you to revert the Optimizer for just a single statement

# Changing Optimizer features enable

## Example

```
SQL> explain plan for
  2 Select object_type, count(*)
  3 From t
  4 Group by object_type;
```

Explained.

```
SQL>
SQL> select * from table(dbms_xplan.display(format=>'outline'));
```

PLAN\_TABLE\_OUTPUT

Plan hash value: 47235625

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT		49	490	212 (8)	00:00:01
1	HASH GROUP BY		49	490	212 (8)	00:00:01
2	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	T	88766	866K	201 (2)	00:00:01



# Changing Optimizer features enable

## Example

```
SQL> explain plan for
 2  Select /*+ optimizer_features_enable('9.2.0') */ object_type, count(*)
 3  From t
 4  Group by object_type;
```

Explained.

```
SQL>
SQL> select * from table(dbms_xplan.display(format=>'outline'))
```

PLAN\_TABLE\_OUTPUT

Plan hash value: 1476560607

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost
0	SELECT STATEMENT		49	490	363
1	SORT GROUP BY		49	490	363
2	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	T	88766	866K	202

Hash GROUP BY introduced in 10g not an option for 9.2 Optimizer, so traditional sort based GROUP BY selected

# Program Agenda

---

- 1 What are hints?
- 2 How to use Optimizer hints
- 3 Useful Optimizer hints to know
- 4 Why are Optimizer hints ignored?
- 5 If you can hint it, baseline it
- 6 Managing an existing hinted application

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

## Syntax and Spelling

Which one of the following hints will trigger the pk\_emp index to be used in this query?

SELECT /\*+ IND(e pk\_emp) \*/ \* FROM employees e;



SELECT /\*+ INDEX(e emp\_pk) \*/ \* FROM employees e;



SELECT /\*+ INDEX(e pk\_emp) \*/ \* FROM employees e;



# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

## Invalid hint

Specifying an index hint on a table with no indexes

```
SELECT /*+ INDEX(p) */ Count(*)
FROM   my_promotions p
WHERE  promo_category = 'TV'
AND    promo_begin_date = '05-OCT-17';
```

Invalid hint because no indexes exist on the table

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)	Time
0	SELECT STATEMENT				3 (100)	
1	SORT AGGREGATE		1	15		
* 2	TABLE ACCESS FULL	MY PROMOTIONS	1	15	3 (0)	00:00:01

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

## Illegal hint

Specifying a hash join hint for non-equality join

```
SELECT /*+ USE_HASH(e s) */ e.first_name, e.last_name
FROM   employees e, salary_grade s
WHERE  e.salary BETWEEN s.low_sal AND s.high_sal;
```

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)
0	SELECT STATEMENT		1	45	4 (0)
1	NESTED LOOPS		1	45	4 (0)
* 2	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	SALARY_GRADE	1	26	2 (0)
* 3	TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	EMPLOYEES	1	19	2 (0)

Illegal hint because a hash join can't be used for a non-equality join predicate

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

## Invalid hint combinations

Specifying a parallel hint for an index range scan

```
SELECT /*+ index(e empno_pk_ind) parallel(e 8) */  
       e.empno, e.name  
FROM   employees e  
WHERE  e.empno < 7700;
```

Invalid hint combination because an index range scan can't be parallelized on non-partitioned table

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes
0	SELECT STATEMENT		8	80
1	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID BATCHED	EMP	8	80
* 2	INDEX RANGE SCAN	EMPNO_PK_IND	8	

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

## Invalid hint combinations

If two hints contradict each other, they will both be ignored

```
SELECT /*+ full(e) index(e empno_fk_ind) */  
       e.empno, e.name  
FROM   employees e  
WHERE  e.empno < 7700;
```

Conflicting hints you can't do a full table scan and index lookup on same table

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes
0	SELECT STATEMENT		8	80
1	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID BATCHED	EMP	8	80
* 2	INDEX RANGE SCAN	EMPNO_PK_IND	8	



# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

Hint becomes invalid due to transformation

Ordered hint dictates the join order as the order of tables in FROM clause

```
SELECT /*+ ordered */ e1.last_name,  
j.job_title, e1.salary, v.avg_salary  
FROM employees e1, jobs j  
      ( SELECT e2.dept_id, avg(e2.salary) avg_salary  
        FROM employees e2, departments d  
        WHERE d.location=1700 AND e2.dept_id=d.dept_id  
        GROUP BY e2.dept_id) v  
WHERE e1.job_id = j.job_id  
AND e1.dept_id = v.dept_id  
AND e1.salary > v.avg_salary  
ORDER BY e1.last_name;
```

