



Zones executes a rapid cross-country data center move



Move a business-critical data center from Ohio to Massachusetts – in one weekend. In November 2011, an international IT security manufacturer decommissioned its data center in Dublin, Ohio. The client contracted Zones to relocate the new data center near Boston, Massachusetts, home to its existing national headquarters office. The goal of the move was to streamline and consolidate data center operations by using virtual server technology to reduce the number of servers needed to serve sales and clients.

The project

The technology client, based in Boston and Oxford, U.K., delivers high-quality IT security and data protection for businesses. This Zones client produced its first encryption and antivirus products in the 1980s, and today its products protect more than 100,000 businesses and 100 million users in more than 150 countries.

Data center relocation is complicated in any business environment. The IT security business had a particularly aggressive schedule, and its IT executives sought to make the transition to a new data center in a single weekend – all without disrupting business operations. The goal was to ensure the client's Microsoft® Exchange Servers, CRM systems, and other mission-critical applications were up and running first thing Monday morning, in time zones that spanned the globe.

The process

To achieve its data center move without disruption, the high tech manufacturer needed an IT partner that was experienced with server operations and had an understanding of how to keep key business processes operational during a short time frame. The client's IT staff already had worked with Zones for procurement, and knew that Zones engineers had the knowledge and capabilities in Microsoft Exchange, CRM, and server-management issues to guarantee that the IT security specialists did not miss a beat.

Zones and the global IT client's engineers mapped out requirements for the project, which included:

- Identifying key business applications
- Determining how to keep key applications operational during the move

Continued on page 2

Client:

This client, a global IT security manufacturer based in Boston and Oxford, U.K., delivers high-quality IT security and data protection for businesses.

IT Project:

Move the client's datacenter hundreds of miles in a single weekend.

Challenge:

Coordinate the logistics and safety of equipment and data during transport. Consolidate servers and applications into a virtual environment.

Solution:

Craft a meticulous timeline and procedural diagram for every aspect of move.

Results:

Data center moved cross-country without any disruption of business operations. More than 50 percent of the center's physical servers were reduced through virtualization.

- Rapidly configuring the relocated data center in time for the business day

“We did a thorough evaluation of our complete product set, and how to migrate our internal servers,” said the client’s manager for global infrastructure. “And we wanted to move everything in an intelligent way so that it arrived in better condition than when it left Dublin. The Zones service people came with the project management skills and technical expertise to help us figure out the best way to do this.”

Adding to the challenge was the fact that the technology manufacturer was not creating an exact duplicate of its Dublin data center. It planned to move from around 100 servers, to 40 virtualized servers—a big transformation. “We weren’t making an apple pie in Dublin and then making an apple pie in Boston,” added the manager. “We also wanted some help slimming down some of our services, move certain services between servers, and migrate a bunch of users from one set of servers to another.”

Finalize the plan

Over six months of rigorous planning, Zones engineers and project managers worked with the IT security client to create a precise timeline and map out specific steps such as:

- Determining LAN/WAN requirements
- Gaining a full understanding of the infrastructure and application requirements
- Creating a design strategy for the migration
- Creating an accurate cost analysis

The critical period when the IT manufacturer’s data center in Dublin was packed and shipped by truck to Boston occurred over five days. In addition to Zones project managers, the



manufacturer’s IT experts from seven countries were onsite to assist with the move. “Plus we had a massive amount of people for both remote and local support handling everything from logistics to travel,” said the global infrastructure manager. “We had people working around the clock in both Dublin and Boston.”

In addition, Zones had pre-positioned two IBM® x3850 M2 Enterprise Servers in a Zones integration facility in Chicago, as insurance against the remote possibility the trucks carrying the client’s servers came to grief on Interstate 76.

Another important consideration was ensuring the security of the servers during transit. “Those servers had critical business information,” says Robb Stanton, Zones’ lead project manager on the move. “We had to have secure transportation for them, make sure there were no DOA servers, and that the environment where they were moving was ready to go.”

Meet “Big Bang” weekend

Beginning on Day 1 of the “Big Bang” weekend, Zones and the security manufacturer’s IT personnel disconnected servers not running business-critical applications and began to pack them up. As the team neared the weekend window, more critical servers were powered down and packed, and backed up as needed by virtualized servers managing the client’s Microsoft Exchange accounts, as well as key client information.

Once the Dublin servers were securely loaded onto trucks, the Zones and client teams flew to Boston to meet the trucks and begin installation in the servers’ new home. “Saturday was a little stressful,” says Rob Hixon, Zones’ account manager for the project. “Robb (Stanton) and I were both waiting for a text message from our team to let us know that the truck got there OK.”

The servers arrived on time, and in good shape. They were installed, powered up and back online for the start of the business day in the IT manufacturer’s European centers.

Continued on page 3

Business Critical Data Center Move

Connecting Business and Technology

A successful move

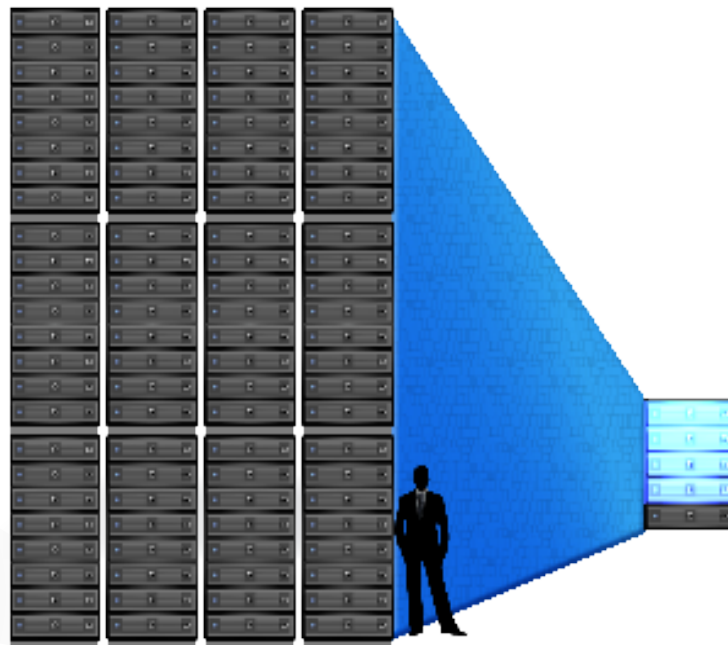
The global IT security manufacturer is now operating its new, consolidated, efficient data center to drive operations across North America and Europe. It is benefitting from the economies afforded by VMware virtualization software that allows an enterprise to use fewer servers to run the same number of applications as before.

The client's managers credit Zones' IT personnel with helping make the move run smoothly. "They were driven to make our

transition a success," said the global infrastructure manager. "They were constantly looking for improvement in our environment and processes, and worked with us not only on the transition, but on making things better for us going forward. Overall the move was hugely successful. The Zones project team was top-notch, and I'd recommend them for future endeavors."

In a poignant coda, the client's 67 IT team members working on the move had elected to remain in Dublin rather than uproot fami-

lies to make the move to Boston. "That had to have been bittersweet," says Rob Hixon, the project's Zones account executive, "But they didn't phone it in – they worked hard to make sure everything went smoothly." And now, all 67 former IT staff members have found new positions. The infrastructure manager, for instance, runs Metro Data Center, a Dublin-based data center hosting firm. Ironically, that new firm has moved into the space formerly occupied by the client's original data center.



Zones connects business and technology

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Trust Zones for IT solutions that sustain a flexible, efficient, and connected business.