

Zethcon's Software-as-a-Service Offerings Speed Along with Infrastructure Upgrade from PKA & HPE

Zethcon

Client Background

Zethcon Corporation

www.zethcon.com

Industry—Supply chain software and services

Zethcon Corporation is a world-class provider of supply chain execution software and services. Over 30 years of technology innovation and operational experience distinguish Zethcon in its primary market: serving third-party logistics providers. The company's flagship product, Synapse, is a market-leader in Warehouse Management Systems and Order Management Systems. Zethcon is well recognized for its deep commitment to highly responsive service and building long-term partnerships that make their customers' business better.



**Hewlett Packard
Enterprise**
Platinum Partner



Background

Zethcon Corp. is the developer of the Synapse Warehouse Management System, software that provides real-time data and management functionality for warehouses and third-party logistics providers. Based in Chicago, the company was founded by a group of software developers with decades of experience in warehousing. In addition, Zethcon's implementation and support personnel are experts in warehouse operations as well as the Synapse software.

Traditionally, Synapse has been deployed within the customer's data center and managed by the customer's IT team. Several years ago, however, customers began asking the company to provide Synapse as a hosted solution.

Zethcon built out data center infrastructure within a carrier-grade facility, providing each customer with a private, hosted network and dedicated servers that run a unique instance of Synapse. This model proved very popular, and within a few years more than half of Zethcon's customers were using the hosted application.

This growth began putting stress on Zethcon's data center infrastructure. The company contacted PKA Technologies for assistance in re-architecting the environment to provide greater stability, reliability and performance.

Challenge

Zethcon had been using Dell and HP rackmount servers and older, tier-2 storage from NetGear. Primarily concerned about the stability of the storage arrays, the company had purchased Dell EqualLogic arrays to replace them. However, there was lingering doubt that the Dell solution would meet customer requirements.

Chris Oechsel, CEO of Zethcon, had met Peter Katz, CTO of PKA, many years earlier, and remembered that Katz is an experienced enterprise architect. Oechsel asked him for help in designing and implementing an environment that would meet the high-availability requirements of Zethcon's customers.

"Our customers are primarily logistics and warehousing service providers, many of whom operate 24x7, all over the world. Synapse is a real-time, online transaction processing application that supports their operations," Oechsel said.

"A couple of years ago we had experienced a few problems with our shared storage, and Peter was kind enough to share his thoughts as to where the industry was headed, what we should be doing and how we could get there. Then late last year we began to recognize the need to take a fresh look at our data center architecture."

Katz flew to Chicago to meet with Oechsel and brought in local Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) representatives as well. They explained why Zethcon needed to rethink its infrastructure from the ground up, with enterprise-class hardware at its core.



About PKA Technologies

PKA Technologies, a certified woman-owned enterprise, has over 20 years experience providing IT solutions to Fortune 500, small and mid-size companies as well as schools and government agencies.

At PKA, we know that most solutions are unique and have individual complexities. Our key to finding the most inspired solutions is our ability to be a complete and committed partner--listening, learning, and responding to the unique challenges of every client and project.

Our strong alliances with leading technology vendors such as Hewlett-Packard Enterprise, Aruba, HP, Intel, Microsoft, Red Hat, Symantec, and VMware allow us to identify best practices that can be integrated into a solution to your most vexing challenges.

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Solution

Katz and the HPE representatives educated Oechsel and his team about the kinds of technology solutions that were available. Based upon that initial meeting, Katz designed an architecture using servers and storage arrays that are appropriate for what Zethcon is doing today and will give the company the scalability it needs for continued growth.

The new environment is based upon an HPE C7000 blade enclosure capable of hosting up to 16 HPE ProLiant BL460c Xeon Gen9 servers. In addition, Katz specified a high-performance, ultrareliable storage-area network based upon an HPE 3PAR 8400-series four-node storage array. The new HPE hardware was delivered in March 2016 and members of PKA's engineering staff flew to Chicago to install it. After two days of onsite configuration work, the new solution was up and running.

"The equipment we'd been using did not have the stability, redundancy or performance that we needed," Oechsel said. "The HPE solutions we've implemented have all that and are enterprise-level in terms of uptime. At the same time, Peter was sensitive to the economic side of things. He helped us leverage some of our existing investments and created an environment that we could scale as large as needed without having to make that huge investment initially."

Results

Zethcon has already migrated key customers to the new HPE environment, with great results, and can readily add more HPE blade servers and expand the storage array to support continued growth. By engaging local HPE engineers and providing a knowledge transfer during the implementation process, Katz helped ensure that Zethcon could manage the infrastructure over the long term.

"Peter brought a full team of people. Because we're in Chicago and Peter's staff is in New Jersey, he thought it was important to bring in local HPE support resources that we could leverage on an ongoing basis," Oechsel said.

"Our local HPE representatives have been very helpful, not only in the initial project but also in educating our customers as to the significant upgrades we've made. We've already had several meetings with customers at our data center, and the HPE reps have been available to answer any questions they may have."

Through thorough assessment and significant expertise in enterprise data center architectures, Katz and the PKA/HPE team designed and deployed a solution that will serve Zethcon's needs over the long haul. The company now has a platform on which to support the mission-critical needs of its customers, build new solutions and services, and continue its steady growth.