Expected join order

1. Employees
2. Jobs
3. V

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

Hint becomes invalid due to transformation

Actual join order used

View merging occurred  
Order of tables in FROM clause  
(e1,j,v) lost  
Optimizer picks join order with  
lowest cost

Id	Operation	Name	Bytes	Cost
0	SELECT STATEMENT			
* 1	FILTER			
2	SORT GROUP BY		1	83
* 3	HASH JOIN		3265	264K
4	4 TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID	DEPARTMENTS	21	147
* 5	INDEX RANGE SCAN	DEPT_LOCATION_IX	21	
* 6	HASH JOIN		3296	244K
7	3 TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	EMPLOYEES	107	749
* 8	HASH JOIN		107	7383
9	1 TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	EMPLOYEES	107	3852
10	2 TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	JOBS	19	627

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

Hint becomes invalid due to transformation

NO\_MERGE hint prevents transformation from taking place

```
SELECT /*+ no_merge(v) ordered */
       e1.last_name, j.job_title, e1.salary, v.avg_salary
FROM   employees e1, jobs j
       ( SELECT e2.dept_id, avg(e2.salary) avg_salary
         FROM   employees e2, departments d
         WHERE  d.location=1700 AND e2.dept_id=d.dept_id
         GROUP BY e2.dept_id) v
WHERE  e1.job_id = j.job_id
AND    e1.dept_id = v.dept_id
AND    e1.salary > v.avg_salary
ORDER BY e1.last_name;
```

Preserves FROM clause order

# Why are Optimizer hints ignored?

Hint becomes invalid due to transformation

Actual join order used

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes
0	SELECT STATEMENT			
1	SORT ORDER BY		17	1139
* 2	HASH JOIN		17	1139
* 3	HASH JOIN		107	5457
4	1 TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	EMPLOYEES	107	2568
5	2 TABLE ACCESS STORAGE FULL	JOBS	19	513
6	3 VIEW		11	176
7	HASH GROUP BY		11	154
8	NESTED LOOPS			
9	NESTED LOOPS		37	518
10	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID	DEPARTMENTS	4	28
* 11	INDEX RANGE SCAN	DEPT_LOCATION_IX	4	
* 12	INDEX RANGE SCAN	EMP_DEPARTMENT_IX	10	
13	TABLE ACCESS BY INDEX ROWID	EMPLOYEES	10	70

Inline View v

# Program Agenda

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- 1 What are hints?
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# If you can hint it, baseline it

## Alternative approach to hints

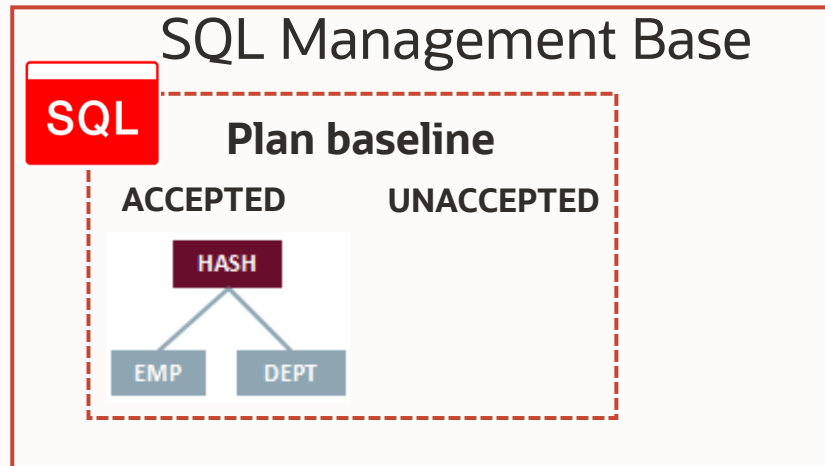
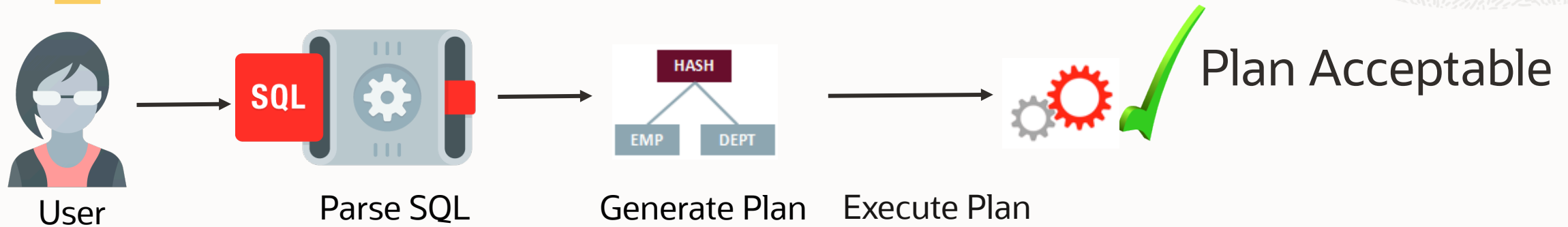
- It is not always possible to add hints to third party applications
- Hints can be extremely difficult to manage over time
- Once added never removed

