

California's oldest lumber company leverages state-of-the-art data center technology



Company

Ganahl Lumber Company is a family- and employee-owned lumber and building materials company based out of Southern California. Ganahl has been in business for more than 100 years by “doing the ordinary things extraordinarily well.”

Solution Details

- Design and construction of two new, fully-redundant data centers spread across its main campus
- Application hosting in the Zumasys Cloud
- Custom software programming for the core ERP system

Key Technologies

- Rocket D3 AIX database
- NetApp MetroCluster array-based clustering and synchronous mirroring
- Citrix Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)
- VMware server virtualization
- Fortinet firewalls
- IBM pSeries and Cisco UCS servers
- ShoreTel VoIP phones
- Edgewave content filtering software

Results

- Significantly reduced unplanned downtime through transparent failover between two data centers
- Decommissioned over 250 workstations with shift to thin clients and Citrix XenApp
- Tripled capacity and support capabilities without requiring more IT personnel
- Saved over \$1M over four years

COMPANY PROFILE

Ganahl Lumber Company is the oldest lumberyard in all of California. This family- and employee-owned company operates nine retail locations in Orange County, California, and offers its customers decades of experience and expertise. Ganahl carries a wide array of lumber, hardware, custom doors and windows, as well as electrical, plumbing and hardware products that it ships throughout Southern California.





The Objective

In 2006, Ganahl was looking for a full service, highly responsive, local technology provider to support the company's growth and acquisition strategy. Gary Armstrong, director of IT at Ganahl, had met Zumasys at several MultiValue conferences and events. When Ganahl outgrew its previous IT provider, Armstrong reached out for help tying together Ganahl's MultiValue application and IT infrastructure. Zumasys' expertise in MultiValue programming and infrastructure solutions perfectly aligned with Ganahl's needs for its core ERP application.

The Solution

Zumasys worked closely with Ganahl to understand its business and strategic goals. As the relationship deepened, Zumasys used its understanding of Ganahl's business to make timely and relevant technology recommendations for a range of IT services, including communications, storage, virtualization (desktop and server), wireless LAN, network protection and remote access.

According to Armstrong, "We appreciate that Zumasys brings appropriate technologies to the table. Since they know our business, they don't waste our time with things that won't fit our needs. We really rely on their knowledge, and we trust their advice."

From the beginning, Ganahl partnered with Zumasys' software development team to create innovative custom programming solutions for its Rocket D3 AIX ERP applications. Together, Ganahl and Zumasys developed a real-time data collection application that connects Ganahl's lumberyard employees to the company's business-critical ERP application through mobile, handheld devices.

Newer custom programming solutions for Ganahl's MultiValue database applications further enhance mobility. Employees can now capture real-time data from mobile and iOS devices, including GPS coordinates and photographs from job sites, and link that data to records in their Rocket D3 AIX database.

As the company grew and expanded into multiple locations, Ganahl continued to evolve its infrastructure with help from Zumasys. Ganahl deployed a new data center using NetApp MetroCluster to mirror servers and storage between two sites for comprehensive business continuity. The new, streamlined data center uses VMware server virtualization and Cisco UCS Servers. A virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) centralizes support for custom door and window software programs.

Most recently, Ganahl made the shift to a hybrid cloud strategy to support its growing Exchange footprint. With business becoming increasingly dependent on email, the company needed to enable business continuity for email in the event of an outage. In 2014, Ganahl moved its Exchange environment to the Zumasys Cloud while keeping production data running on site.



"There are a lot of infrastructure providers out there and a lot of MultiValue experts, but Zumasys is the only provider that we felt had both of those capabilities and more. They blew our socks off with what they were able to do for us."

– GARY ARMSTRONG
Director of IT, Ganahl Lumber



Results

Redundancy and reliability are essential to Ganahl's ability to deliver information to users and improve the customer experience. Zumasy's custom programming solutions for Ganahl's Rocket D3 AIX database are enabling employees in ways never before possible with the information they need to deliver on the company's promise to "do the ordinary things extraordinarily well."

Working with Zumasy, Ganahl has increased cost efficiencies and eliminated downtime. And now, with its Exchange application hosted on the Zumasy Cloud in the Las Vegas SuperNAP data center, Ganahl can rest assured that even in the event of a power outage or hardware failure at its headquarters, workers at every location will continue to have access to their email in the field.

More than just business continuity, Zumasy has also helped dramatically increase the efficiency of the company's six person IT staff. Virtualization enables the company to support more users without the need for more IT personnel. They can now do upgrades faster, troubleshoot easier, and deliver better security to all users, resulting in increased productivity for IT and the end user. In all, the team's capacity and support capabilities have tripled, adding up to a savings of more than \$1 million over four years.

Virtualization has also helped the company dramatically reduce its IT footprint, leading to a reduction in power, space, and cooling requirements. "At one point our data center was so thirsty for power that we had to continually ask our facilities staff for more circuits. It finally got to where we were going to have to go to the city to request more power," says Armstrong. After virtualizing, the company was able to reduce the number of servers it needed and was ultimately able to give circuits back.

With thin clients and a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), Ganahl was able to decommission more than 200 PCs. This saved the company

money by eliminating the need for hardware and reducing the cost of fixing and keeping those machines updated. It also helped boost productivity by eliminating problems caused by manufacturer software, as well as problems associated with employees loading their own applications.

Previously, the company's manufacturer software programs caused PCs to crash, requiring significant IT support and sometimes resulting in debilitating downtime. VDI enabled Ganahl to replace 50 physical desktops with virtual machines that run centrally in the company's secure data centers. Armstrong's IT team controls any interference between custom software programs by testing in VDI before the software is released. Together, these virtualization efforts have helped maximize productivity company-wide.

By running the software from a central location, IT now has better control and most employees have observed that their systems run faster with the new infrastructure. These efficiencies have freed IT administrators to focus less on maintenance and more on security and strategic projects.

Armstrong truly values the relationship he has built with Zumasy and the resources they offer. "If I have technology related questions, they're the first people I call," he says. "We even lean on them to provide extra programming or an extra set of eyes to help us do things better."

Armstrong plans to continue to expand his company's relationship with Zumasy. In particular, Ganahl will be replicating its core ERP system to the Zumasy Cloud for archive and disaster recovery. He remarks, "Management expects my team to find, install, and support technologies that improve productivity. Zumasy has repeatedly helped us meet those expectations. I firmly believe that will continue." ■

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