



Company

Conglobal Industries, Inc. is a leading provider of shipping equipment and transportation services to large and small companies, individuals, and government entities throughout the U.S., Mexico and Costa Rica.

Objective

Outsource application hosting to centralize computing functions, improve cost and IT efficiencies and elevate backup and disaster recovery process.

Solution

- ▶ Universal, always-on Application Hosting through Zumasys
- ▶ Hosted applications include internally developed depot management software, Microsoft Dynamics, GP accounting system, financial reporting, general office applications, email, and Trinium Technologies trucking software

Results

- ▶ Access to real-time information internally and externally to customers
- ▶ Reduced costs for IT staffing, hardware upgrades and operating systems
- ▶ Anywhere/anytime access for employees
- ▶ Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity goals achieved
- ▶ Freed up customer to focus on core business vs. IT management

Company

Conglobal Industries, Inc. is the nation's largest retailer of new, used, modified and refurbished ISO shipping/cargo containers, ground storage containers, chassis, and specialty equipment. The company operates a nationwide network of container terminals and provides all types of intermodal equipment to large and small companies, individuals, branches of the armed services, and state and federal institutions. Conglobal's services also include intermodal repair, maintenance, storage, and redistribution, as well as trucking and transportation services, mobile repair services, and real-time information systems. The company has 30 facilities and offices with more than 700 employees in the U.S., Mexico and Costa Rica.

Situation

Conglobal was formed by the merger of two leading container companies. At the time, it was easier for IT systems at each of the company's worldwide locations to be maintained as silos, with each office having its own database and client/server applications. Shortly thereafter, the company realized that this decentralized practice led to substantial systems duplication and IT inefficiencies. Internal audits also revealed that this approach caused a number of security and disaster recovery limitations.

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With business continuity a key concern for Conglobal, the company decided to integrate all of its sites into a single solution, but it knew that its small IT staff did not have the necessary server-side capabilities to accomplish this in-house. As Brian Mellen, Director of IT and Operations for Conglobal, notes, "We weren't interested in having expertise in all the latest technologies on staff. We were interested in running our business, not in running IT." Conglobal determined that it did not want to add the expense of hiring internally and decided to outsource its application hosting. ▶

“There is a huge realm of different software and hardware technologies that take a lot of time to learn. I don’t see a big benefit to having my staff learn them when I can turn to someone like Zumasys. I can just focus on the results.”

- Brian Mellen,
Director of IT and Operations,
Conglobal Industries, Inc.

Partners

- ▶ Citrix
- ▶ NetApp
- ▶ VMware



Solution

Conglobal selected Zumasys to host its applications based on the right combination of customer service, consulting expertise and competitive price. In September 2008, Conglobal began transitioning its day-to-day operations software to the Zumasys environment. The hosted applications include Conglobal’s operations software, Microsoft Dynamics GP accounting system, financial reporting, and Trinium Technologies trucking software, as well as general office and email applications. By centralizing its software, Conglobal is now able to install each application only once in the hosted environment rather than having to install it on every PC.

Conglobal has phased the roll-out of the hosted environment and has found the migration to be very smooth. For each location, the transition happens over a single weekend. While Conglobal was initially only going to host its U.S. systems, it is now putting its Mexico and Costa Rica facilities in the hosted environment to gain better operational control. Conglobal is currently more than halfway done with its transition and plans to migrate all of its locations into the hosted environment by the end of 2009.

Results

The Zumasys hosted environment has given Conglobal access to more real-time information. With its previous client-server system, the company couldn’t get activity details from each location until that information was downloaded. The hosted system enables staff to conduct real-time reporting for increased control, more informed decision-making and a broader business view. This new outsourced model also provides greater flexibility for some of the company’s staff to work off-site.

Hosting with Zumasys also offers Conglobal a number of IT advantages. First, the company no longer has to worry about functions like server backups. Additionally, time is no longer spent fixing viruses on PCs, as all the capabilities are hosted in the Zumasys environment, making the PCs primarily “dumb terminals.” If an employee PC dies, all of its information can immediately be accessed from a new PC. Mellen states, “Now we can focus on our business rather than our hardware.”

Working with Zumasys has made adding software much easier for Conglobal because it doesn’t have to make a huge capital investment in the hardware and operating systems to support it. Zumasys handles that. Mellen remarks, “I see way too many companies with a huge IT staff spending a lot on hardware. Hosting is way more cost effective. Plus, it’s easier to add in new software because you know what your costs are going to be — it’s only the cost of the software, not the software plus the hardware plus the support staff.”

The advantage of the new hosted environment reaches beyond Conglobal’s internal environment and out to their customers. Using a central database, Conglobal is now developing a portal where customers can directly access their information.

Mellen sees the transition to the hosted environment as a very smart business move. “There is a huge realm of different software and hardware technologies that take a lot of time to learn. I don’t see a big benefit to having my staff learn them when I can turn to someone like Zumasys. I can just focus on the results.” He continues, “I’m a huge proponent of outsourcing. We get high quality people with expertise in specific areas, all keeping up on the latest technologies. There’s no reason not to do it.” ■