## **Solution**

- Use SQL Plan Management (SPM)
- Influence the execution plan without adding hints directly to queries
- SPM available in Enterprise Edition\*, no additional options required

# If you can hint it, baseline it

## SQL Plan Management

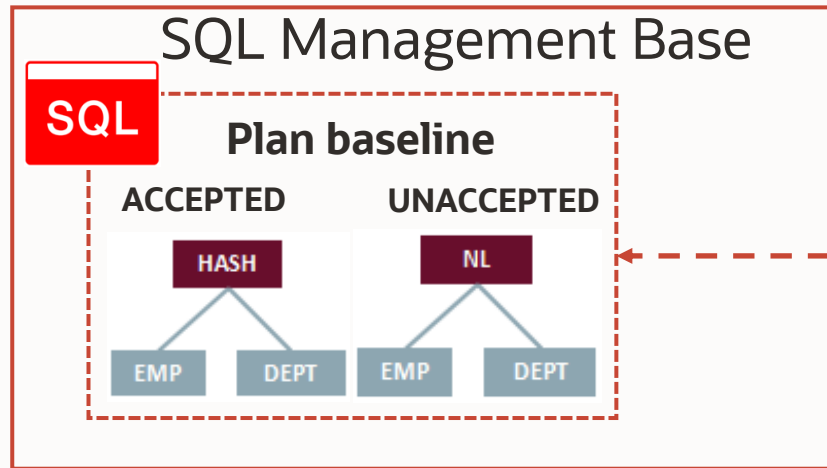
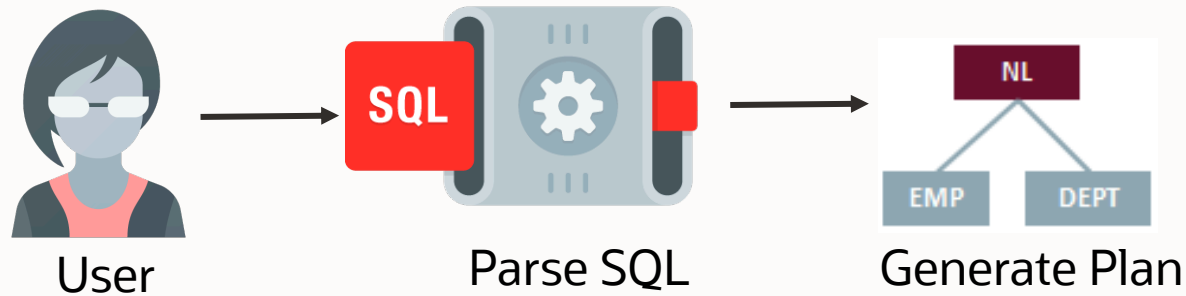


