



Case Study

Zones redefines the workplace experience

Avanade helps keep digital sales implementation on track

Business situation

Zones, a global technology provider, has ambitious financial and growth goals, but its workplace processes and technology foundation weren't yet structured to support its plans. When selling is your business, a streamlined and user-friendly sales platform is more than just a nice to have – it's the heart of your operation – which is why it was so important for Zones to get its digital sales and service implementation right.

Zones' legacy CRM application didn't drive "solution-selling" behavior, offer sales opportunity tracking or provide

mobile access to sales representatives in the field. In addition, data duplication across disparate platforms was causing operational inefficiencies, and with multiple user interfaces, the entire sales technology platform was cumbersome to use. For a company that offers more than 250,000 products and solutions from 2,000 leading IT manufacturers, as well as a broad portfolio of professional services, providing employees with enhanced digital workplace capabilities was vital.

And with growth plans requiring the onboarding of hundreds of sales people over the next few years, the faster the company could get people up to speed

with the new CRM system, and the faster employees could gain visibility to products and services, the more successful Zones would be.

A Microsoft Dynamics CRM implementation was initiated with another vendor, but when problems arose in the early stages, Zones turned to Avanade to get the project on the right track again. *"We chose to work with Avanade because of their breadth of resources, and how rapidly they were able to come up to speed, understand what we were trying to accomplish, and put together an operational execution plan to help us get there,"* said Anwar Jiwani, senior vice president of Operations and CIO, Zones.

Collaboration, technical expertise and quick up-take all essential to success

From the start, Avanade demonstrated its ability to hit the ground running and align with Zones' fast-paced, customer-focused culture. After evaluating the implementation's status and scope, Avanade formulated a development plan and instituted a structured yet adaptable change control process to enable rapid decision-making to keep the project moving forward.

Teamwork for an integrated, powerful solution

The Avanade team – comprised of onshore and offshore resources – designed the Dynamics CRM 2015 Sales and Service modules to integrate with Zones' legacy Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP solution and Oracle eCommerce system. In addition, the CRM solution needed to host a new order management user experience being built by Zones' internal IT group in a parallel work stream. Avanade supported in the development of the order management solution, embedding it directly into the Dynamics CRM user experience. The quoting and ordering system integrates with Zones' sales pipeline, providing a 360-degree customer view.

"Bringing everything together with two parallel streams is challenging; that's where collaboration was key. The Avanade and Zones teams worked extremely well together," said Jiwani.

Avanade facilitated the migration of more than 10 million records, leveraging Scribe Software and Microsoft SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS).

Robust business intelligence, made better

Avanade partnered with Zones' business intelligence (BI) teams to design a data model that would meet the sales leadership's evolving analytical needs and provided expertise on extracting data from the CRM platform. Ultimately, this refinement means a smooth customer experience downstream.

For example, Zones' field sellers regularly address and resolve customer needs, such as requirements for additional hardware. Prior to the new CRM system, account executives – who are not in the field – may not have been aware of such activity. Now, account executives have centralized access to all customer information, enabling them to better predict customer needs and remain close to the ground.

Rapid deployment for 1,600 users

The initial pilot group involved 50 users and ran for six weeks. Zones was so thrilled with the results, the deployment schedule was accelerated for the rest of the company. Four months later, with Avanade's support, all 1,600 employees were migrated to the new platform. The solution's scalability and ease of use will enable the onboarding process for the dramatic increase in sales people being hired in the next couple of years.

Benefits: New digital workplace capabilities to fuel growth

With the new digital sales and service platform, Zones has gained workplace capabilities to improve productivity and customer service. Zones is now better able to manage the extended customer experience landscape, from order management workflow to integration with ERP and e-commerce systems all from a single user interface.

Specific benefits include:

- **An improved customer experience**
 - While Zones' customers don't interact directly with the system, they do benefit from it. Through the power of collaboration, Zones employees are able to engage the right people at the right time to address account issues and process orders more quickly – thereby reducing the overall number of touchpoints for the end customer.
- **Access to the right information, when and where needed**
 - For sales leaders, visibility into a reliable sales pipeline allows them to better forecast business and identify where focus is required.
 - For Zones' OEM partners, the sharing of an accurate product pipeline and the rapid and reliable receipt of deal registrations builds trust and opens up additional partnering opportunities.
 - For Zones' sellers in the field, mobile access to the CRM solution provides real-time information when they need it most – in face-to-face meetings with customers.

“Having engagement and alignment with Avanade at a senior level was key to the success of this implementation. Working with Avanade was a very positive experience.”

– Anwar Jiwani, SVP, Operations and CIO, Zones

• **Transforming sales: team selling is now a reality**

- The CRM-powered engagement model provides a mechanism for account executives to engage the appropriate technical and sales resources, facilitating collaboration and driving team effectiveness.
- All account team members now have access to a single, shared view of the customer, allowing them to work cohesively to deliver a unified customer experience.

• **Business process optimization: supporting sales through effective back office engagement**

- By tightly integrating sales support interactions into the seller’s CRM experience, Avanade was able to break down the walls between Sales and Sales Support resulting in faster order processing times.
- Dynamics CRM’s process-centric user interface supported the roll out of a standardized sales process which drives consistency in approach and reduces the learning curve for those new hires.

• **IT simplified**

- Management of the IT environment is greatly simplified for Zones’ IT group now that a common technology platform, automated processes, user-friendly interfaces and a modern web service layer are in place. And data duplication is no longer an issue.

Zones’ technology platform has been transformed from a growth constraint into an enabler for the future. Due to this digital workplace solution’s greatly enhanced flexibility, scalability and functionality, the company’s ambitious growth objectives are now within reach.

Jiwani explains, “*Technology is changing all the time. Now we have the digital foundation and framework to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.*”

Company overview

Zones, Inc., supports business, healthcare, the public sector and specialty markets by applying innovative technology solutions across a variety of specializations including networking, security, software, storage, mobility, data center and virtualization. Zones holds the highest levels of technical certification from every key solution provider it represents. Incorporated in 1988, Zones is headquartered in Auburn, Wash., and is a certified MBE company.



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and designed experiences for its clients, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Our professionals combine technology, business and industry expertise to build and deploy solutions to realize results for clients and their customers. Avanade has 29,000 digitally connected people across 23 countries, bringing clients the best thinking through a collaborative culture that honors diversity and reflects the communities in which we operate. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com

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