



*“Our MIMIX HA solution has helped us bring in more business and retain our biggest customers with minimal increases in IT staff. In fact, MIMIX HA paid for itself in only 30 days.”*

Robert Bernal, Director of Technology  
Southwestern Motor Transport

## Business Profile

Company name:  
Southwestern Motor Transport Inc.

Headquarters:  
San Antonio, Texas USA

Industry:  
Transportation

Employees:  
Approximately 1,000

- Business Environment:
- 75-year old regional trucking firm serves the eastern portion of the U.S. and offers service to Canada and Mexico
  - Approximately 500 trucks, 3,000 trailers and 40 terminal locations
  - Provides long-haul and less-than-truckload (LTL) services
  - Delivers real-time shipment information as a vital element of customer service for Fortune 50 and other premier customers
  - 24/7 freight environment calls for high availability of systems

Implementation Team:  
Vision Solutions

Vision Solutions Product:  
MIMIX HA for i5/OS

## Critical Issue

For Southwestern Motor Transport (SMT), the product is service. Fortune 50 customers demand real-time information about their shipments, and SMT delivers it via email and web portals. Hosting the email server, the web site, and receiving live data from drivers' Java-based phones, SMT's IBM System i solution is critical to providing 24/7 service. To satisfy its premier customers and compete successfully for new business, SMT must have a solution that protects against planned and unplanned downtime.

## Results

- Achieved ROI in only 30 days.
- Eliminated threat of unplanned downtime to essential logistics, communications and customer service applications.
- Ensured continuous live communication with truckers on the road.
- Eliminated planned system downtime for routine maintenance and upgrades.
- Ensured 24/7 continuity of business processes including web site and delivery of real-time information to customers.
- Increased business and retained premier customers by delivering optimum uptime.

## Technologies

- MIMIX® HA for i5/OS®
- LTL/400 transportation management software from Ayers Rock Software, LLC
- Cheetah Software Systems™ Cheetah Tracks™ dispatch and optimization software on an Application Service Provider (ASP) basis
- QUALCOMM® OmniTRACS® satellite mobile communications system for long-haul trucks
- Nextel® Java- and GPS-enabled phone system for local pickup/delivery drivers
- IBM® Lotus® Domino® email server
- Two IBM System i™ 520 servers

## Business Challenge

Manufacturers turn to Southwestern Motor Transport (SMT) to carry freight including raw materials, parts and finished goods. No small packages, these are commercial motor freight shipments weighing up to 40,000 pounds—critical elements of the supply chain for SMT's customers.

At SMT, the company product is actually service, according to SMT's director of technology, Robert Bernal. Customers want visibility into the process, from loading through delivery. “We're a lot like an airport—simultaneous carriers, multiple routes, arrival times and schedules. An enormous amount of information is being conveyed to customers at any given time, and it's essential to the business,” said Bernal.

A long-time IBM customer, SMT relies on live communication with drivers on the road and real-time information about shipments to compete effectively for Fortune 50 customers. “We need to push information out to customers almost instantaneously, whether on the web or by email, and we need uptime all the time to make that happen,” said Bernal. “We were looking for zero fault tolerance, where if there were any issues, we would be back up within minutes. There would be an enormous cost for us to lose the computer,” added Bernal.



## Solution

“When I’m asked about our long history with IBM, ‘14 years no downtime’ pretty much says it all,” said Bernal. “Since 1992, when RAID drives came into play, our unscheduled downtime has been zero—and we’re a 24/7 shop,” Bernal explained.

SMT started with the IBM System/3 in the early 1970’s, and the IBM midrange—from the System/34 to the System/36 to the AS/400—has been vital to SMT as the company has grown. Today the company has two System i 520’s with two way-replication at the center of a hub-and-spoke Ethernet system.

Bernal emphasized that when SMT implemented MIMIX HA for i5/OS from Vision Solutions, the IT team chose two-way replication to balance performance. “When we’re doing SQL reporting, for example, I don’t query the live production data, I read the replicated production data, and there’s no bottleneck issue,” he said.

“System i and MIMIX work together to provide the uptime, reliability and simplicity we need—and help us respond to our customers’ requirements for fast, accurate information any time of the day or night,” Bernal stated. “At any given time on our System i, there are about 300 drivers via satellite, 250 Java phones, as many as 700 internal users, and a high volume of customers on the web checking arrival times and current locations of shipments. Our network is replicated, our hosts are replicated, our software is replicated and our VoIP phone system is replicated,” he added.

“We calculated cost per hour for downtime, and MIMIX paid for itself in a month. We’ve done some tests, and it worked flawlessly,” said Bernal. “We used to go down about two to six hours a night to back up the system, and now we’re down maybe 15 or 20 minutes for an IPL every two weeks, and that’s all,” he noted.

Vision Solution’s advanced technology and “set it and forget it” maintenance were key to choosing MIMIX, according to Bernal. “We didn’t want to baby-sit it or tweak it, so MIMIX was what we were looking for,” said Bernal.

“By helping us achieve continuous uptime and enabling us to give customers real-time data, IBM and VISION help us compete with multi-billion-dollar carriers,” Bernal said.



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