**NOTE::** Actual execution plans stored in SQL plan baseline in Oracle Database 12c



# If you can hint it, baseline it

## SQL Plan Management

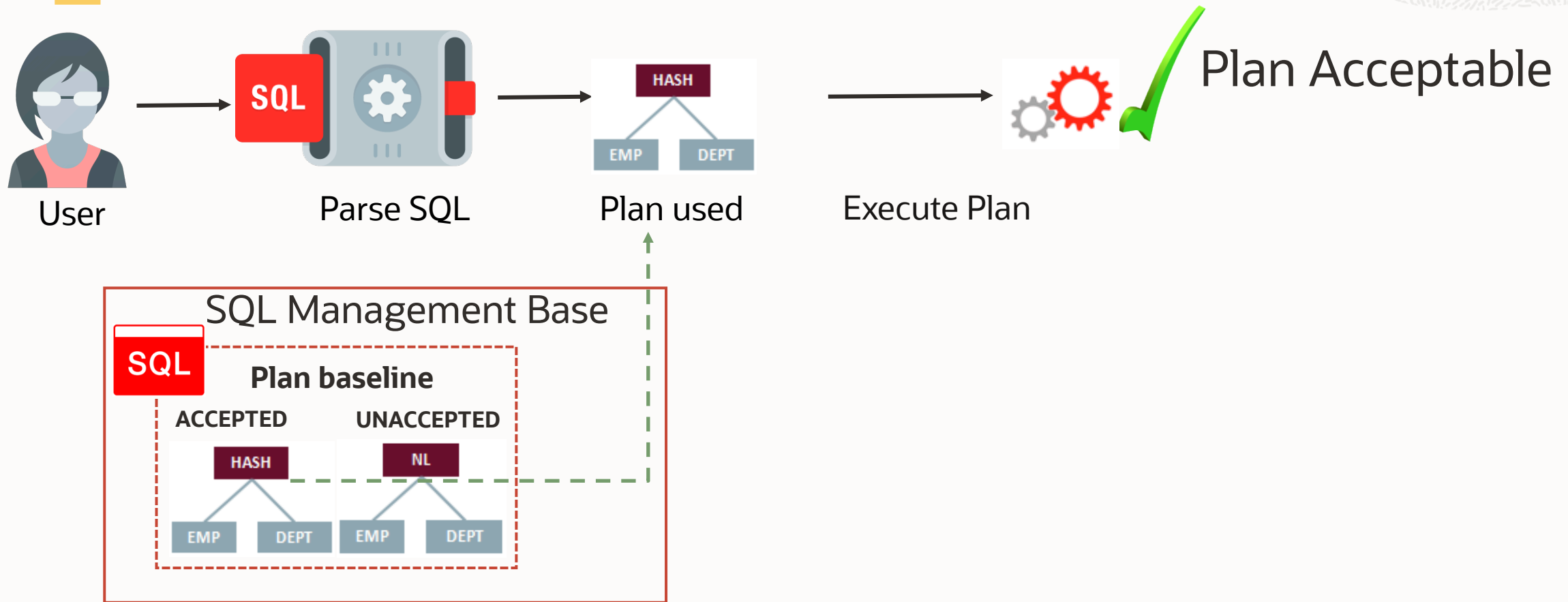


**NOTE::** You **do not** need to be in auto-capture mode to have a new plan added to an existing SQL plan baseline

Additional fields such as fetches, row processed etc. are not populated because new plan has never executed

# If you can hint it, baseline it

## SQL Plan Management

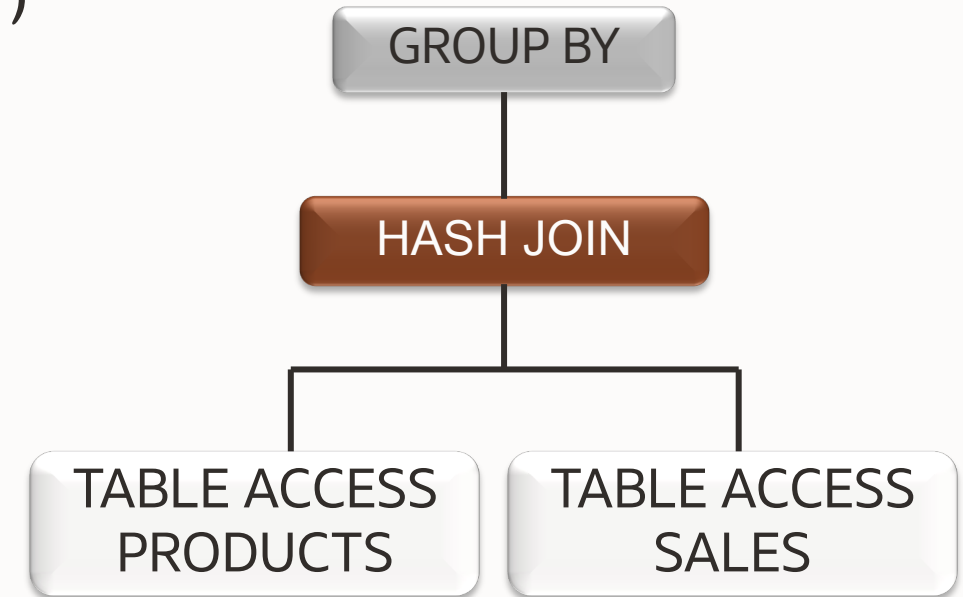


# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Example Overview

Simple two table join between the SALES and PRODUCTS tables

```
SELECT p.prod_name, SUM(s.amount_sold)
FROM   products p, sales s
WHERE  p.prod_id = s.prod_id
AND    p.supplier_id = :sup_id
GROUP BY p.prod_name;
```



