

Logicalis Implements a Quick and Convenient Backup for Kwik Trip



Kwik Trip, Inc had challenges that most retailers would love to face. Based in La Crosse, Wisconsin, Kwik Trip operates 313 convenience stores along with 47 Tobacco Outlets in the upper Midwest. Despite a soft economy, Kwik Trip is opening 15 new stores a year; and its same-store sales are growing by 10 percent annually. Kwik Trip also operates its own dairy, ice cream plant, bakery, commissary, distribution center, and fleet maintenance shop. “Our vertical integration is one of the reasons for our success,” says Ed Strahs, Director of Information Technology (IT). “It keeps our costs lower, and gives us better control over the products we sell in our stores.”

However, Kwik Trip’s growth and vertical integration create challenges, including an increasingly complex IT environment. The company runs core business applications on two IBM iSeries servers but has 25 Intel® servers that Kwik Trip uses for other critical functions such as email and office applications. Recently, Kwik Trip added servers for help desk and warehouse management. Kwik Trip backed up its Intel servers onto tape, one at a time, and its IBM iSeries to tape using standard system tools. During the backup, critical functions were unavailable for hours at a time. Backup administration was taking several hours a week.

Kwik Trip turned to Logicalis for help to automate the company’s backup. Logicalis created a backup solution consisting of Tivoli Storage Management (TSM) software, an IBM pSeries server, and an IBM tape library. The new technology has radically simplified Kwik Trip’s backup procedures and reduced backup times by more than half. And the company will recover its investment in less than two years thanks to lower costs.

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Kwik Trip’s old backup procedures weren’t scaling to match its growth. “When I came here five years ago, we had just a couple of servers,” says Network Manager Sue Brogaard. “Now we’re up to 25 servers, most of them running Windows NT® or 2000, and a couple running UNIX®.”

Kwik Trip needed a fast, automated, multi-platform solution that would let the company backup its iSeries and Intel servers to a single storage repository. Tivoli Storage Manager filled the bill perfectly. And the decision to work with Logicalis to implement the solution was an easy decision. “I’ve been working with Logicalis ever since I came here nine years ago,” says Ed Strahs, Director of Information Technology for Kwik Trip. “They’ve been a really good business partner for us.”

In addition to supplying the hardware and software, Logicalis configured the solution. “Tivoli Storage Manager is a policies-based product,” explains Logicalis Area Sales Director Kevin Lawler. “How long do you keep backups? How many versions? You have to bring this all the way down to the file level. We bring the experience to get that done.”

Kwik Trip’s new backup solution addresses the company’s need for speed, simplicity, and capability. “As we grow, we can add disk capacity to the pSeries backup server, and more tape drives to the tape library,” Mr. Strahs states. Over a two-year period, Kwik Trip expects to save more than \$125,000 in costs for software, backup tapes, and staffing time. Most important, the new system expands the number of hours when IT services are available—offering Kwik Trip’s users extended hours like those its retail customers enjoy. “We’re a convenience store,” Mr. Strahs says. “It’s our job to be convenient.”