



“Downtime could cost us thousands of dollars each minute that we couldn’t receive or send information. With MIMIX®, we can keep systems up and business running.”

Steve Neely, V.P. of Information Systems, PFG

Business Profile

Company name:
PFG Customized Distribution

Headquarters:
Lebanon, Tennessee (U.S.A.)

Industry:
Food Distribution

Employees:
1,200 nationwide

- Business Environment:
- Distributes food and food products to casual-dining, multi-unit chain restaurants nationwide
 - Operates 24/7 with restaurants and institutions placing orders late at night while expecting timely deliveries in as little as a few hours
 - Headquarters and distribution facilities are located in an optimal location for over-the-road distribution but a high-risk area for dangerous tornadoes
 - Oversees seven warehouses and one support location

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

Critical Issue

With an eye on disaster recovery, PFG had implemented MIMIX HA for i5/OS to protect the mission-critical applications on the company’s production IBM System i server. Pressed for 24/7 availability and with increased growth and market opportunities, PFG saw the need to optimize uptime for all of its systems. To minimize planned and unplanned downtime for its Windows-based applications, PFG looked to Double-Take® for Windows from Vision Solutions.

Results

- Addresses disaster recovery needs for both Windows and System I environments.
- Ensures 24/7 business continuity.
- Provides nonstop user accessibility, even during planned maintenance.
- Implementation was simple and straightforward.

Technologies

- MIMIX® HA for i5/OS® from Vision Solutions
- Double-Take® for Windows
- IBM® System i server environment
- Citrix MetaFrame XP
- Microsoft® Office® 2000,
- Lotus Notes®
- SCI (Supply Chain Intelligence)

Business Challenge

PFG Customized Distribution provides on-demand fulfillment of food products. The company has built close-working relationships with customers such as Cracker Barrel Old Country Store®, Outback Steakhouse®, TGI Friday’s® and Ruby Tuesday® by providing a highly specialized system to meet their needs.

Located in Lebanon, Tennessee, PFG Customized Distribution’s headquarters and distribution facilities are ideally located for over-the-road distribution. But this is a high-risk area where dangerous tornadoes occur with frequency. So, in addition to system availability, PFG is mindful of the need for disaster recovery (DR).

“Information systems are crucial because we are a 24-hour operation,” stated Steve Neely, V.P. of Information Systems at PFG. “In some distribution centers, today’s orders must be delivered the next day. In others, there is a two-day window. Customers can place orders into our system via the Web, so we need to keep the system available at all times, especially since restaurants typically order after close of business, 11 pm to 12 pm.”

For its distribution and internal systems network, PFG operates a single IBM® System i production server at its headquarters. To protect such mission-critical applications as order processing, warehouse management, dispatch, inventory, food distribution, payroll and HR, a backup System i server, located five miles away at the local distribution center, is set up for continuous availability and disaster recovery situations using MIMIX® HA for i5/OS® from Vision Solutions.



However, there are also four IBM servers connected to the production server that are running the running the Citrix® MetaFrame® XP application in the Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Operating System®. Citrix MetaFrame is used to serve Microsoft® Office®, Lotus Notes® and a truck routing application, SCI (Supply Chain Intelligence). Seventy-five percent of the PFG staff accesses Windows®-based applications from one of these four servers.

Neely and Kelly Thompson, PFG Network Administrator, decided to implement a solution that would ensure high availability (HA) and DR for the Windows-based environment.

Solution

PFG installed Double-Take for Windows from Vision Solutions in October of 2002. Within a matter of days, the solution was fully implemented.

“Double-Take for Windows proved to be a simple process of installation and testing,” said Kelly Thompson, PFG Network Administrator. “The Vision Solutions Services and Support team ensured that each step in the process was overseen with painstaking detail. It’s an approach to system maintenance that we undertake to make sure all applications perform flawlessly—preemptive and proactive,” said Thompson.

PFG used Double-Take for Windows to replicate the four Citrix MetaFrame servers to four backup servers located five miles away from headquarters at the warehouse facility. Much like its counterpart, MIMIX HA for i5/OS, Double-Take for Windows continuously monitors and replicates changes made to open files as they occur. MIMIX monitors the primary servers for any application data changes. When these occur, it automatically and rapidly copies the changes to the remote redundant backup servers. Whenever one of the production systems goes down or needs to be taken offline for maintenance, users can be quickly switched to an available backup server.

PFG now realizes the benefits of high availability from Vision Solutions across its System i and Windows environments, including user accessibility during planned maintenance, increased productivity, and less required labor for system upkeep.

“We can’t afford downtime,” stated Neely. “Customers won’t tolerate it and our own infrastructure can’t support it. With Double-Take for Windows we realize a savings I’m not sure we could accurately measure: tornado or no tornado, maintenance schedule or whatever the scenario, we now have the ability to keep systems up and business running, period.”



17911 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 500, Irvine, CA 92614
1-800-957-4511 ▪ 1-801-799-0300 ▪ visionsolutions.com



◆ High Availability ◆ Disaster Recovery ◆ Systems and Data Management ◆