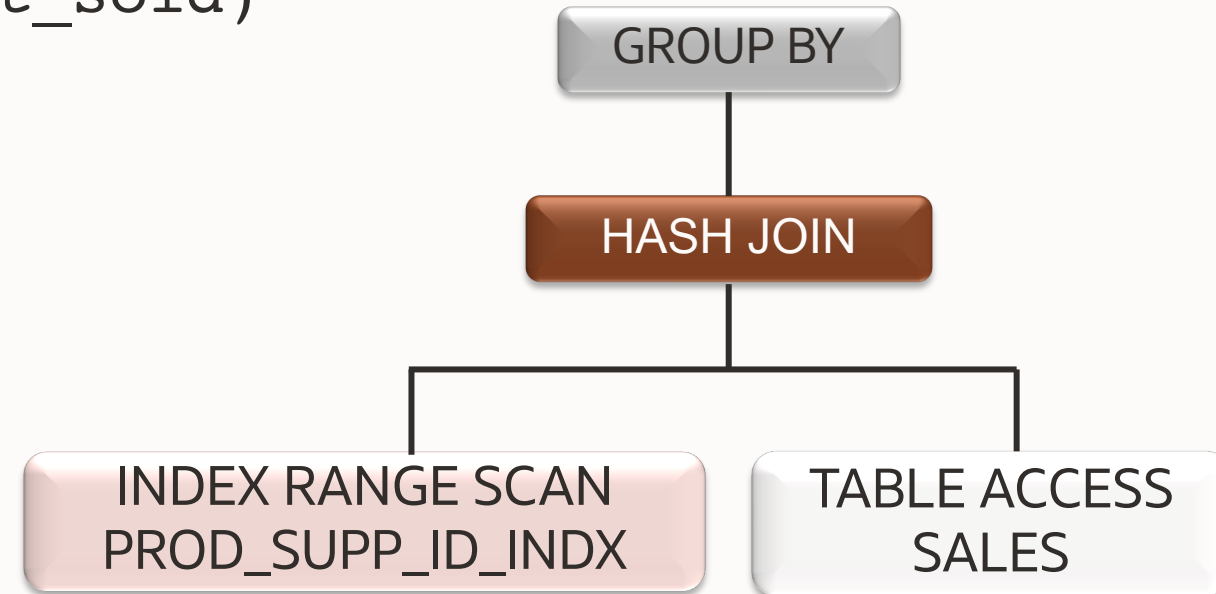
**Current Plan**

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Example Overview

Simple two table join between the SALES and PRODUCTS tables

```
SELECT p.prod_name, SUM(s.amount_sold)
FROM   products p, sales s
WHERE  p.prod_id = s.prod_id
AND    p.supplier_id = :sup_id
GROUP BY p.prod_name;
```



**Desired Plan**

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Step 1. Execute the non-hinted SQL statement

```
SELECT p.prod_name, SUM(s.amount_sold)
FROM   products p, sales s
WHERE  p.prod_id = s.prod_id
AND    p.supplier_id = :sup_id
GROUP BY p.prod_name;
```

PROD_NAME	SUM(S.AMOUNT_SOLD)
Baseball trouser Kids	91
Short Sleeve Rayon Printed Shirt \$8.99	32

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

Default plan uses full table scans followed by a hash join

PLAN\_TABLE\_OUTPUT

SQL\_ID akuntdurat7yr, child number 0

```
SELECT p.prod_name, sum(s.amount_sold) FROM products p , sales s
WHERE p.prod_id = s.prod_id AND p.supplier_id = :sup_id GROUP BY
p.prod_name
```

Plan hash value: 3535171836

Id	Operation	Name	Rows	Bytes	Cost (%CPU)
0	SELECT STATEMENT				15 (100)
1	HASH GROUP BY		2	90	15 (7)
* 2	HASH JOIN		3	135	14 (0)
* 3	TABLE ACCESS FULL	PRODUCTS	2	72	9 (0)
4	PARTITION RANGE ALL		960	8640	5 (0)
5	TABLE ACCESS FULL	SALES	960	8640	5 (0)

Predicate Information (identified by operation id):

- 2 - access("P"."PROD\_ID"="S"."PROD\_ID")
- 3 - filter("P"."SUPPLIER\_ID"=:SUP\_ID)

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

Step 2. Find the SQL\_ID for the non-hinted statement in V\$SQL

```
SELECT sql_id,  
       sql_fulltext  
FROM   v$sql  
WHERE  sql_text LIKE 'SELECT p.prod_name, %';
```

