



creating a recipe for success

**Famous Family-Owned Bakery Taps
New Jersey IT Services Company
Exigent Technologies to Expand Operations**

Carlo's Bakery master baker and national reality show celebrity Buddy Valastro has built his reputation and baking empire on a family tradition of creating the best-tasting, highest-quality wedding cakes, specialty cakes and baked goods in New Jersey. So when the time came to expand the business to include a 30,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art cake factory, and say "arrivederci!" to its old-school back-office operations, Valastro and his family knew a cookie-cutter IT solution provider wasn't going to work. "We built a first-class facility, laid the network cables, had our telephony solution ready—but we were missing that core IT infrastructure that brings it all together and needed help," explains Leo Minervini, the company's VP of technology. Fortunately for Minervini, the help he was looking for was already knocking on his door, leaving him voicemails and now sitting on his desk.

Calling in the Order

A fan of the hit TV show "Cake Boss," Rob Kornbluh, senior account executive at Exigent Technologies, noticed early on that there wasn't a computer in sight at Carlo's Bakery, which was hard to believe given the bakery's widely publicized expansion plans and growing success. So Rob did what any good, locally-based sales guy would do – he picked up the phone and cold called the bakery.

"After a little detective work and a lot of persistence, Rob's efforts finally paid off, and his message landed on the right person's desk and got Leo's attention," recalls Daniel J. Haurey, president and CEO of Exigent. "We were excited when we got the call back from Leo and request to meet."

"People are fascinated by the show and the bakery, so I get pitched every day," says Minervini. "But, in this case, the timing was perfect and Rob's tone was genuine."

Everyone else came through the door selling equipment, Minervini explains. "They didn't sit down and talk to us about our business and what we needed," he says. "Exigent earned our business every step of the way. From the very first call, the team showed us true enthusiasm and had the technology expertise we were looking for in an IT services provider."

Starting from Scratch

For more than 100 years the bakery used pen and paper to run the operations, but with its explosive growth and national success, introducing technology to help build and manage the Valastro empire became a priority.

"We were starting from scratch, and this was our opportunity to truly build a technology foundation for our business that would serve us well no matter how far we grow – even beyond our best projections," says Minervini. "Investing in IT and selecting a local IT service provider wasn't a decision we took lightly and we were determined to get it done right the first time."

Tom Szabo, the Exigent Technologies solutions architect who ushered Carlo's Bakery through the decision and deployment process, says the bakery had several goals for folding technology into the business.

The first goal was around growth: "Anyone who's been to the original Hoboken bakery location can tell you there's no way to cram even another cannoli into the shop, much less introduce a fleet of servers," Szabo says.

"The Lackawanna expansion was absolutely essential to the bakery's growth, and what was great was that Leo and his team saw IT as an enabler and understood why the company needed

to convert from a handful of disparate laptops to a full technology infrastructure that was future-proofed,” says Szabo.

Scalability was the second goal. “Carlo’s Bakery has big plans and is anticipating increased e-commerce offerings and merchandising opportunities moving forward, so having a back-end infrastructure that could accommodate a multitude of business applications was a must,” says Szabo. Luckily, the sheer size of the Lackawanna location enabled the Exigent team to deploy the new infrastructure with a lot of breathing room.

Minervini also noted he wanted an IT environment that would assure maximum uptime and redundancy so the bakery could achieve its final goal: to enhance the overall customer experience and continue to deliver exceptional service.

To simplify management of the PCs, printers and applications within both locations, Exigent utilized Microsoft’s Deployment Toolkit to create “golden” images for each user’s desktop, enabling rapid restoration capabilities for PCs — a marked upgrade for Carlo’s employees. Prior to the infrastructure deployment, every user was independently leveraging laptops, completely siloed from other users and with no backup copies of their files. Today, bakery employees share files on a central, fully redundant server, and enjoy a standard user experience from computer to computer.

“They now have the ability to pull the image of any user’s machine off the network, and have a failed machine up and running in minutes,” explains Haurey. Carlo’s Bakery also can file-share on a central server infrastructure, providing the foundation for future growth.

“Exigent gives us the right resources and the right expertise — backed by their full support— to help us exceed our goals and keep the company focused on the business.”

Leo Minervini, vice president of technology, Carlo’s Bakery



“Ensuring a positive and memorable customer experience has always been a top priority for Carlo’s Bakery and we wanted the technology to enhance that experience, not distract from it or replace it,” says Minervini.

Selecting the Right Ingredients

To meet the business needs Minervini outlined, Exigent Technologies deployed a state-of-the-art virtualized network infrastructure equipped with PCs, Macs, laptops, printers, security software, servers, and a storage area network (SAN). The solution was rolled out in several phases and required coordinating products and solutions from industry-leading vendors, including VMware, Apple, HP, Lenovo, Microsoft, Trend Micro, Lexmark, and Brother.

Phase 1 included creating the robust, highly available VMware vSphere environment. Once it was complete, Exigent took the solution into production, launching four virtual machines to support the bakery’s domain, handle its shared files, house a database for the impending point-of-sale system, and run applications. A fresh Active Directory compiled by Exigent was next in line: the Active Directory environment now sustains policies that govern IT and physical security system usage and makes it much easier to scale and manage the day-to-day operations.

With the virtual environment tested and in place, Exigent then tackled the redundancy portion of the solution, deploying its PREVENT™ managed backup and business continuity solution, which merged on-premise NAS with automated cloud backup. Carlo’s Bakery is also taking advantage of Exigent’s fixed-fee AS-SURANCE™ managed IT service plan which provides 24/7 remote monitoring and management of the bakery’s entire IT infrastructure, along with help desk and onsite support.

“The bakery considers Lackawanna [Jersey City] to be its hub, and as it grows, any other locations will be spokes that connect back to that base infrastructure,” says Haurey. “That is one reason we crafted such a robust foundation; the bakery wants all data and transactions to be secure in the Lackawanna system, no matter how or where they might expand.”

Haurey and Szabo say the next step for Carlo’s entails provisioning additional applications, namely coordinating the point-of-sale needs of the bakery and any of its peripheral locations to ensure all the data and transactions are housed securely in the Lackawanna infrastructure. Additionally, Exigent now functions as a strategic technology partner for Carlo’s Bakery, supporting it from the help-desk level up through its strategic growth and expansion plans.

A Partnership that Takes the Cake

Minervini says the relationship has matured into exactly what he hoped for when he first returned Kornbluh’s message. “I’m not in the business of maintaining servers and supporting an IT department, I’m in the business of sustaining and supporting the bakery’s business and adding value that helps keep our customers happy,” says Minervini. “Exigent gives us the right resources and the right expertise — backed by their full support— to help us exceed our goals and keep the company focused on the business.”

