



State of California

Employment Training Panel

CASE STUDY

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

Z Microsystems, Inc.

From its early days as a key supplier to Sun Microsystems and other federal systems integrators, Z Microsystems has evolved its technical expertise in both hardware and software development. Z Microsystems is located in San Diego and provides software that powers Z VIDEO - the standard video capture and editing toolset used by the intelligence community and tactical Department of Defense (DOD) deployments. The company's ability to respond flexibly, promptly and cost-effectively to federal defense needs has raised Z Microsystems to the forefront in the far-reaching computing world.

Focused on the government and DOD contracting, Z Microsystems manufactures and delivers entire deployable workstations that consist of flat panel displays, storage systems, CPUs, servers, power management systems and traveling desks that enhance and optimize user work performance. Designed to adapt to a variety of deployed conditions, Z Microsystems's field-ready computing products have shown exceptional long-term reliability in 'real world' field conditions by withstanding the rigors of arctic extremes to desert battle zones.

Despite its mature 'big business' appearance, Z Microsystems is still a small employer, with only 60 employees in three U.S. locations. The company felt improvement was needed in many areas to meet the company's performance expectations; however, they could not afford to address *all* of the areas of concern without assistance. Z Microsystems turned to ETP for help.

The company wanted to enhance the abilities of upper and middle management teams to increase overall management skills, improve job performance, and promote improved handling of employees and their work environment. They also wanted to strengthen worker abilities in specific areas. Training was provided in strategic management development, continuous improvement, manufacturing skills, computer skills, soldering and lean enterprise – all based on a needs assessment and analysis conducted by the Z Microsystems. The company trained 32 employees and earned \$14,700 in ETP funds.

According to Z Microsystems leaders, positive results were immediate. Soldering training provided skills to workers that allowed more in-house soldering work in-house, thus reducing re-work and consequently saving money. The management skills training led to less internal strife and better department control. The training also demonstrated that the company cares about its employees' education and performance beyond the 'how much can you produce today' environment. Z Microsystems employees were taught the value of independent analysis and given the tools to dissect and solve issues.

Z Microsystems representatives stated that ETP dollars *allowed* them to train their employees. Absent ETP assistance, training would not have occurred, or would have had to be conducted over several years in small groups and with fewer obvious positive results.

“Education is the key to success in and out of business. We all should have the chance to be successful and we can be, with the help of the ETP training program.”

**Rick Elliott, Vice President of Quality Assurance
Z Microsystems, Inc.**

For information regarding the ETP program, call ETP's Economic Development Unit at 916/327-5640 or e-mail edu@etp.ca.gov