

SAVE MART SUPERMARKETS

Customer

Save Mart Supermarkets

Industry

Grocery Retailing

Challenge

- Replace costly proprietary vendor solutions with proven open source solutions
- Find a powerful, flexible database that can easily scale over time
- Manage daily time and attendance data for 20,000+ employees

Solution

- Open source software
- Ingres Database

Benefits

- New Economics of IT ensures significant cost savings now and in the future
- Solution is simple to scale as company grows
- No licensing fees
- Better service and support
- Adoption of Ingres Database and other open source software has contributed to IT savings of more than 50% in comparison to the proprietary software that was replaced

Save Mart Saves Smart With Open Source Software

HIGHLIGHTS

A privately held food chain headquartered in Modesto, CA, Save Mart Supermarkets opened its doors in 1952. Today, it operates more than 245 stores throughout Northern California and Northern Nevada under the Save Mart, S-Mart Foods, Lucky, and FoodMaxx banners. Three warehouses and a trucking fleet are also part of this multi-billion-dollar grocery chain. For a business-critical application that tracks the hours and attendance of 20,000-plus employees, Save Mart Supermarkets chose Ingres Database, the leading independent open source database that helps organizations develop and manage business-critical applications at an affordable costs. Picked for its proven performance, customer service, flexibility, and open source advantages, Ingres Database and the New Economics of IT help Save Mart do more with less. In conjunction with other open source solutions, Ingres Database has contributed to IT savings of more than 50% in comparison to the proprietary software that was replaced.

CHALLENGE

Even in the best of times, grocery business profit margins are razor thin – with absolutely no room for unnecessary spending. This cost-conscious corporate culture is what first drove James Sims, Save Mart Supermarket’s Chief Information Officer, to explore open source software. As CIO for California’s second-largest grocery chain, Sims is responsible for maintaining a lean IT budget as well as a high-performance IT infrastructure. At the beginning of 2009, Sims was asked to review his expenses to identify any cost reduction opportunities. Ultimately, he was able to trim both CapEx and OpEx expenses in almost equal amounts—representing 13% of the operating budget.

Because Save Mart historically relied on proprietary vendor solutions for many years, Sims’ IT department spent a significant portion of its annual budget on licensing fees, as well as maintenance, service, and support costs. When Save Mart acquired stores from Albertsons in 2007, the size of the grocery chain literally doubled in size—but the number of software licenses did not, because licenses were not included in the acquisition. That’s when the high price of Save Mart’s proprietary software solutions became even more unacceptable. Sims had to make a choice: commit even more of his IT budget to ever-escalating license and maintenance fees, or accelerate his group’s strategy for integrating open source into their systems. He chose the latter.

SOLUTION

One of Save Mart’s initial open source projects was a time-and-attendance tracking application that gathers and aggregates data on more than 20,000 employees’ in-and-out time-card punches. Instead of going with their proprietary database solution, Save Mart chose Ingres Database to manage the data. “This is a very important application for Save Mart,” said Sims. “If we had any

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- James Sims,
CIO, Save Mart

substantial errors or delays in compensating employees, we could be exposed to hefty state and union penalties. So we have no room for mistakes.”

Ingres Database is not the only open source software being integrated into Save Mart systems. Sims’ team has also adopted SuSe Linux, MySQL, and Hobbit open-source monitoring. Together, these changes have contributed to over 50% in IT savings in comparison to the proprietary software that was replaced. “The economics of commercial open source makes so much sense,” said Sims. “We only pay for what we need, when we need it. And we don’t have to sacrifice quality, performance, or any investment we’ve made in legacy software.”

RESULTS

Sims and his team are quite pleased with the performance of Ingres Database in the hours-and-attendance tracking application. “Ingres

is the perfect solution,” said Sims. “It has the reliability of a proven product. And it enables us to do more at a lower cost and with more flexibility to adapt to the market conditions.” Sims looks forward to integrating Ingres Database into other Save Mart processes. “The tracking application is not gigantic,” he said, “but it’s working very efficiently. I would not hesitate to implement Ingres Database in a much larger-scale solution.” Reliable performance, cost-effectiveness, and flexibility are not the only benefits Sims enjoys with Ingres Database. “We get better service and support with open source and Ingres.”

By integrating open source solutions into its IT infrastructure, Save Mart has been positively impacted by the New Economics of IT. “Open source is profoundly less expensive,” says Sims. He estimates that open source adoption across his enterprise has contributed to an IT savings of over 50% in comparison to the proprietary software that he replaced.

About Ingres Corporation

Ingres is the leading open source database management company. We are the world’s second largest open source company and the pioneer of The New Economics of IT, providing open source solutions at dramatically reduced cost than proprietary software vendors. As a leader in The New Economics of IT, Ingres delivers low cost and accelerated innovation to its more than 10,000 customers worldwide.

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