



## "Steady-As-She-Goes" at Geest North Sea Line with MIMIX® High Availability Solutions

### Rotterdam, a global trading junction

With over 300 million tons of goods handled by this European port, Rotterdam is one of the world's most important junctions when it comes to cargo traffic and is Europe's most important port for oil & chemicals, containers, iron ore, coal, food and metals. Around 30,000 seagoing vessels and 130,000 inland vessels arrive in the port every year.

The third-largest shipping company of Rotterdam is Geest North Sea Line. With

almost half a century of experience in short sea shipping, Geest North Sea Line is specialized in transporting commodities from quay-to-quay and from door-to-door across Europe.

Dedicated short sea shipping, added value operations and a true belief that the 'customer is king' are just three of the ingredients that ensure Geest retains its leading position in the busy European trading community. The company's six 340 TEU vessels work the North Sea routes to the United Kingdom complemented by Channel Tunnel rail services, Geest North Sea Line operates also a shipping line to Ireland with three vessels.



**Geest North Sea Line B.V.**

### By Sea, Rail, Truck, and Barge – Geest Delivers More than Transit

Geest's comprehensive transport network spans much of Europe with a fleet of 4,000 containers that move via rail, road or by environmentally friendly barge service on the Rhine. 250+ trucks per day penetrate northern, southern and central parts of Europe's hinterland.

In addition to goods in transit, Geest delivers a 'one-stop shopping' services

portfolio for total supply-chain management, which includes warehousing operations, distribution, and inventory management services. These expanded services help to deliver products just-in-time directly from the manufacturer into the hands of retailers with daily departures offered to all UK destinations.

Geest is a company that is steadily expanding and currently handles nearly 400 movements a day, twice as much as in 1998. Company objectives are to double again in the next few years!

### The Power of Information Drives On-Time, Profitable Deliveries

Time, cost and destination all play a part in the choice of transport used for cargo movement. Fast transit times are guaranteed by choosing the optimum geographical routing from a wide variety of UK ports, ferry services and the Channel Tunnel. Making optimum logistics management choices—meeting delivery times and maximizing profitability—depends upon Geest's access to critical data and information.



**MIMIX®**  
The Power of Information Availability™  
[www.MIMIX.com](http://www.MIMIX.com)

A shipping network as comprehensive and complex as Geest's, has an equally impressive amount of critical data in continuous motion. And with the need for that data to be real-time accessible comes another key ingredient to Geest's success: Business Continuity and Resiliency. In the world of 24/7 business processing, both the application and data must be continuously available. Put simply, the goal, for a business like Geest's, is to achieve maximum application and system uptime for their supply chain management systems.



### **Reliability, Availability and Increased Business Process Efficiency**

"A professional business that is well-run will always have its eyes on three ICT objectives: The first is your system reliability, closely followed by your application availability. If these two elements are in place, the third key objective is to help keep your company's overall business ticking nicely," stated ICT Manager Johan Van Wensen.

The world of logistics is one of low profit margins and high client volatility. Therefore, business continuity is a key competitive advantage. At Geest, the objective is to have no more than one hour of downtime, at any time. "Delays for truckers waiting for late ships cost us 3,750 Euro," Johan calculated. "And one hour of downtime at any of our 11 online sales offices would cost us another 3,500 Euro, which is 38,500 Euro an hour should all 11 offices be affected at once!"

Cost-conscious yet with a keen appreciation for proven solutions, Johan turned to IBM and Lakeview Technology as Geest's computer systems were living dangerously on the edge of their designed possibilities. As Steve Kenis, Area Sales Manager, Lakeview Technology explained: "Lakeview Technology's MIMIX® solution offers complete protection for the full IBM® iSeries™ environment, including not just data, but also user profiles, device descriptions, application programs, data areas, data queues, spool files, IFS files and other system objects."

"Lakeview and IBM® are genuine can-do companies, like us. There was a mutual understanding of our needs from the start and that felt good," said Van Wensen.

Geest North Sea Line has some 180 online users hooked up to the Rotterdam IBM® eServer iSeries™ and over 25 printers, all of which are connected through leased lines. With over 200,000 shipments a year, Geest saw a pressing need for a more computerized operations model. Their 10 largest customers make up a hefty 20 percent of total revenue. So, combining their client's needs with their own foresight, Geest decided to go digital.

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According to Johan, "Geest management decided in 1998 to move to a less paper-based, integrated computerized working model with operational input going straight to our IBM® eServer iSeries™. ICT became a strategic, read critical, component of Geest's day to day operations." But there was a snag. Headquartered in one of Rotterdam's industrial estate areas, Geest was one of many companies plagued by sudden "brown-outs" when the utility company shut down the electricity for maintenance works. "That created havoc with our planning—especially when a boat was docking and needed unloading and loading services. Delays do not make for happy customers and we decided to do something about it." Lost revenue is often the most visible and easily identified cost of downtime, but it is just the tip of the iceberg when discussing the real costs to the organization.



To evaluate downtime, you must consider all the components that make up a business and how each may be affected by system downtime. You also need to account for the cost of idled employees, lost productivity, lost or spoiled inventory, system and data recovery costs, lost business opportunity, lost customers and lost value in the form of share value, customer loyalty, reputation and goodwill.

