



"The product speaks for itself. It runs. It does what it needs to do. It replicates right. The role swap is very clean. And tech support is always there to back you up if you get into a situation you're not sure about."

Craig Faulkner, systems administrator, Raven Transport

Business Profile

Company Name:
Raven Transport Co., Inc.

Headquarters:
Jacksonville, Florida, USA

Industry:
Trucking

Business Size:
Raven Transport Co., Inc. has a modern truck trailer fleet that primarily serves the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Northeast regions of the United States, but it is authorized to operate in all 48 lower states. In 2007, the company recorded revenues of \$75.9 million.

Business Environment:

- Founded in 1985.
- Privately owned.
- A central dispatch center operates around the clock, 365 days a year.
- The company won the Truckload Carriers Association's National Fleet Safety Contest in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004.

Implementation Team:
Vision Solutions, ICS and Raven Transport

Vision Solutions Product:
Migrate While Active

Critical Issue

Raven Transport is a growing company. Consequently, it needed to upgrade its IBM® i-based systems from an IBM System i 520 server to an IBM Power 520 Model M25 server. At the same time, the company wanted to upgrade the operating system from V5R3 on the old machine to V5R4 on the new server. Because it runs a lean IT department, Raven Transport needed some assistance in performing the migration quickly and seamlessly, with little or no downtime.

Results

- From start to finish, including all of the planning, the project was completed in about six weeks.
- The company experienced almost no downtime when upgrading to a new server running a higher version of the operating system.
- Only 20 to 25 person-hours of Raven Transport IT staff time was required to complete the system upgrade.
- The migration was seamless.
- There was virtually no need for in-house expertise.

Technologies

- Vision Solutions Migrate While Active
- IBM System i 520 (old system)
- IBM Power 520 Model M25 (new system)

Business Challenge

Being a mid-sized trucking company, Raven Transport has a small IT department that doesn't include in-house programmers or hardware experts. As a result, the company needed help to perform the migration to its new server and operating system efficiently and effectively.

In addition, the company couldn't afford significant downtime to accommodate the upgrade. Raven Transport runs a 24x7 dispatch center and its trucks are on the road all of the time. Therefore, the company needed to keep its server running throughout the project.

Raven Transport also needed the upgrade to be seamless. Given the limited IT staff available to "put out fires," the company wanted to be able to install the new system, switch over to it and not have any serious problems that would have to be dealt with as a result of the migration.

In short, the company's objective was to have the new system transparently assume the production role after the upgrade. Preferably, users would barely notice anything during the migration other than that their applications possibly ran faster when it was finished.



Solution

Before tackling its hardware and operating system upgrade, Raven Transport asked its IBM Business Partner, ICS, for suggestions on the best way to undertake the project, given the limited in-house hardware expertise. ICS recommended the use of Vision Solution's Migrate While Active™, which allows organizations to perform upgrades and migrations without interrupting business operations.

When ICS made its recommendation, Raven Transport already had several years of experience using Vision's ORION™ Solutions for IBM® i to protect the availability of the company's IBM i systems. Thus, even before proceeding, Raven Transport had a high level of trust in the proposed solution.

To begin the upgrade process, the new hardware was installed in parallel with the old system. Raven Transport then used Migrate While Active to create a replica on the new server of all production data and objects that resided on the old system.

Migrate While Active then employed IBM i journaling to keep the old and new systems perfectly synchronized until Raven Transport was confident that the new system was ready to assume the production role.

Finally, Migrate While Active facilitated the cutover to the new system by automating many of the switchover processes. With the help of this automation, the migration process was completed quickly, with virtually no downtime. That was a real benefit because Raven Transport believes that it otherwise would not have been able to keep its systems available throughout the migration process.

With the help of Vision Solutions and ICS, Raven Transport finished the upgrade project with a total of just 20 to 25 person-hours of work on the part of two in-house IT staff, without the need for any specialized expertise.

Raven Transport was comfortable performing the upgrade despite not having in-house hardware expertise because the company knew that the experts in Vision's customer support group stood ready to help at any point in the process, if necessary. "Whenever I've called Vision, they've always been very helpful," said Craig Faulkner, systems administrator at Raven Transport.

Faulkner went on to say, "If you want someone to take you from the beginning and put you to the end—in production—that's what Migrate While Active does."



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