Goya Foods, Inc.

# Switch from Laser Disk to Hard Disk, Proof of Delivery Reduces Response Time

Switching from a custom laser-disk-based proof of delivery system to packaged software that stores images on hard disk has reduced response time from minutes to seconds at Goya Foods. In the past employees had to wait to call up historical data because the jukebox had to switch disks for nearly every request. In an effort to eliminate the bottleneck, the company switched to a new archiving system that stores both scanned images and computer-generated reports onto hard disk for much faster retrieval. "Now we can call up any document in a matter of seconds no matter how many people are using the system," said David Kinkela, Vice President of Information Systems for Goya Foods. "The time savings have improved customer service by making it possible for our reps to spend less time researching and more time with customers. We save additional time by being able to search through computer-generated reports, such as drivers' commissions, along with delivery receipts and other scanned documents in a single search. By switching to packaged software we have also eliminated the need to upgrade and maintain the custom software that we used in the past."

The largest Hispanic-owned food company in the United States, Goya Foods employs more than 2,000 people worldwide. The company was founded in 1936 by Spanish immigrants Prudencio and Carolina Unanue who began by importing authentic Spanish products, such as olives, olive oil and sardines, and selling them to New York's growing Hispanic population. More than 60 years later, Goya has become a leading provider of rice, beans, seasonings, nectars and authentic Latino specialties. Goya products are distributed from coast to coast and beyond to customers from all ethnic backgrounds who seek great-tasting and quality food products. Still family-owned, Goya Foods is led by Joseph A. Unanue, President, and six third-generation members of the founding family. Goya today operates more than 13 facilities throughout the U.S., Caribbean and Europe.

### Previous paper and laser disk based systems

The vast majority of the company's business applications run on an IBM AS/400 host. Customer service representatives enter orders into the AS/400. Invoices are then printed and distributed to the drivers that deliver products to customers. When the customers take delivery of the products, they sign the invoices to verify they have received them. At the end of the day the driver returns the invoices to the office. Often, customers have after-the-fact questions about a delivery. In the past it was a very time-consuming job to go through the filing cabinets in search of the invoices that were needed to resolve customer questions. Sometimes, invoices were misfiled or otherwise lost. In this situation the company would often lose revenues because it was unable to substantiate delivery of the product. Another problem was the growing number of people and space required to operate the filing system.

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David Kinkela
VP of Information Systems
Goya Foods, Inc.

**Industry:**

Distribution



**Metafile Solution:**

Proof-of-Delivery
Customer Service
AS/400 Integration

**Goya Foods Corporate Profile:**

Largest Hispanic-owned food company in US

Employs more than 2,000 people worldwide and operates more than 13 facilities

**METAFILE**
Capture
Organize
Index
Deliver

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In an effort to resolve these issues Kinkela commissioned the development of a custom proof of delivery system based on a laser-disk storage system. When the drivers returned to the company's plant, the signed invoices were scanned and stored on laser disks. In turn, 50 laser disks were kept in a jukebox that could move any one of them into the drive when needed to service a user request. Customer service reps called up images of the invoices by typing the invoice number into the customer software application. In most cases the customer didn't have the invoice number so the service rep needed to call the accounts receivable department and ask them to look it up. Once they typed in the invoice number, there was often a considerable delay, up to 5 to 10 minutes, before they actually saw the image of the invoice on their screen. This delay was caused by several factors including the need to wait while other requests were processed, the need to load a new disk into the drive, and the relatively slow access and read times of laser disks.

### Move to an off-the-shelf solution

"While the laser disk system provided major advantages over paper filing," Kinkela said, "we still saw considerable room for improvement. The biggest concern was the amount of time that it took our customer service reps to call up images from the system. A secondary concern was the amount of time and money that was involved in maintaining the custom imaging system. A local reseller, Strategic Business Systems (Strategic) of Ramsey, New Jersey presented an alternative that seemed to have a lot of advantages. Metafile's Metaviewer Enterprise imaging solution is an economical, off-the-shelf solution to proof of delivery that stores images on hard disk where they can be accessed much more quickly than by laser disk. I also like the fact that Metafile offers a COLD system that archives reports from the AS/400 so that they can be searched from the same interface and even in the same search as the scanned documents. The system supports a wide range of standard hardware so we have been able to continue using our old scanners. Strategic introduced me to several other route delivery firms that had implemented the solution, and I heard nothing but good things. So I made the decision to move ahead and implement the new solution."

With the assistance of Strategic, Kinkela implemented the new software to take advantage of the ability of the AS/400 to print bar codes on each record. The scanner reads the bar codes and then accesses the host computer to obtain other information for each invoice including the customer numbers, store numbers, broker numbers, product group and day of delivery. This saves time by eliminating the need to type in the invoice number for each invoice when it is scanned. It also makes it possible for the service reps to access the images based on whatever information they have available, eliminating the need to call accounts receivable for the information. When the scanning is completed, a special report is run on the AS/400 that includes all invoice numbers that were on the trip. This report is matched against the report from Metaviewer that indicates the invoice numbers that were scanned from the trip. Although Goya has not yet implemented it, Metaviewer also has the capability to automatically update the host record when the invoice is automatically update the host record when the invoice is scanned.

### Service reps save time

"The most important advantage of the new software is the time that it saves for our customer service reps," Kinkela said. "Instead of having to first locate the invoice number and then wait for the laser disk drive to serve up the image, they can get a copy of any invoice just by typing in whatever information they have on hand, such as the customer number or delivery date. These time savings help us to improve service to our customers. Instead of taking down the customer information and promising to call them back, our reps can usually resolve issues without even putting the customer on hold. They put the time they save on researching invoices to use by spending more time on the phone resolving customer issues."

After successfully implementing the imaging system, Goya began using Metaviewer COLD to archive a number of AS/400 reports, such as drivers and brokers commissions, that were previously stored in filing cabinets for reference. Metafile's Windows-based, menu-driven download software manages the downloading of host spool files from the AS/400. The program works by reading the spool file and converting it to the compact, searchable file format that resides on the Windows NT server. "Instead of searching through cabinets to find the right report and then paging through the document for the information they need, our people can get answers in seconds simply by typing in any text that appears in the record they are looking for," Kinkela said.

Kinkela added that the fact that the new software is continually upgraded and supported by its developer provides welcome relief from the challenges of maintaining the previous custom system. "In the past we had to pay the full price of coding for every little change we made to the system," he said. "Now we are continually getting improvements, and the only additional cost is a small maintenance fee. All in all, we have seen major improvements in many different areas of our organization since we have implemented the new software."

For more information, contact Strategic Business Systems, Inc., 17 South Franklin Turnpike, Ramsey, NJ 07446. Call Strategic 1 (800)-727-7260 or e-mail info@sbsusa.com. Visit Strategic on the Web at http://www.sbsusa.com.

> "Instead of searching through cabinets to find the right report and then paging through the document for the information they need, our people can get the answers in seconds simply by typing in any text that appears in the record they are looking for."