

Case Study

Southwest Traders



Southwest Traders Keeps on Trucking with the Zumasys Cloud

SOUTHWEST TRADERS, INC
Your Distribution Solution

We recently sat down with **Danny Ruckel**, IT Director at Southwest Traders, to ask about his experience moving to the Zumasys Cloud.

Tell us about your company.

Southwest Traders, based in Temecula, California, is a regional food distributor and restaurant supplier for the southwestern United States. Our supply network spans 17 states west of the I-35 corridor, with distribution centers in Temecula, Stockton, Fresno, Denver, and Dallas. We're 325 people strong and have been in business since 1977.

My job at Southwest Traders consists of managing IT across the entire enterprise. We're a 24x7 operation, and our IT has to be able to keep up. Our mission as a company is to develop solutions that exceed our customers' expectations, and IT plays a pivotal role in our ability to deliver on that mission.

How important is technology to your business?

Technology, and IT in particular, is vital to our business. Customers want to provide a high level of service to their vendors, and they expect the same from us. Our ability to print labels and ship orders relies heavily on the availability of our technology and our data.

Our Mark Information System ERP runs our entire business: everything from inventory control and warehouse management to finance and purchasing. From the moment a pick release is received from a customer to when the payloads within that release are translated into an order, our ERP system manages the whole process—often running several orders at one time. And with the web service tools at our disposal, we can generate and receive orders in a variety of formats that seamlessly integrate with our customers' systems.

Prior to moving to the cloud, what were your objections to/perceptions of cloud computing?

For me, cloud computing seemed like a solution that just didn't fit with our business model. We met with a number of different cloud providers to design a virtual environment in a collocated data center. But after talking with these providers, I felt that the expense was prohibitive, and I wasn't confident that any of the providers really understood the needs of my business. All proposed vendors backed off once they came to fully understand our requirements in the context of D3/Mark.

At one point, I had come very close to signing with another cloud provider for collocation. They would provide the space, the HVAC and the data line, but I would have had to pay for and provide my own equipment. On top of that, they weren't very forthright in sharing information, including what their redundant systems were like or what my bandwidth charges would be for data. That level of service was just inadequate for what our business needs were and continue to be.

Why did you decide to move your data and applications to the Zumasys Cloud?

With our old system, we were constantly monitoring our storage and server components. The equipment was close to 10 years old, so components were failing all the time. It was expensive to keep on its feet, and I knew I was going to have to do something. I was looking into the cost of investing in a new server and new storage, and it did not look pretty. Just to get a single IBM Power Series 7 server with the new storage would have cost north of \$100K—not including the professional services to install it.

The other problem was maintenance. I was having daily concerns about whether I was going to come in to work and find our server dead on arrival. There are four employees in our IT department, and we did not have the bandwidth to handle that kind of instability.

Finding Zumasys bordered on a miracle. In 2013, I attended my first Mark user group event. Dave McCary from Zumasys approached me, and after learning about our needs, he seemed convinced that Zumasys had a solution for me. He provided a proposal that made my jaw hit the floor. I was excited—almost giddy—at the prospect of finally being able to get into the cloud with Zumasys. I just couldn't believe that it would be possible.

In the number of conversations that I had with Dave and the other technical staff at Zumasys, they showed me how the technologies in the Zumasys cloud aligned perfectly with ours. They really brought me to the point where I was confident that this was a good solution for us. Being able to move into a managed, virtual data center environment with an SLA that would make me and my customers happy was a very exciting prospect.

How has moving to the Zumasys Cloud impacted your business?

Today, both our ERP solution and our web services are entirely run out of the Zumasys cloud in the SUPERNAP data center. And since we started with Zumasys in June 2014, I've been able to sleep a little bit better at night. Our employees have noted significantly improved throughput, and the performance of the solution is wonderful.

I love the pay-per-use model because it puts more cash in my pocket. I'm paying for storage used and my spot in the data center, plus an hourly support cost per month. It is a far cry from the \$100K I would have spent just to refresh our server.

Then there's the improved availability of the Zumasys solution. We have customers that cannot tolerate us being offline for more than four hours—ever. If our old infrastructure had experienced an outage that caused us to be offline for more than that period of time, it would have seriously compromised our relationship with our customers and endangered our business. With Zumasys, we no longer have to worry about downtime, and we can give our customers the SLAs they need to trust us and grow their business with us.



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"I LOVE THE PAY-PER-USE MODEL BECAUSE IT PUTS MORE CASH IN MY POCKET."

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