SQL_ID	SQL_FULLTEXT
akuntdurat7yr	SELECT p.prod_name, SUM(s.amount_sold) FROM   products p , sales s WHERE  p.prod



# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Step 3. Create a SQL plan baseline for the non-hinted SQL statement

```
VARIABLE cnt NUMBER
```

```
EXECUTE :cnt := dbms_spm.load_plans_from_cursor_cache(sql_id=>'akuntdurat7yr');
```

PL/SQL PROCEDURE successfully completed.

```
SELECT sql_handle, sql_text, plan_name, enabled
```

```
FROM dba_sql_plan_baselines
```

```
WHERE sql_text LIKE 'SELECT p.prod_name, %';
```

```
SQL_HANDLE
```

```
SQL_TEXT
```

```
PLAN_NAME
```

```
ENA
```

```
SQL_8f876d84821398cf
```

```
SELECT p.prod_name, sum(s.amount_sold)
FROM products p , sales s
```

```
SQL_PLAN_8z1vdhk1176
g42949306
```

```
YES
```

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Step 4. Disable plan in SQL plan baseline for the non-hinted SQL statement

```
EXECUTE :cnt := dbms_spm.alter_sql_plan_baseline(sql_handle=>'SQL_8f876d84821398cf',-  
                                                    plan_name=>'SQL_PLAN_8z1vdhk11766g42949306',-  
                                                    attribute_name => 'enabled', -  
                                                    attribute_value => 'NO');
```

PL/SQL PROCEDURE successfully completed.

```
SELECT sql_handle, sql_text, plan_name, enabled  
FROM    dba_sql_plan_baselines  
WHERE   sql_text LIKE 'SELECT p.prod_name, %';
```

SQL_HANDLE	SQL_TEXT	PLAN_NAME	ENA
SQL_8f876d84821398cf	SELECT p.prod_name, sum(s.amount_sold) FROM products p , sales s	SQL_PLAN_8z1vdhk1176 g42949306	NO

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

Step 5. Manually modify the SQL statement to use the hint(s) & execute it

```
SELECT /*+ index(p) */ p.prod_name, SUM(s.amount_sold)
FROM   products p, sales s
WHERE  p.prod_id = s.prod_id
AND    p.supplier_id = :sup_id
GROUP BY p.prod_name;
```

PROD_NAME	SUM(S.AMOUNT_SOLD)
-----	-----
Baseball trouser Kids	91
Short Sleeve Rayon Printed Shirt \$8.99	32

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

Step 6. Find SQL\_ID & PLAN\_HASH\_VALUE for hinted SQL stmt in V\$SQL

```
SELECT sql_id, plan_hash_value, sql_fulltext
FROM v$sql
WHERE sql_text LIKE 'SELECT /*+ index(p) */ p.prod_name, %';
```

SQL_ID	PLAN_HASH_VLAUE	SQL_FULLTEXT
avph0nnq5pfc2	2567686925	SELECT /*+ index(p) */ p.prod_name, SUM( s.amount_sold) FROM products p, sales

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Step 7. Associate hinted plan with original SQL stmt's SQL HANDLE

```
VARIABLE cnt NUMBER  
EXECUTE :cnt := dbms_spm.load_plans_from_cursor_cache(sql_id=>'avph0nnq5pfc2', -  
                                                    plan_hash_value=>'2567686925', -  
                                                    sql_handle=>'SQL_8f876d84821398cf');
```

PL/SQL PROCEDURE successfully completed.

SQL\_ID & PLAN\_HASH\_VALUE belong to hinted statement  
SQL\_HANDLE is for the non-hinted statement

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Step 8. Confirm SQL statement has two plans in its SQL plan baseline

```
SELECT sql_handle, sql_text, plan_name, enabled
FROM   dba_sql_plan_baselines
WHERE  sql_text LIKE 'SELECT p.prod_name, %';
```

SQL_HANDLE	SQL_TEXT	PLAN_NAME	ENA
SQL_8f876d84821398cf	SELECT p.prod_name, sum(s.amount_sold) FROM products p , sales s	SQL_PLAN_8z1vdhk1176 g42949306	NO
SQL_8f876d84821398cf	SELECT p.prod_name, sum(s.amount_sold) FROM products p , sales s	SQL_PLAN_8z1vdhk1176 6ge1c67f67	YES

