

# Turning Your IBM System i into a Time Machine: *Nippon Express and CCSS Show How it's Done*

## Super-Sizing Efficiency in Lean Environments

As the spectre of recession begins its inevitable and indiscriminate creep into boardrooms, CEO's begin to scan the body of the organisation, looking for areas in which to trim the fat that might sustain them through the tough times. So how do IT Managers justify and protect their existing budgets and prove their System i environment can punch above its weight? Simple – they turn their System i into a time machine.

Within the heart of any logistics organisation beats a ticking clock – to say it is a time sensitive industry is an understatement. Based in New York, Nippon Express (USA) Inc, part of the global logistics heavyweight, Nippon Express, has built an enviable reputation on reliable and competitive logistics services for land, sea and air transportation and distribution. For Nippon, the clock is always ticking in line with customer expectations; increasing efficiency translates to raising customer expectations and profit margins. They utilise two IBM System i 825's to support over 1,500 users.

Nippon already operated a 'trim' systems management team and struggled to meet the demands this entailed. Shin Nakamura, Systems Analyst at Nippon, explains, "We had great processing power and reliability with the 825 boxes but were not passing on those benefits to our user community and customers. We needed the tools that would help us do more, with less resource. In short, we needed more time! That's the challenge we presented to CCSS and together, that's exactly what we've achieved."

## Proactive Monitoring

CCSS, the (System i) systems management specialist, recognised that these problems had become a barrier to increasing efficiency and recommended three solutions to resolve these problems: QSystem Monitor, QMessage Monitor and QRemote Control. These would help implement a new approach to managing their systems that was consistent with their time sensitive needs.

QSystem Monitor has helped to eliminate the reactive monitoring state through a real-time, centralised view of critical performance parameters across all partitions. With system visibility at 100%, the team is able to double what it delivered with the same ISD resources. Their old manual checklist has been ditched in favour of automated monitoring and allows them to catch issues ahead of time - effectively resetting the clock in their favour. Users no longer highlight problems, productivity is not impacted and the organisation is maximising its systems for best efficiency. Millions of deleted records have been removed thanks to disk space monitoring and distribution queue monitors have led to an 84% improvement on the time saved at branch and 84% improvement on time to receive DI data. The team now easily shares the results of the systems' performance turnaround with upper management.

## Resolving the Application Situation

Nippon's business applications allow users to log, track and manage each scheduled customer delivery. With the user community stretching across 67 branch locations, serving 55 cities in USA, Canada and Mexico, application availability and efficiency is crucial. Nakamura explains, "If our system failed during off-hours, our business operation would effectively stop. The impact on the air transportation business would be extreme. Even in a less serious situation where the users are impacted due to an application delay, productivity and revenue could be reduced. These are the situations we needed to avoid."

Programmers had no fast means of responding to messages relating to applications. Now QMM's automated monitoring, filtering and escalation procedures flag urgent messages and send them directly to the person responsible for resolution, rather than the entire team. Users benefit as the immediate response reduces delays. Nakamura says, "Our real-time view on performance and messages has reduced downtime and saved our team countless hours that were spent monitoring manually. Our operators now spend 87% less time monitoring the system – that's an incredible gain. For us, saving time is saving money, so it's very worthwhile."



## For Every Inaction, There is a Reaction

QMM's event monitor alerts managers when a scheduled event does not occur, e.g. tape back ups. 12 separate escalations to 12 different groups are utilised for precise problem allocation/resolution during office hours giving more accountability per person, per issue. Out-of-hours, messages are sent via SMS text. Nakamura says, "A recent hardware failure message was immediately identified by QMM and we were able to resolve it. Previously, there would have been no way to respond as quickly and we would have certainly experienced downtime. We expected a ROI payback on the CCSS solutions in an 11 month period, but after 7 months, we already have substantial measurable results – we're very pleased."

With QRemote Control completing the systems management install, Nippon has a fast and effective means of responding to issues without using laptops. This has virtually eliminated their weekend monitoring hours. Managers respond by running commands and programs directly from their mobile device and the burden of being 'on-call' is greatly reduced.

Increasing efficiency through a proactive systems management approach has saved Nippon significant man-hours and potential downtime. These benefits directly impact the management team, their user community and customers. Nippon's lean and highly productive network now looks fit to outpace any economic uncertainty and keep on delivering.

By Greer Hahn

For more information on CCSS products visit:

Website: [www.ccsltd.com](http://www.ccsltd.com)



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