

JAKE'S FINER FOODS

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Armand Page, Vice President of Operations and IT,
Jake's Finer Foods



Jake's Finer Foods - Keeping Out of the Eye of the Storm

THE BUSINESS NEED

Jake's Finer Foods is a full-line distributor that serves more than 1,500 food service companies and restaurants from its 180,000-square-foot warehouse in Houston, Texas. In 2009, the family-owned company had \$80 million in sales and operated across multiple states. That's a long way from the company's humble beginnings in 1946, when farmer Kervin E. Jacob came back from World War II and decided to distribute his farm's eggs himself. The company has been growing every year since. These days, Jake's is a full-line regional Foodservice Distributor selling both Retail and Institutional accounts.

But in 2008, Hurricane Ike had the potential to bring the thriving business to its knees.

The severe hurricane caused \$30 billion in damage across Louisiana, Texas and the Florida Panhandle. Jake's facility was physically unharmed. "Not a pebble hit us," says Armand Page, vice-president of operations and IT at Jake's, but being without power for 12 days is never a good thing for a food distributor. Fortunately, the company was able to bring in enough generator support to keep Jake's going.

The hurricane highlighted a further risk that needed to be managed: The lack of an adequate High Availability/Disaster Recovery system. Before the hurricane, Jake's was using a system familiar to many companies: "It was called a wing and a prayer," Page says. The company was religious about taking tapes off site. However, if the primary location were destroyed, Page says, "we'd have been out of luck. Hurricane Ike changed how we looked at disasters."

Jake's Finer Foods employs business applications from Retalix Inc. Built for the food industry, Retalix offers a complete Enterprise Suite of software. Jake's uses Retalix Power Enterprise (ERP), Power Warehouse (Warehouse Mgt), Power Voice (Voice Automation in the warehouse), Power Buy (Forecast & Replenishment), and Power Net (Web-based Order Entry). Any loss of these systems would have severe implications, "We'd be dead in the water. We couldn't operate," says Page. "We wouldn't be able to receive, put away, enter orders. We'd have a warehouse full of products going nowhere." The hurricane provided the motivation for Jake's management to expedite the selection of a suitable HA/DR system.

THE DECISION

Page had been shopping around for an HA/DR system for some time, and had done rigorous comparisons with competitors. In the end, he was convinced Maxava HA Enterprise offered the perfect solution for his growing company's needs. "What I always liked about Maxava was the fact that they had a flexible implementation model and were competitive in their offer," he says. "Following the successful delivery of two full-blown demos and I realized that Maxava HA Enterprise was definitely the way to go."

THE OUTCOME

He and his staff were thrilled with the ease of implementation, and the results. During the transition, he says Maxava's authorized solution partner Source Data Products (SDP) was there every step of the way. "SDP supplied local expertise on Maxava HA and the System i," says Page. Jose Briones, business process analyst at Jake's, was relieved at SDP's knowledge and availability. "SDP had a solution for everything we were facing. To them, it was no big deal. One, two, three, it's solved," Briones says. SDP helped Jake's install the new IBM i520 hardware as the source HA system while moving the IBM 9406-800 machine to the target HA environment, located in another building some distance away.

Within 90 days of signing the contract the company acquired a new production System i, set up the replication environment and started replicating everything live. "We were as green as we could be going in, and to have this quick a result is unimaginable," says Page.

"We do role swaps to make sure everything is working, every three months. It's very easy to do," says Page.

It took a near disaster for Jake's Finer Foods to batten down the hatches. Now the company is prepared to weather whatever storm comes its way. "We don't lose sleep anymore about backup. Within seconds of a change on the production box, the data is sitting on the target box."

"We could have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars with another company and it may or may not have turned out well," says Page. "Maxava delivered everything they said they would, with no loose ends. They made it simple – and powerful. We couldn't be happier."

To learn how Maxava can provide your company with top-quality, affordable HA solutions, go to www.maxava.com.