



integration

GMI Helps Sun Take Flight in Aerospace and Defense

A large aerospace company needed a change. The company supplies governments and private entities with high-quality and high-value defense systems and aerospace products. It found that some of its procurement processes were not keeping pace with the innovation that the company inspired.

The Problem

“Sun systems play a very important role with the client,” says Earl Overstreet, President of GMI. “They are widely used in applications requiring high performance, reliability, and low cost. End users are also attracted by the ability to customize standard building blocks, thus creating a solution that closely matches their needs and budget. Unfortunately, customizing small orders of entry-level servers and storage is a nightmare for any manufacturer. The client’s needs were both very specific and very low volume. Almost every order was different.”

In addition to a need for custom integration, Sun and the client were facing two other service problems:



“Excellent customer service that responds directly to their needs and addresses their top priorities... plus freeing up Sun’s resources to assist the company’s user in developing technical solutions that make them more competitive — that’s what Sun and GMI hoped to achieve when we partnered to support the company. GMI has certainly performed! I consider our partnership with GMI to be one of Sun’s strongest advantages in this account.”

— Dale Vaughan
Sales Manager
Sun Microsystems, Inc.

- Long lead time: Since Sun builds everything to order, lead times could be long, causing the client to wait weeks or even months for an order to be filled.
- Purchasing system integration: The client wanted to integrate Sun ordering into its existing legacy purchasing system. The company also wanted special reports on lead time, delivery, shipping and special services like asset tagging that Sun wasn’t able to provide in a cost-effective manner.

Sun decided this was an ideal opportunity for a reseller partner.

The Solution

“We’ve worked with different groups within this company for over 20 years,” says Overstreet. “They knew us and knew the quality of our work. Since 1984 we’ve supplied them everything from commodities — like personal computer products — to sophisticated GMI-designed data storage devices and customized Sun systems. Sun also knew about our capability. Over talks between the two companies, it became clear that GMI was the best choice for improving customer service and giving the client the kind of attention it deserves.”

In March of 2004, the client set up an agreement with GMI to acquire Sun products. With the agreement in place, GMI quickly got to work addressing the client’s needs.

1. **Lead Time:** By ordering Sun systems from Access Distribution in California, GMI was able to dramatically cut down on lead time. Says Overstreet, “Access keeps millions of dollars of Sun product in inventory for immediate shipment. Over ninety percent of the Sun parts numbers we order on a regular basis are shipped from stock.”
2. **Customization:** GMI worked closely with the client on system configuration and used its own facilities in Bellevue as a staging area for orders. “Access ships directly to us and we do most of the software and hardware integration work in Bellevue,” states Overstreet. “When we ship an order, it’s ready to use right out of the box.”
3. **Purchasing System Integration:** GMI set up internal systems to accommodate the client’s procurement system and to track and report key metrics. A catalog, maintained by GMI, listed both the company’s and the manufacturers’ part numbers, descriptions, and lead times. Asset tagging was added to the GMI hardware integration services. This work positioned GMI to respond quickly to the next generation of the company’s acquisition needs. “We’re here to serve the customer,” says Overstreet. “The system we have now folds perfectly into the client’s way of doing business.”

The Results

By working with GMI, the client has been able to enjoy dramatically shortened lead times, better integration with its existing systems, and a level of flexibility and responsiveness that cannot be provided by large manufacturers.

Despite the drastic increase in customer service, the client’s total cost for purchasing Sun products has actually gone down. Unburdened from supply chain logistics, the Sun team could focus on helping the customer select and deploy the best Sun technologies.

“We have to be efficient to make the process work for the client and for Sun,” says Overstreet, “but, what I’m proudest of is that the client experienced no cost increase using our services. In fact, we were able to save them money while giving them vastly superior service.”



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