GTSI Helps Army Get Command of Battlefield Communications

Providing the nation's warfighters with high-quality, stable, and reliable tactical command and control services that function as a combat multiplier is a top priority for Product Management Office, Tactical Battle Command (PMO TBC) at Ft. Monmouth, NJ. Core elements of PMO TBC's mission are to direct the acquisition, development, implementation, and deployment of a service-oriented architecture; train warfighters on the use of the systems and software; and support the Army Battle Command Migration Plan and legacy tactical C2 systems.

Maneuver function and battle staff tools along with consolidated enterprise services are essential to enhancing situational awareness and field communications. The ability to visualize battle space and synchronize the elements of combat power while simultaneously collaborating and sharing data in near real time gives warfighters advanced decision-making capabilities.

A battlefield functional component of Project Manager Battle Command (PM BC), TBC was tasked to design and deliver a robust mobile data center platform that would enable various applications that fall under PM BC's realm to be consolidated. The objective: Bring the functionality and connectivity of a complete data center to the battlefield with less hardware while providing troops with access to Army Battle Command Systems (ABCS) applications through a familiar interface.

TBC devised an architecture based on commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) technology that enabled units to be individually configured for specific battalions and battlefield conditions. The Army's strict application and operating environment specifications required that the configured units be easily lifted, transported,

and fully functional under harsh conditions and hostile environments. The mobile data center platform allowed TBC to continue to successfully provision the mission critical suite of command and control products deployed in today's fight, while the flexible design enabled units to be easily upgraded to meet the needs of a future mission.

TBC wanted to work with a partner that had proven capabilities and established systems and processes for ordering and assembling equipment and assessing environmental effects on a range of hardware. This assessment would determine the functionality, ease of integration, connectivity, power consumption, and heat dissipation of all components. Of even greater significance, however, was that TBC's partner must be able to design, integrate, and ship fully configured units in 90 days or less.

A mobile data center platform that stacks up in any environment

GTSI was in the perfect position to assist TBC with the assembly and deployment of these operational transit cases. The company already had performed significant work with other DoD customers and DHS, and it had longstanding

relationships with leading server, storage, networking, uninterruptable power supply (UPS), and deployable case vendors. Holding more than 1000 industry, vendor, and professional certifications, GTSI's engineers had all the qualifications to perform the required tasks involved in the design and assembly of the portable tactical data centers. Additionally, GTSI's ISO 9000:2000 registered Integration Center had more than 1300 stations and a staff of professionals who could manage the logistics and supply chain as well as build and ship fully integrated units to the field within relatively short timeframes.

TBC knew of GTSI's exemplary performance on server and storage configurations within other areas at Ft. Monmouth and asked the company to provide quotes on several operational transit case (OTC) configurations, stipulating that the units needed to be deployed within a 90-day or less timeframe.

GTSI presented a cost proposal for a fully configured COTS solution that met TBC's strict weight, environmental, and security specifications. Not only did GTSI deliver a design that met all TBC's specifications, but also the company documented how it would provide the logistical and supply chain management and production capabilities necessary to meet delivery date requirements.

Once given the go-ahead, GTSI worked closely with TBC and its systems integrator, thoroughly reviewing specifications for the Sun X4100s, NetApp FAS270s, Cisco 3560s, UPSs, and the other components housed in the cases. After conducting assembly tests and analyzing the results, GTSI determined the optimal long stack and short stack configurations for specific environments.

GTSI's use of PDIO methodologies and PMI processes ensured accountability and continuity throughout all phases of the project, beginning with the initial receipt of an order from TBC through the staging and integration of all components to the deployment of the configured OTCs. Once GTSI received a task order, a project manager immediately established a master deployment schedule. Because it took 30–60 days on average for equipment to be received from the manufacturers, GTSI ordered hardware components within two business days of receiving TBC's paperwork to avoid any lag time in the production cycle. After the equipment arrived, the GTSI Integration Center created and registered custom UID tags for all components and assembled the hardware into different configurations. To date, GTSI has produced and shipped 1000+ OTCs, as well as hundreds of spares, to the field.

In addition to providing extended manufacturer warranties, GTSI continues to work closely with the Tobyhanna Army Depot and vendors to ensure that the equipment provided in the OTCs is maintained, regardless of whether the units are CONUS and/or OCONUS deployed.

A unique blend of disciplines

Field personnel should have the same level of computer support as that provided by their core enterprise systems. The armed forces along with agencies responsible for emergency management and homeland security understand the strategic value of a mobile data center platform for the dissemination of accurate information.

GTSI applies its extensive knowledge of server, storage, and networking technologies in the development and implementation of IT infrastructure solutions. Engineering, project management, and financial experts devise project plans, levels of effort, and schedules targeted to individual agencies' materials planning, quality assurance, performance, delivery, and financial requirements. Additionally, GTSI's Integration Center is fully equipped and staffed to execute all the intricate tasks involved in complex builds and assemblies. From initial project planning and estimation to sequencing, scheduling, monitoring, risk management, delivery, and project close-out, GTSI applies a disciplined approach to the practice of custom integration, configuration, and complex builds.

Through meticulous coordination and proven processes, GTSI completes agencies' projects on time, within scope, and on budget and ensures that systems are fully operational at the time of deployment. Additionally, ongoing communication and collaboration with customers provides valuable feedback that fosters continual improvement and enables agencies to realize the full value of their technology investments.

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