



"You can't predict the future, and that's why we need the strongest possible backbone. With Vision Solutions and IBM, it's affordable for us as a medium-sized business: we've got the technology to keep systems moving for our customers, our employees, and our partner companies in the event of unexpected downtime."

Mark Geery, IT Director, Tony's Fine Foods

Business Profile

Company Name:
Tony's Fine Foods

Headquarters:
West Sacramento, California (USA)

Industry:
Food distribution

Employees:
More than 250

Business Environment:

- Food distribution specialist serving the Western U.S. since 1934
- Four warehouses store over 12,000 items in multiple temperature zones
- Also provides 3rd party logistics including warehouse storage for distribution customers, manufacturers and other food distributors
- In addition to facilitating Tony's Fine Foods' famous personal service, the company system supports online and remote ordering used by customers, partners, and Tony's sales representatives

Implementation Team:

- Vision Solutions
- Tony's Fine Foods in-house IT staff

Vision Solutions Products:

- MIMIX HA for i5/OS
- EchoCluster for AIX
- EchoStream for AIX

Critical Issue

Trucks move in and out of Tony's Fine Foods' warehouses nearly 24 hours a day and a system outage would impact the receipt and delivery of products including perishable items. To maintain its superior customer service, Tony's needed a way to protect against unexpected downtime and provide flexible ways to manage planned downtime.

Results

- Business continuity for System i and System p environments.
- Minimal system maintenance required from IT team.
- MIMIX helped IT team migrate its entire system to a new IBM server with minimal downtime.
- Planned downtime can be scheduled flexibly to avoid business impact.
- EchoStream for AIX "dial back" (CDP) feature facilitates IT troubleshooting

Technologies

- MIMIX® HA for i5/OS®
- EchoCluster™ for AIX®
- EchoStream™ for AIX
- IBM® System i servers and IBM System p servers
- Distribution, ERP and strategic applications and 3rd party logistics software

Business Challenge

Tony's Fine Foods has remained a family business for almost three quarters of a century, and the company has a long-standing reputation for exceptional customer service. As part of its commitment to customers, Tony's minimizes the risk of unexpected business downtime.

One way to measure the impact of downtime is that Tony's Fine Foods delivers on average over a million dollars a day in products. "If we had a system failure, some of the costs could include having employees idle or paying overtime to get back on track," said Mark Geery, IT Director, Tony's Fine Foods. "But there's one thing that's actually priceless that we can't risk losing: the trust of a customer."

As the company grew, the IT team looked closely at the ability to recover from a critical failure. In addition to the main data center at the company headquarters, Tony's has three warehouses located across northern California. The goal was to avoid problems at the main center and eliminate the possibility that downtime there could impact the other sites.

"Whether it's keeping processes moving at our warehouses, having Web sites up for online orders, or dozens of other business requirements, we want our systems to be seamless from the perspective of our customers and partners and our own sales representatives," Geery said.



Solution

The company selected MIMIX HA for i5/OS from Vision Solutions as a foundation element of a planned disaster recovery (DR) infrastructure.

"We liked the IBM knowledge behind MIMIX, and we talked to existing customers who had good experiences with MIMIX," said David Nasater, IT Development Manager, Tony's Fine Foods. "It only takes about 15 minutes a day to look at MIMIX and see if everything is running right, and we've completed a few successful tests of the system," Nasater said.

"Not only is MIMIX helping us sleep better at night, but we used it to help migrate our data when we moved our whole system from an IBM 810 to a 520," Nasater emphasized. "And with MIMIX, we did it with minimal downtime," he noted.

In addition to the company's primary distribution and strategic systems running on IBM System i, Tony's Fine Food also runs logistics software for its 3rd party partners on a System p server running AIX. To keep those applications available, Tony's chose EchoCluster for AIX and EchoStream for AIX from Vision Solutions.

"We're now implementing a DR system in a co-location facility, and it will have two partitions, one running AIX and one running i5/OS. EchoCluster and MIMIX will help us keep our applications protected and available," Nasater stated.

"We wanted the strongest backbone we could have, and in recent years, that has become more cost-effective for smaller businesses like ours," Nasater said. "IBM provides the hardware performance we need and Vision Solutions has the DR capabilities. Vision Solutions helps us avoid an outage that could lead to disappointing a customer and helps us navigate our planned downtime so it doesn't impact the business," he stated.

"In addition to data protection, EchoStream for AIX has another really nice feature," Geery noted. "It offers a 'dial back' to return applications or data bases to a previous point in time to solve a problem or check on a business or IT event," he said.

"The role of technology isn't to supplant customer relationships; at Tony's Fine Foods, technology is deployed to help support these relationships, and with the help of Vision Solutions and IBM that's what we're doing," Geery concluded.



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