Embrace Modern IT Deployment with Windows Autopilot and Zones

When you launch a new device with an employee, what does the process look like? How could it be improved?

The journey to modern IT begins

Whether you realize it or not, the business world as you know it is currently at a crossroads. Companies everywhere are navigating the journey from classic IT to modern IT, and their strategies for doing so will be a major source of competitive advantage in the years ahead.

First, let's define the terms. "Classic IT" describes how companies have deployed technology in the past. Many employees had a single device; it was business-owned, and it used legacy apps and operated on a corporate network. This way of managing employee devices was manual, it was reactive, and it was high-touch. Needless to say, the IT office always had their hands full.

Modern IT is different. Employees today often use multiple devices – desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and so on. Some of these devices are business-owned; others belong to the employee. They often use a combination of native programs and cloud-managed apps. IT processes are often automated, proactive, and driven by self service rather than the IT team personally getting their hands dirty.

Where is your business on this spectrum between classic and modern IT? If you aren't too far along yet, there's no better time to get moving than the present.

Transforming deployment is the beginning

When it comes to modernizing your business' IT, it makes perfect sense to start at the beginning: deploying user devices. When you first give an employee a new device, what does that process look like? How could it be improved?
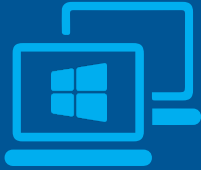
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The traditional process was fairly painstaking. The IT department would build a custom image for each new device they deployed, after manually gathering all the necessary information to get started. They would then deploy the image to the new computer, overwriting anything that was originally on it. This was a labor- and time-intensive process, but it got the job done.

Now let's look at modern deployment. Here's how things would look in an ideal world: The process wouldn't be labor-intensive at all. Users would simply unbox a new Windows PC, boot it up, have user-specific apps and accounts automatically installed, boot it up, and turn it on. With little or no user interaction, they'd be able to boot it up and get right to work – the device would be ready for productive use from day one.

This sounds far simpler and better, doesn't it? So the question is: How can your business transition to this ideal world?

Introducing Windows Autopilot

If you're looking to revamp your business' approach to deploying new devices, here's a word of advice to get you started: Your efforts should begin with rolling out Windows Autopilot. With Windows Autopilot, you get a process that's fully cloud driven. You don't have to worry about painstaking manual processes to set up images – instead, you simply pre-register devices in the cloud by using the Windows Autopilot Deployment Program through InTune and your devices will configure remotely once the user initially signs in, with no IT intervention required.

This is a straightforward process that will greatly reduce the burden on your IT teams. Getting new devices ready will be no sweat – IT can simply use the Windows Configuration Designer to create a package containing customizations, and the package will automatically be downloaded to each new computer once it's turned on by the set user for the first time, and installed to customize the PC.

There are additional features that may benefit today's professionals, depending on their industry. For example, in education, Microsoft offers a wizard-driven "Set up School PCs" app that makes it easy to create a USB key with school-specific customizations. You can then use that same USB key to set up additional PCs in just a few minutes, which means your deployment process will be highly scalable. In today's modern, fast-paced environment, this will pay big dividends.

Getting real value from fast deployment

Being able to deploy devices quickly for your employees will make a tangible difference. And with the Windows Autopilot Deployment Program at your fingertips, quickness will indeed be the name of the game. Getting devices set up for your employees will be a simple three-step process – one, register the devices, two, assign a profile of settings, and three, ship them directly to users (or have Zones do this for you, through our fulfillment centers).

For one thing, this will show immediate value for your employees. Because their devices are so easy to deploy and manage, they'll be able to save time and get stuff done faster. There will be no need to wait around while IT goes to painstaking ends to complete setup processes – and in the future, if there are any issues to troubleshoot, that process will go more smoothly as well. Additionally, you won't be limited by the work hours of your IT department. Your employees can launch their devices and get them set up at any time of day, in any location, anywhere in the world.

For those on the IT management side, Autopilot will deliver benefits as well. Getting rid of custom images is a great way to drive down total cost of operation (TCO), and having access to centralized cloud-based device management resources will help everyone save time and get work done more efficiently. In addition, the granular application, security, and policy administration capabilities built into Autopilot will make it far easier to manage people's devices moving forward.

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Zones can make zero-touch deployment a reality

At Zones, we understand fully that now's an especially key time to invest in easy, fast device deployment. Right now, millions of employees are making the shift to a largely remote or hybrid way of doing business, and that means they don't always have fast access to a team of IT professionals that can help them get devices up and running in a high-touch manner.