Hinted plan is the only enabled  
plan for non-hinted SQL statement

# Influence execution plan without adding hints

## Step 9. Confirm hinted plan is being used

```
PLAN_TABLE_OUTPUT
-----
SQL_ID  akuntdurat7yr, child number 0
-----
SELECT p.prod_name, sum(s.amount_sold) FROM  products p , sales s
WHERE  p.prod_id = s.prod_id AND    p.supplier_id = :sup_id GROUP BY
p.prod_name

Plan hash value: 2567686925

-----
| Id | Operation                | Name                | Rows | Bytes | Cost (%CPU)|
-----
|  0 | SELECT STATEMENT          |                     |      |      |      8 (100)|
|  1 |   HASH GROUP BY           |                     |      |      |      8 (13)|
|*  2 |    HASH JOIN              |                     |      |      |      7  (0)|
|*  3 |     INDEX RANGE SCAN       | PROD_SUPP_ID_INDEX |      |      |      2  (0)|
|  4 |      PARTITION RANGE ALL   |                     |  960 |  8640 |      5  (0)|
|  5 |       TABLE ACCESS FULL  | SALES               |  960 |  8640 |      5  (0)|
-----

Predicate Information (identified by operation id):
-----
   2 - access("P"."PROD_ID"="S"."PROD_ID")
   3 - access("P"."SUPPLIER_ID"=:SUP_ID)

Note
-----
SQL plan baseline SQL_PLAN_8z1vdhk11766gelc67f67 used for this statement
```

