



IT Products & Services

Field Training Support for the
U.S. Marine Corps



As part of our extensive capabilities in information technology (IT), Akima offers direct access to thousands of IT products from leading manufacturers such as Dell, HPE, Microsoft, Oracle, Riverbed, Splunk, and more. Whether a customer is seeking hardware, software, or integrated systems, our in-house team of product experts stand ready to help modernize IT infrastructure while also improving security and delivering mission-serving solutions faster and at a lower cost. Currently, Akima holds partnerships with more than 100 technology vendors.



Featured Contract: Field-Based Logistics Training for the U.S. Marine Corps

Akima's team at Tuva modernized and updated mobile training systems for the U.S. Marine Corps' Global Combat Support System (GCSS). These field-ready training systems educate personnel on a range of logistics — from planning and executing the movement and support of forces to acquiring, storing, distributing, maintaining, and disposing of assets.

Mission

Organized logistics are crucial to the Marine Corps' global operations. Personnel, supplies, and equipment must get to the right place around the world — on time and with proper procedures, every time. To ensure smooth operations for complex logistics, personnel must have the right training, whether they're on base in the U.S. or out in the field on another continent. For that training, the Marine Corps were relying on years-old outdated technology that wasn't keeping pace with its growing software and database needs. That's where the Akima team stepped in — to help modernize and upgrade the logistics software and databases that the Marine Corps depends on. The modernization effort included creating a pop-up classroom — packaged into a mobile kit — that could be used anywhere in the world. Each kit had to include a server and storage array (both from HPE), a mouse for every laptop, external hard drives, 8-port switches, extension cords, about two dozen laptops, cabling, and a printer, as well as supplies like padlocks, Velcro, and duct tape.

The Marine Corps requested 100 kits to be fully vetted, tested, and shipped to locations around the world. “The kits had to be completely self-contained so the instructor could simply open it and be prepared for every possible contingency, and have a detailed plan and instructions,” explained Jim Kizziar, a subject matter expert at Tuva.

Strategy

Tuva first had to survey and evaluate the 120 components in each kit. With advice from Affigent, Akima’s IT solutions expert subsidiary, the Tuva team settled on HPI ProBook 640G4 laptops running Windows 10 for the 24 student laptops and two instructor laptops. HPE ProLiant Servers were the first choice mainly due to their outstanding reputation as secure servers. In addition to assembling the kits, Tuva recorded all serial numbers, labeled all kits and components, and included documentation, warranties and instruction manuals. The project took about 12 months to complete; then Tuva shipped 40 of the kits to the Marine Corps’ “schoolhouse” in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the rest to units across the United States and overseas.

Flexibility

The Akima team had to adapt quickly to overcome technology hiccups along the way. Initially, for example, they built the prototype using WiFi to connect the laptops with the server and storage arrays that held the main training system. However, the Marine Corps could not get approval to use WiFi because of coverage and security concerns. Tuva quickly changed course and connected the prototype with CAT6 cables. When Tuva had a viable prototype, it was submitted to the Marine Corps, which requested certain changes. Once those were made, the prototype was complete.

Working with agencies operating across the globe, Akima delivers IT products and solutions that help customers accomplish their goals.

Expertise

“It was a team effort,” Kizziar said. “Affigent is a turnkey IT solutions provider with skilled PMPs and solution architects on the team, so we relied on them for guidance on sourcing the equipment and related logistics.” The mission required far more expertise than simply compiling kits. The team laid out all the equipment, including racks for all the servers and laptops to help make it easy to load software and image the laptops. “After testing everything, some equipment had to be replaced, and everything had to be double-checked,” says Roger Foote, director of business development at Akima.

Results

The Marine Corps is responsible for delivering task forces on land, at sea, and in the air. Ensuring that the right logistics are in place, and that personnel are properly trained to coordinate that logistics, is critical for mission success. Akima was able to deliver a solution — updated and customized field-ready training systems — that will train logistics personnel to keep tasks moving forward with precision and timeliness.

