Wolverine Packing based in Detroit, Michigan, has been processing and distributing a full line of meat products for more than 60 years. With a 110,000 square-foot state-of-the-art facility and approximately 500 employees, it is one of the nation's largest food distributors of meat products to the wholesale, retail, and food services industries. Wolverine provides services which include prepackaging, processing, private labeling, portion control, steak cutting, and national distribution.

Server Downtime Means Loss of Inventory and Inability to Function

In the food industry, any type of business interruption represents a potential catastrophe. Large plants process, store, and move tens of thousands of pounds of meat product on any given day. Plants must be able to fulfill, ship, and deliver customer orders virtually nonstop or risk massive amounts of spoiled product. The emergence of enterprise IT systems has allowed companies like Wolverine Packing to handle larger volumes of business without sacrificing quality or safety. But enterprise computing has also introduced a new set of challenges: how to perform scheduled maintenance without interrupting operations and what to do when disaster strikes.

"Perishable product has got to get out the door," says John Kuriwchak, IT manager at Wolverine. "For our system to even be down for a day, it would put us behind quite a bit. We’d have to manually ship product, and corrupted information would take a long time to recoup."

iCluster Removes "What If" from the Equation

Even though Kuriwchak says that the main server at Wolverine is sturdy, the owner of the company asked him what would happen if a box went down. He knew then that he needed a high availability backup and disaster recovery system, and Rocket's iCluster solution, which was developed to give businesses complete assurance that primary server outages would have minimal—if any—impact on mission-critical operations, would be that system.
World-Class Support, Service, and Training Prove Critical

Soon after implementing iCluster, Kuriwchak realized that he had not only purchased a superior product, but had also entered into a true partnership. As he brought the new system online, the iCluster support team was with him every step of the way, and when Wolverine later decided to migrate to a faster primary server, he had less than two days to replicate all of the enterprise data at Wolverine onto a backup system that would allow them to continue operations during the switchover. The iCluster support team was there for him again. “We had to save all of our data on a Sunday and, within a few minutes, we were syncing,” Kuriwchak says. In fact, Kuriwchak was so impressed with his partners at Rocket that he convinced his management team to send him to an iCluster training course in Massachusetts.

After the course, he was able to easily perform a replication from one backup to another “right off the checklist.” But the biggest test came one evening at 8 p.m. a few months later. A piece of hardware on the production server at Wolverine malfunctioned, and he learned that it would take almost a day for a replacement part to arrive. So Kuriwchak went to work.

“With iCluster, I got the entire backup system up and running by 10 p.m. with all of our sync objects up to date,” he says. “We ran the business on the backup system until the following week, when we were able to switch back over. I thanked my boss up and down for sending me to the training. It helped us avert a disaster.”

The IT Director at Wolverine, Cheryl Geesey, says that a highly engaged support team is especially critical for a backup or disaster recovery system. “With most third-party software, you usually know the solution and have an established relationship with the vendor,” Geesey says. “With something like disaster recovery, you hope you never have to use it. But if a disaster happens, you need to know what you’re going to get in terms of support.”