

## Marathon Helps the World's Top Logistics Freight Forwarder Stay Ahead of Competition

### PROFILE

Japan's leading travel agency and global leader in international logistics

### ENVIRONMENT

Marathon everRun FT™ software  
IBM AS400 servers  
Sumisho servers

### WINDOWS APPLICATION

Windows Server 2003

### THE COMPANY

Founded in 1948, Hankyu Express International is Japan's leading travel agency with more than 2,300 employees and over \$4.5 million in capital. The company is also a global leader in international logistics with a complete portfolio of services ranging from traditional air and ocean forwarding to full spectrum logistics (including kitting, minor assembly, and order fulfillment).

### THE SITUATION: SERVE CUSTOMER FREIGHT NEEDS ONLINE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

To improve satisfaction and convenience, Hankyu wanted to develop a Web-based system that would allow its customers to place, track and monitor shipments online, at any time.

Kimihisa Takasugi, Chief of the System Development Section, describes the challenge: "Until a few years ago, we had been processing forwarding requests in writing. But in the last couple of years, we have been

receiving more and more user comments saying that paper-based systems are a hassle." The Web-based system had to eliminate the disadvantages of conventional paper-based processing while enhancing ease-of-use.

But there was an important opportunity for market distinction as well. "The online processing of freight administration is still uncommon in the distribution industry," says Takasugi. "Providing our customers with a convenient system ahead of competitors is a great advantage to Hankyu Express."

### SOLUTION: DEFEND 24/7 OPERATIONS WITH MARATHON EVERRUN FT™ SOFTWARE

The Hankyu International Cargo Operation System, or HICOS, is based on an IBM AS400 server that communicates with database servers and front-end Web servers to manage all freight information. Through ordinary Web browsers, customers can access HICOS immediately to place forwarding orders and to monitor their progress. As a virtual front desk, the Web server reduces the need for time and

# MARATHON

Run to Infinity

# Success Story

resource intensive exchanges between Hankyu administrative staff and customers.

The primary consideration, however, is reliability – the system must be available at all times. “Even though the system is easy to use, it is totally useless if it does not work when needed,” says Chiaki Nakata, the manager in charge of HICOS. “In order to maximize the advantages of an online system – anytime, anywhere and promptly – nonstop failure tolerance was our top goal and absolute necessity.”

Tomoo Kaneko, Corporate Communication Manager, confirms the mission. “To realize the basic concept of ‘accessible and available for use when required,’” Kaneko says, “we believe that a failure-tolerant server solution is an absolute necessity.” Toward that goal, Hankyu tested the everRun FT™ software on Sumisho Computer System servers. When the installation went smoothly and the tests demonstrated reliability, the software was deployed for HICOS.

## RESULTS: ELIMINATION OF SYSTEM FAILURE AND INCREASED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The everRun FT™ software ensures that the Web server – which functions as the system’s customer support desk – runs reliably without suspension of work due to system failures. “If our Web system

stops, all shipments would likely stop immediately,” says Michio Kubota, the HICOS manager in the Logistics Planning Department. “Given that we have customers all over the world, we must make sure the system continues to run 24 hours a day. The everRun FT™ software has dispelled all these concerns.”

Kaneko appreciates the way HICOS has improved Hankyu’s relationships with its customers. “We intend to use this mechanism for various purposes, but first of all, we want to demonstrate to as many customers as possible the convenience of the system,” says Kaneko. In addition, the success of HICOS, based on its 24-hour reliability, opens new opportunities for competitive advantage. “We also hope to enhance services which satisfy customers. Because we constructed this state-of-the-art logistics communication system ahead of our competitors, we believe that the system will serve as the key to increasing our business. We will expand uses in the future.”

- Ensures uninterrupted operation of Web-based freight service management system
- Improves customer satisfaction
- Reduces administrative burdens
- Helps create competitive advantage

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