That's why we work to get our clients up and running with zero-touch deployment. We understand that deploying Windows PCs for remote workers can be a complex process, so we're here to help you simplify it. When you work with Zones to set up Windows Autopilot, you'll be able to deploy Windows 10 devices for your employees within minutes, and there won't be any need for IT intervention after the initial setup and deployment.

Under this setup, everyone wins. When you deploy a device using our Autopilot services, your users will be able to quickly and securely access the apps and services they need, and this will all be at no additional cost to your business. In fact, you can significantly reduce your IT spend by investing in a process that's simple and efficient.

Enabling remote work quickly and easily

As your organization shifts to a remote-first environment, there's no time to waste. Business doesn't slow down just because you're going through an IT transition – in fact, for many companies today, these are busier times than ever. So you need devices that will be quick and easy to deploy. Open the box, take your device out, and get to work.

Windows Autopilot makes this possible. All your employees have to do is unbox their devices and turn it on, and Autopilot will move them smoothly through the process of configuring them from the cloud, all in just a few steps. It's also easy to track the whole process, too, as Autopilot gives the user a clear visualization of how their configuration is progressing.

Visit **zones.com/autopilot** or call **800.408.ZONES** today. First Choice for IT.™

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We understand that deploying Windows PCs for remote workers can be a complex process, so we're here to help you simplify it.

Please visit zones.com/autopilot to learn more about how this amazing deployment solution can save you and your organization valuable time and money. You can also request a simple consultation, in which Zones and Microsoft can answer your questions and advise you on how Autopilot can improve the way you do business.

As you move toward a modern IT infrastructure, you'll appreciate the ease of hassle-free provisioning. You can deliver a great user experience, with personalization and a simple setup, and you can move your users at whatever pace is comfortable for you. This isn't just about desktops and laptops, either – you can also connect devices deployed with Autopilot to Azure Active Directory (AD) and enjoy easy mobile device management.

Explore the services Zones has to offer

If you're ready to get up and running with Windows Autopilot, Zones can offer a number of services to help get you started. This begins with our Windows 10 Assessment – we'll work with you to size up your environment and gain an understanding of how Windows 10 addresses application compatibility, organizational readiness, and endpoint management.

After that, we offer services around Windows Autopilot and Intune Setup. This is a comprehensive process that includes planning, designing, and implementing an environment built around Autopilot and Intune. You'll be able to easily pre-configure the right devices for your environment, even if you have little or no infrastructure in place. And at Zones, we have integration and logistics professionals stationed all over the world to help ensure all your new technology arrives on time and on budget.

As you move forward and begin using your new technology in the workplace, Zones will provide continual customer care to make sure your devices are still running smoothly. Our Cloud Service Desk will help ensure your employees are using their devices as intended, and they can offer help whenever needed. Whether it's supporting a new user, dealing with a lost device, or retrieving a forgotten password, we've got the know-how to help your people navigate anything.

Zones will make your life easier

We know life is hard these days. Just about everyone is adjusting to a new, remote way of doing business every day, and there are numerous logistical hassles involved with simply completing a day's work. At Zones, we don't want your IT to be any more difficult than it needs to be.

That's why we're committed to helping your business simplify device deployment. We have best-in-class integration centers located across the United States that will help you drop-ship equipment straight to your end users. We also work directly with device manufacturers to ensure that all the information you need to enroll your new devices is secure.

We are ready to accelerate your business' move to modern device management. To get started with Windows Autopilot and Zones, all you need to do is get in touch. Contact your Zones Account Manager today or email us at autopilot@zones.com, and we'll set up a short consultation and answer any questions you might have. We're excited to see how Windows Autopilot can improve your business experience.

About the Author

Brad Stave, is the director of workplace within the partner and project management division at Zones. Brad brings a passion for innovation, plus more than 15 years of experience in management, sales engagement, partner development, and marketing within various industries. Brad believes that solutions like Microsoft's Autopilot are now more important today than ever. With an ever-increasing need to manage and deploy IT solutions for users around the globe, remote deployment through Autopilot is critical to the business success of any innovative organization.

More Information

Visit our website zones.com/autopilot

About Zones, LLC

For over 30 years, Zones has worked with industry-leading partners to offer comprehensive IT solutions to clients around the world. Our Workplace Modernization, Network Optimization, Data Center Transformation, and Security Fortification solutions lead clients through their digital transformations, and our services offer support every step of the way. That's what makes us the First Choice for IT.™

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