



The project

An enterprise-level healthcare insurance company based in Seattle, Washington, found its desktop support department understaffed for an upcoming computer refresh project. PCs currently used by the helpdesk were not functioning well and the client's IT staff could not troubleshoot in a timely manner. In addition, a subset of the PCs was unable to support the imminent deployment of new applications.

The challenge

Replace more than 2000 desktop computers within a short time frame and with limited manpower, without disrupting the daily workflow of the desktop support team.

The solution

The Zones account executive quickly assessed multiple aspects of the PC deployment project, conferring with the health insurance corporation and the Zones Professional Services team.

After several meetings, the client's desktop management team assigned the PC project and ownership of full lifecycle services to the Zones Professional Services team.

Zones exceeds expectations of Pacific Northwest Health Insurance Company

Lifecycle services include:

- Product procurement (desktops and laptops)
- Assistance with image creation and pre-imaging
- Development of scripts to migrate old PCs and data, settings, and more to new PCs
- Project management
- User interviews
- PC installation and migration
- Asset management
- Old/obsolete PC disposition
- Post-installation support

Without delay, the Zones team collaborated on a statement of work (SOW) to address

each area of responsibility, ensuring that expectations would be met during each step of the process. Zones sales and purchasing teams worked closely to secure the number of PCs necessary for the project to help maintain image integrity and minimize changes. Zones procured and stored products in its warehouse in preparation for imaging and future deployment.

Testing phase

Zones Professional Services staff worked with the healthcare client's desktop management team to create the desktop and laptop images that would meet the client's requirements. After an image was developed,

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Client:

A large, leading provider of healthcare insurance and services in Seattle, Washington.

IT Project:

Procure, configure and replace more than 2000 PCs and laptops.

Challenge:

Procuring, imaging and installing the correct number of PCs and laptops without disrupting the workflow of the client's understaffed IT support team.

Solution:

Zones' Professional Services Team created a detailed timeline that outlined areas of responsibility and milestones that needed to be met at each stage. The Zones team installed 2000 computers within three months, six months sooner than the insurance company estimated it could achieve using its own IT staff.

Results:

Zones successfully replaced more than 2000 desktops and laptops for this large health insurance client in record time without disrupting the workflow of client's IT team. The PC deployment project included image creation and pre-imaging, which saved the IT department up to six months of work in imaging alone. The Zones team also managed the project, developed scripts for data migration, conducted end user interviews, installed the PCs, set-up ongoing asset management, and delivered post-installation support. Outmoded PCs were assessed and resold where possible for the benefit of the client.

PC Deployment & ITAD

Connecting Healthcare and Technology

a small portion of desktops and laptops were deployed to the client's production environments for User Acceptance Testing (UAT).

Through UAT, modifications were made to the image, preparing it for the Zones integration lab where imaging could begin en masse. During the same time, Zones and the health insurance client's infrastructure team worked together to establish a T1 connection to Zones integration lab via virtual private network (VPN), allowing for final customizations to occur before final product delivery to the client site.

In the Zones integration lab, each PC was imaged and then connected to the client's Active Directory (AD) environment across the VPN tunnel. Zones segmented a specific portion of its LAN lab to the client's domain. Zones technicians joined the AD domain, applied final changes and were also able to upload additional applications specific to each end user (per group policies) via the Microsoft SMS server at Zones. Finally, Zones technicians connected to the client's encryption server and encrypted each laptop drive prior to shipping.

Pilot installations and training

Before deployments began, two pilot installs were executed to test all developed scripts, processes and procedures. In addition, Zones deployment techs trained the insurance helpdesk staff on the new improvements. Once both parties signed off on the successful pilots, full implementation was authorized. By this time, weekly meetings were in place to review progress and validate expectations of costs and deadlines. End user interviews were conducted on site one to two weeks prior to installation dates.

Deployment of new computers

PC deployments occurred in the evenings to minimize interruption to business. After installation, techs interviewed the users with upgraded systems for advice on upcoming

installations and provided post installation support. Questions were answered and issues resolved to help minimize the number of calls being placed to the client's help desk and to provide users with first class desk-side service.

Asset management and disposition

In addition to the migration from old to new, Zones techs were responsible for helping maintain the client's asset management system. After each night of installs, critical asset information was captured and entered into this system.

A final critical component to the project was the client's ITAD (Information Technology Asset Disposition) process. During the user interview, process details were collected to help plan for ITAD handling. Zones assessed information to determine re-marketing value of the desktops and laptops prior to de-installation. Based on the re-marketing value (where existing), Zones facilitated the return of a portion of these proceeds. The healthcare insurance firm used these proceeds to help fund the ITAD processing that was performed (i.e., DOD data wipe, shipping, compliant disposal methods).

The benefits

Zones Professional Services assisted a leading provider of healthcare insurance and services with the planning, procurement, integration and migration of new systems, and asset disposition. Here are the key benefits the organization realized:

Abbreviated Project Schedule. With more than 2000 computers installed within 3 months, Zones shortened the 9-10 month installation period the insurance company anticipated when using their own IT staff. By allowing Zones to assist their current staff and delivering and installing the PCs, Zones reduced our client's workload, allowing them to focus on their current IT duties.

Custom Configurations. Zones used an imaging network to ensure the safety and security of data and applications. Once our customer finalized their reference image, Zones was able to image 600 PCs in our integration lab over a course of 3 months. This service saved our customer 5-6 months of imaging work and personnel deployment.

Long-Term Asset Management. Six weeks into the project, the Zones team was tasked with updating the customer's asset management system. Each evening, critical information was captured and entered into the client's database, including PC models, serial numbers, asset tag numbers, user IDs and other tracking information. This data was useful for project tracking, and the information is invaluable to the client for post-installation support and long-term asset management.

Lower Project Costs with ITAD: Zones ITAD teams assessed information to determine re-marketing value of desktops and notebooks prior to decommission of equipment. Based on re-marketing value, Zones facilitated a return of a portion of proceeds to the customer. In addition to protecting our environment, the company lowered project costs by using the funds to help cover the costs associated with ITAD processing, including DOD data wipes, shipping and disposal methods.