Non-hinted SQL text but it is using the plan hash value for the hinted statement

Note section also confirms SQL plan baseline used for statement



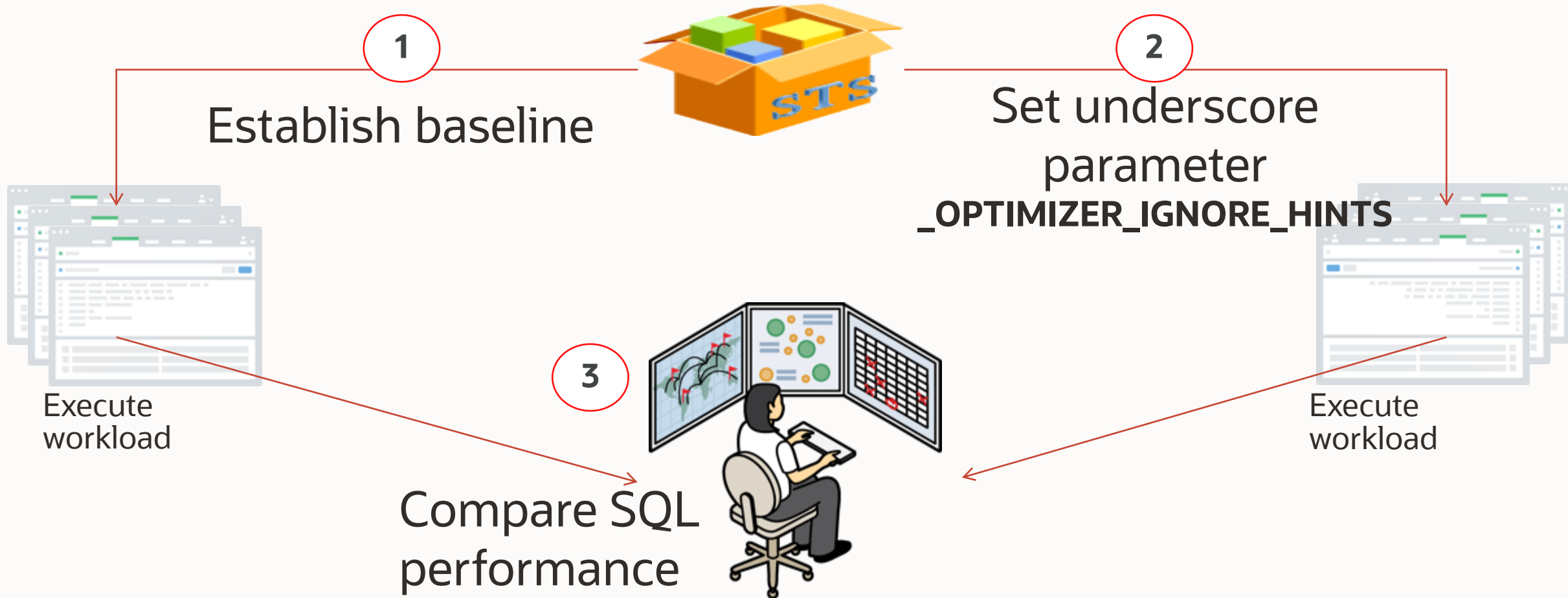
# Program Agenda

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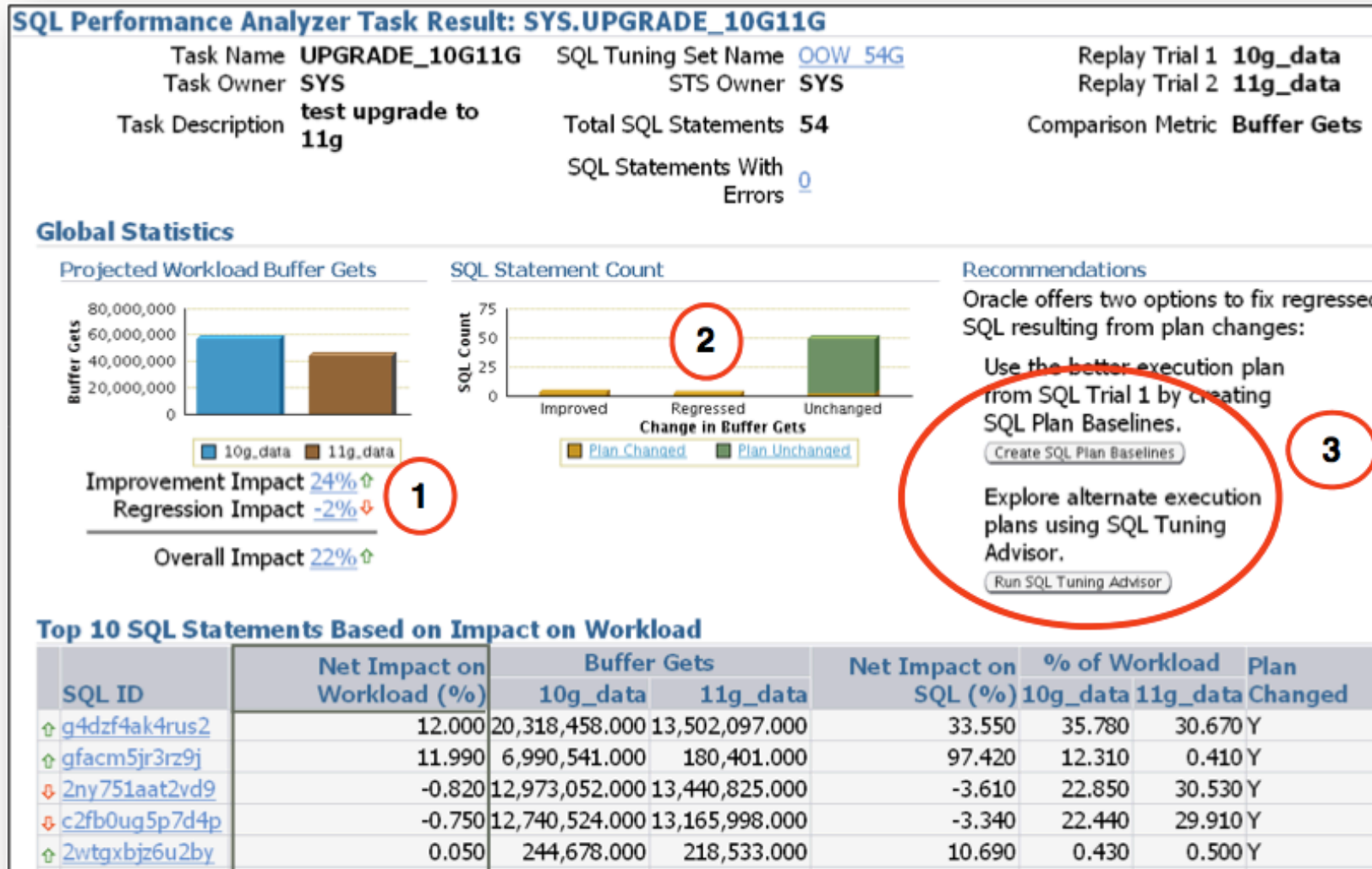
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# Managing an existing hinted application

## SQL Performance Analyzer



# Managing an existing hinted application



# Summary



Optimizer hints should only be used with extreme caution

- Exhaust all other tuning mechanisms first
  - Statistics, SQL Tuning Advisor, etc.

To guarantee the same plan every time supply a complete outline





- Easier to do this with SQL Plan Management

Hints live forever!

- Use `_OPTIMIZER_IGNORE_HINTS` parameter to test query performance without hints



## Join the Conversation

-  <https://twitter.com/SQLMaria>
-  <https://blogs.oracle.com/optimizer/>
-  <https://sqlmaria.com>
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## Related White Papers

- [What to expect from the Optimizer in 12c](#)
- [What to expect from the Optimizer in 11g](#)





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