



"We now have the security of knowing that we can recover our business within a few minutes should an outage occur."

Ismael Frias, CIOAlpura Group

Business Profile

Company name:
Alpura Group

Headquarters:
Mexico City, Mexico

Industry:
Milk and dairy products

Employees:
4,500

- Business Environment:
- Founded in 1970, now Mexico's leading milk producer
 - Produces two million liters of milk per day from more than 82,000 cows at 160 dairy farms
 - Seven plants, 20 company-owned distribution centers, and 60 independent distributors across Mexico
 - Perishable product line could trigger significant expense if production or logistics systems were unavailable

Implementation Team:
Dedomena, S.A. de C.V.

Vision Solutions Products:
MIMIX HA for i5/OS
Double-Take for Windows

Critical Issue

Alpura must be able to process, package and deliver high quality dairy products to supermarkets across Mexico less than 24 hours after production and always under the strictest quality control. Anything that delays this continuous supply chain, even for a few hours, is a serious matter. Alpura estimates that each hour of downtime costs the company about US\$5,000.

Results

- Alpura saves \$10,000 per day or \$3,600,000 per year by eliminating downtime for data backups.
- Assurance that the business could recover in minutes in the event of unplanned downtime.
- Regular testing validates the success of Vision Solutions technologies for IBM and Windows environments.
- Peace of mind.

Technologies

- MIMIX® HA for i5/OS®
- Double-Take® for Windows®
- IBM® System i™ servers
- IBM System x™ servers
- Custom-developed distribution, accounting, inventory and other business applications

Business Challenge

Like all major companies today, Alpura depends on information technology to both make its products and to get them to market. It uses custom-developed applications to handle everything from production and distribution logistics to accounting, payroll, and online analytical processing (OLAP) applications that enhance its business intelligence.

These uses of information technology drive considerable value for Alpura. But the down side of its reliance on technology is that if the technology is unavailable, the value stream stops.

Alpura and its partners need its centralized systems to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without exception. Complicating matters is the fact that Alpura's infrastructure includes more than one computing platform. In addition to an IBM System i Model 820 server, Alpura also uses six Windows-based servers to run its most critical business applications.

While the IBM servers are very reliable, they needed to be off-line for about two hours a day to perform data backups. The maintenance-related shutdowns were very costly. Alpura needed to keep its data and applications available full-time, while still being able to perform all necessary maintenance.



Solution

To find a solution, Alpura turned to Dedomena, S.A. de C.V., a Vision Solutions Business Partner. After reviewing all of Alpura's systems and understanding their availability issues, Dedomena recommended MIMIX HA for i5/OS from Vision Solutions. MIMIX provides real-time replication of DB2/400® databases and all their non-database System i objects including application, system, configuration and integrated file-system objects.

Alpura then purchased a backup System i Model 820 server and had it installed in the IBM Business Recovery Center in Mexico City, about 15 miles away. The MIMIX implementation process was completed by an expert from Dedomena. Now, should a server outage occur, MIMIX can automatically fail systems over to the backup server using TCP/IP address impersonation to ensure seamless transition.

With its System i data and applications fully protected against both planned and unplanned downtime, Alpura turned its attention to its Windows servers. Since Alpura was very satisfied with its MIMIX solution, the natural choice for Windows server availability protection was Double-Take for Windows, also from Vision Solutions.

Double-Take for Windows provides real-time replication for Windows environments running on xSeries servers integrated into System i environments. Like MIMIX, Double-Take for Windows continuously monitors changes made to open files and replicates them to one or more xSeries Windows servers over standard network communications.

A Windows-based GUI client facilitates easy configuration, control, monitoring and management of the Double-Take for Windows replication environment. Double-Take for Windows constantly monitors server health and, if any monitored server fails, it fully automates every aspect of the failover procedure. For maximum flexibility, Double-Take for Windows allows Alpura to switch its Windows environment independently or in tight coordination with System i server switching.

Once a month, Alpura conducts a system failure test to exercise its disaster recovery capabilities, including switchovers to the backup site. The tests work flawlessly.

In addition to significant and tangible savings from avoiding planned downtime, there is also the benefit of knowing that nothing will stop Alpura from delivering its dairy products, fresh and on time. "We can recover our business within a few minutes should an outage occur, and that provides us with peace of mind every day," said Ismael Frias, CIO, Alpura Group.



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