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***"The cooperation between Lakeview Technology and Rainbow Solutions is a truly synergetic one, and one that allows Geest North Sea Line an optimal workload balancing."***

*Eric Klaare, Sales Manager, Rainbow Solutions*

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### **"The Right Stuff"**

Geest's ICT Master Plan 2000 included an upgrade for the existing IBM® eServer iSeries™ 720 series machine that would then be moved to the accounting department. Acquisition of a new IBM® eServer iSeries™ was next and the website was brought online using this new iSeries™ 720 machine.

In December 2000, the ICT Master Plan was presented to the board and approved. In March 2001, one machine had been upgraded and web hosting of the other machine was in progress and before the summer of 2001, another IBM® eServer iSeries™ 720 for production was gently humming in Rotterdam. "We pride ourselves in a horizontal management style which allows for very fast response times. This proved its worth once again as we were allowed to move very fast in the implementation of the ICT Master Plan to the benefit of the company."

In September of the same year, Lakeview Technology was chosen as preferred partner to implement Geest's High Availability solution. "We chose for Lakeview for two important reasons: costing and excellent references. Without much ado, Lakeview invited us to visit Dutch Postbank to ask their client the very kind of questions any prospective buyer wishes to ask. We were very satisfied and confident that Lakeview would fit the bill and they did. They absolutely have 'The Right Stuff'."

Managed Availability solutions enable organizations to deliver consistent, predictable access to applications and data across an enterprise. They contribute significantly to profitability by providing near 100 percent data and application uptime, thus allowing a business to keep functioning and serving customers when its operations

might otherwise be hampered.

As a matter of fact, the switch to the back-up mode was put to the test recently due to a power failure. MIMIX® operations procedure kicked into action and within seconds, Geest was in business, again. At the blink of an eye, so to speak.

### **eBusiness**

Online applications, such as Web-based eCommerce, cannot be kept running all of the time. On a regular basis, they must be taken offline to backup data; reorganize the underlying database; run batch jobs that require exclusive database control; and upgrade the hardware, operating system, network, database-management system and application software. Planned maintenance has been a necessity since the first days of computing, but, for many companies, the business threat that planned maintenance represents is relatively new. Formerly, planned maintenance and batch jobs could be scheduled during "batch windows," which are typically night time and weekend hours when a business does not need online access to data and applications.

However, companies operating globally or at their customers' and suppliers' convenience over the Web have no windows of downtime left. Geest North Sea Line understood the challenges and designed a comprehensive Master Plan to allow for the company to move to a higher level of productivity and availability that allowed for built-in flexibility to meet their growth plans.



### **MIMIX Exclusive Active Server™ Technology**

At Geest North Sea Line, both IBM® eServer iSeries™ servers run in operational mode. Usually, one IBM® machine will be in operational mode while the second is mirroring data in the background.

MIMIX®, with its Active Server™ capabilities, enables a business to take more control of its computing

environments by providing new application and database services that are utilized online, while servers are active.

Creating, upgrading, reorganizing... every task required to keep systems productive seems to carry its own downtime penalty. MIMIX® with Active Server™ answers this dilemma. Active Server™ lets you deal with database-management issues at nearly every stage of a file's life cycle. From bringing new applications and data onboard to reclaiming DASD from highly active databases overloaded with deleted records, Active Server™ powers you through the workload while users stay online and productive. "Geest is a cost-conscious company," Johan Van Wensen reminded us. "The mirroring machine will also run operational tasks such as query modes, usually up to some 20 percent of the machine's capabilities. With one machine running at the upper limit of its power all the time, the back-up machine is helpful to work away the spillover. This way we ensure maximum use is gained from both our production and backup machines."

Lakeview Technology Solution Consultants initially implemented MIMIX® and then transitioned the support and audit functions to its Dutch partner Rainbow Solutions.

Eric Klaare, Sales Manager, Rainbow Solutions said: "The cooperation between Lakeview Technology and Rainbow Solutions is a truly synergetic one, and one that allows Geest

#### **Geest North Sea Line**

**Company Name:** Geest North Sea Line

**Founded:** 1960

**Headquarters:** Rotterdam, The Netherlands

**Industry:** Maritime shipping and European land-based transport

**Mission Critical Apps:** in-house developed ICT solution

**IT Topology:** IBM® eServer iSeries™ 810 and 720

**Business Initiative:** Secure 24/7 logistics supply chain

**Availability Solution:** MIMIX® from Lakeview Technology

North Sea Line an optimal workload balancing." Today, Rainbow is the main interface for Lakeview Technology and Geest, supporting their MIMIX® solution and ready to assist with any further availability needs or provide auditing and/or change-management assistance for High Availability.

All of Geest North Sea Line's software is tailor-made software, owing to the specific nature of their business.

"That was never a problem for Lakeview Technology,"

Johan Van Wensen said. "We have a very warm relationship with Lakeview and the MIMIX® people are very professional and dedicated specialists. They saw it as a world-class challenge, did a perfect job and helped Geest reach a higher level to meet our business' growing needs." 



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