

Global Supply Chain as a Service



Zones helps a global semiconductor manufacturer implement one-stop rack integration and software solution implementation.

This client, a global manufacturer of semiconductors, works closely with other semiconductor manufacturers worldwide, which often presents global supply chain difficulties. The client needed to assemble racks to deliver products to its customers, both across the United States and globally – equipment on these racks includes Cisco UCS servers, Cisco Nexus and Catalyst switches, UPS, and KVM.

Zones was well-positioned to help improve this client's deployment processes because of the efficiency of our Technology Solution Centers and the expertise of our team. Zones set up new hardware to streamline implementation for the client and helped multiple delivery engineers tackle challenging projects.

As a result, the client has a much more efficient supply chain – and additionally, a Zones-implemented server imaging runbook helps expedite processes further. The client's project managers can easily coordinate changes to hardware specifications, hardware installation, and server imaging.



6 HyperV virtual machines installed.



0 downtime thanks to superior supply chain logistics.



Challenges

- Multiple short-notice orders required hardware ordering and assembly, plus software image installations.
- Because the client was still running legacy hardware, their engineering team had to install server images on top of inefficient, aged firmware.
- New rack build projects caused issues with scheduling the required delivery engineers.



Solutions

- Zones provided a jump server and trained multiple delivery engineers, making it easier to install software images on servers.
- Learning sessions with the client's engineers provided knowledge transfer and process best practices.
- Global Supply Chain as a Service (GSCaaS) helped untangle and streamline supply chain challenges.
- A strategy was developed to enhance the client's four-phase process for installing software images.



Results

- The client now has the visibility into potential supply chain disruptions, so they take care of any issues before they become a serious problem.
- The robust supply chain provided by Zones allows the client to ship hardware between their sites worldwide and other manufacturers quickly and efficiently.
- Server imaging runbook helps streamline changes to hardware specifications, hardware installation, and server imaging.

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The Challenge

The client was looking to overcome a few IT roadblocks. For starters, the company found it difficult to handle multiple simultaneous orders on short notice. This often required hardware ordering and assembly, not to mention software image installations, beyond the ability of their legacy hardware. As a workaround, their engineering team had to install a server image built for an old firmware or BIOS on a server with new firmware or BIOS, an arduous, time-consuming process. There was a lot of time spent waiting for approvals, and global supply chain issues also created inefficiencies for the client.

On top of that, new rack builds were often needed on short notice. This would cause issues with their supply chain, which caused problems with scheduling the required delivery engineer to the server imaging task. In short, efficiency was a challenge at every level and everything needed to be streamlined.

The Solution

Zones provided the client with a jump server located at one of their Technology Solution Centers, which allows the client's remote delivery engineers to log into servers from anywhere and cleared up scheduling issues. Zones held a series of training sessions for the client's engineers for knowledge transfer into process best practices and leveraged their Global Supply Chain as a Service (GSCaaS) solution to take the pressure off the delivery process. These steps, together, removed much of the time pressure the client was facing.

Additionally, Zones created a quality assurance plan for server firmware and BIOS compliance. This plan encompassed server imaging, hardware installation, cable labeling, port labeling, cable installation, and packaging. Not only that, but Zones established quarterly reviews of hardware and software installation requirements, making it easier for the client to manage upcoming changes to hardware or software images.

The client has a four-phase process for installing software images, which was reliable but slow and inefficient. Zones completely overhauled to client's imaging process, replacing it with a new solution that better addressed their business needs. The end solution covers each phase of the client's imaging with Windows Server installation, HyperV configuration across six virtual machines, and image installation for each machine.

The Results

The client's order and imaging processes have been streamlined and simplified. They now have end-to-end visibility into their supply chain, which allows them to make informed decisions on buying and shipping and avoid potential disruptions. Their engineers have the knowledge, experience, and expertise they need to maintain an efficient process worldwide.

Thanks to Zones' GSCaaS capabilities, supply chain issues are now a thing of the past. The client can ship hardware to any of their global sites or work in concert with their manufacturing partners, with zero downtime.

In addition, a server imaging runbook is now being maintained in collaboration with the client's in-house team of engineers. This helps streamline things significantly, as changes to hardware specifications, hardware installation, or server imaging are now simply managed by the project manager through change orders.

“Before contacting Zones, we knew how important a truly global supply chain was to a company of our size – but we didn't realize how investing in supply chain improvements could transform our business so completely. We're running at a completely different level thanks to Zones' solutions.”

– Director of IT, Global Semiconductor Manufacturer

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