VISION SOLUTIONS

Eastridge Workforce Solutions
Managed Services Case Study Platinum Level

"Vision Solutions has the in-house knowledge and experience to manage and monitor MIMIX better than we could. They have much better experts than I could ever find in the market."

- Brad Taylor, CIO

Critical Issue

Around the clock, every day of the year, thousands of people across North America check into and out of Eastridge Workforce Management's time and attendance system. The consequences of any downtime would be dire for both Eastridge and its clients.

Business Challenge

Eastridge Workforce Solutions delivers workforce management services and technologies to more than 1,300 clients across North America. It's time and attendance system alone processes transactions from thousands of people 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As clients' employees check in and out through the system, it verifies who is allowed to be there and who should be there. It also records employees' time to generate accurate payrolls.

In the words of Brad Taylor, CIO of Eastridge, "It would be catastrophic if the system were unavailable for even just a few minutes."

Clearly, Eastridge needs a high availability/disaster recovery (HA/DR) solution that guarantees that its time and attendance system—and the data associated with it—will always be available, no matter what may occur. The company cannot afford to pause for disasters or for the normal scheduled maintenance that all systems must undergo from time to time.

Business Profile

Company Name:
Eastridge Workforce Solutions

Headquarters:
San Diego, California, USA

Industry:
Workforce Services & Technologies

Business Environment:
- Founded: 1972
- Employees: 300
- Clients: >1,300
- Delivers solutions in all 50 states
- Privately held

Implementation Team:
Vision Solutions Managed Services

Yet HA/DR is not a core competency or competitive differentiator for Eastridge. Powerful, innovative workforce solutions are. Thus, the company needs a way to utilize the foremost HA/DR skills and experience, without distracting its IT group from its work in advancing the company's business objectives.

Solution

Eastridge Workforce Solutions relies on MIMIX Availability to ensure that its IBM i-based time and attendance system is never unavailable and never loses any data. To this end, MIMIX Availability replicates all production data, system data and applications from the production server to a recovery server.

If the production server ever goes down or has to be taken offline for maintenance, users can be quickly switched to the always-ready-to-run backup server. As a result, even if the primary server is offline, the time and attendance application and its data are still available to serve clients.

Eastridge takes advantage of the most experienced MIMIX Availability experts, without putting any burden on the company's IT staff by employing Vision Solutions Managed Services to monitor, manage and maintain Eastridge's HA/DR solution.

Managed Services monitors the MIMIX replication processes around the clock to guarantee that they are always running properly and efficiently. If an issue arises, Vision experts can often quickly resolve it remotely.

For example, a Vision representative once noticed that Eastridge's backup server was running slower than it should be. After tracing the problem to an old log file that had been truncated and was slowing the DASD, he immediately called Eastridge and got approval to fix the problem remotely. "He went above and beyond," declared Taylor.

A primary advantage of using MIMIX Availability and Vision Solutions Managed Services is that the combination thoroughly protects against downtime— including during scheduled maintenance. For instance, when it comes time to upgrade IBM i on Eastridge's servers, Managed Services undertakes all of the work.

Before initiating an upgrade, Managed Services performs a "role swap," assigning the production role to what is normally the backup server. After completing the upgrade, the server roles are swapped back to their normal states.

How much application downtime is incurred when Vision Solutions Managed Services performs upgrades in this way? Taylor didn't pause for an instant when answering that question. "None at all. That's the great part. There's zero downtime," he replied.

Summing up, Taylor said the key advantage of MIMIX Availability and Vision Solutions Managed Services is that it, "gives us the peace of mind of knowing that one of our company's key systems will always be operational. Managed Services ensures that it's always working correctly. This reduces our cost of managing it compared to doing it ourselves. On top of that, Managed Services gives us another set of eyes on our system to ensure it is running efficiently. If there's any sort of performance degradation, they suggest corrective actions—whether that's to MIMIX or not— and that's terrific!"

Results

- Frees Eastridge to focus on its core business
- Ensures near-zero downtime
- Protects against all data loss
- Proactively resolves issues before they become problems
- Undertakes the successful implementation of upgrades
- Provides peace of mind

Services and Technologies

Services:
- Managed Services Platinum Level

Software:
- MIMIX Availability
- IBM i

Hardware:
- IBM Power Systems 8203-E4A & 8202-E4C