

How Chenega Systems enables DoD modernization through Zoom-centric programs

Chenega Systems used Zoom for Government to help agencies embrace flexible work, remain competitive with talent recruitment, and more.



Founded: 2017

Location: Virginia, United States

Industry: Technology

Challenges: Legacy government operations, enabling a flexible workforce, and meeting the federal government's stringent security requirements

Solutions: Zoom Meetings, Zoom Phone, Zoom Rooms, Zoom Webinars

Business benefits: Elevated service offerings, secure and compliant communications, seamless connections across working environments

“We made the switch to Zoom for Government as soon as it became available — it was important for us to have the security that comes with it. There are a lot of good services out there but they don't meet the security standards for the Department of Defense.

Mike Masten

Vice president of modernization and innovation services for Chenega Systems

[Chenega Systems](#) is a sort of jack of all trades. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the Alaska-native Chenega Corporation, Chenega Systems is an 8(a) small business defense contractor for the U.S. government and operates as a reseller, acting as an end user, serving an end user. Chenega Systems has been doing this by leveraging a unique offering they call “Modernization as a Service” or MaaS.

MaaS is a turnkey service that provides the government with fully modernized innovation environments and “software factories” that are then managed as a service. From initial design to implementation and operation, Chenega Systems' MaaS model instantly modernizes programs within the U.S. government and the Department of Defense (DoD), a process that has historically taken a long time and has posed many issues.

At the heart of these programs? The [Zoom for Government platform](#), as Chenega Systems services the government by deploying our meeting, phone, room, and webinar solutions. And according to Mike Masten, vice president of modernization and innovation services for Chenega Systems, our IL4-authorized technology has helped these institutions embrace flexible work, remain competitive with talent recruitment, and unblock workflows while meeting the advanced security requirements necessary to service the government and DoD.

Going from legacy to Silicon Valley

Using communications technology both in service offerings and internal operations, Chenega Systems deploys Zoom's suite of solutions as an integral part of its MaaS offering. This is a turnkey offering that provides full innovation environments and “software factories” where government workers produce software through DevSecOps capabilities.

While they are currently partnering with the DoD on seven software factories, Chenega Systems' first factory launched in 2018 with the U.S. Air Force, who requested Masten, “Make us into a Silicon Valley tech company.”

“[With the DoD] we might think of them as being tech-advanced, like in *Transformers* and *Minority Report*. But the reality is a lot of their infrastructure is very old and because the DoD is such a large organization, modernizing that infrastructure is very difficult. Zoom played a critical role in the initial establishment of the first software factory,” said Masten.

And building that factory meant starting fresh. “We weren't trying to upgrade existing systems, or take something from the '90s and modernize it. We wanted to create something that was built for the new digital economy, and just immediately give them access to a tool that we knew tech companies in Silicon Valley were using. That's what brought us to Zoom in the first place,” noted Masten.

“We saw Zoom as kind of the next generation of video conferencing, and we were looking for things out of the gate that worked very well and were easy.”

Security and flexibility with Zoom for Government

While their offerings originally involved commercial Zoom, “We made the switch to Zoom for Government as soon as it became available — it was important for us to have the security that comes with it,” said Masten. “There are a lot of good services out there, but they don't meet the security standards for the Department of Defense.”

“Where is their cloud hosting taking place? Is it overseas? Even if it's domestic, what are the security controls?” These are the questions that Masten asked as he examined the technology to fold into Chenega Systems' MaaS offering.

“As soon as Zoom for Government became available, we immediately switched over all of our programs. Now not only are we giving [customers] a good video, but it has the security that is expected within this environment.”

Chenega Systems' trust in Zoom for Government has only continued to grow as the platform earns more authorizations, attestations, and certifications. “Impact Level 4 (IL4) was a big upgrade for us because there's a difference between FedRAMP and IL4 since FedRAMP doesn't allow for those Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) conversations.”

[Zoom for Government's IL4 authorization](#) has even helped DoD employees take flexible work in stride. “IL4 for both video and VoIP has opened up an entire realm of work they can do remotely, which has been great for the workforce, especially given the pandemic and new remote work policies being adopted in the DoD.”

Programs built off a comprehensive platform

While there's no one-size-fits-all approach to Chenega Systems' offerings, all their programs include a unique mix of certain Zoom solutions, including combining [Zoom Webinars](#) and [Zoom Rooms](#) to create the ultimate all-hands environment.

Chenega Systems built an all-hands offering for the Air Force to host educational opportunities for airmen. “They use the system for everything — VIP events with generals and secretaries of the defense, all types of (AAA) events

Chenega Systems' programs strive to provide the communications backbone that each unique organization needs at that time, picking from Zoom's menu of solutions to enable impactful transformation. As Masten noted, "Everybody out of the gate gets access to video and [VoIP](#) for day-to-day work. Zoom Rooms are also critical; we set up conference rooms and huddle rooms — if it has a screen, we usually turn it into a Zoom Room. We even have mobile Zoom Rooms on carts that are battery-powered so people can do adjunct meetings."

Supporting a modern government workplace

To Chenega Systems, hybrid work is not a possibility but a reality. "It's becoming clear to us that the future is not going to be fully remote or in office, it's going to be hybrid. The "Modernization as a Service" offering that we provide needs to be planned right from day one to enable hybrid work," said Masten.

Masten's already noticing that flexible work has a few side effects, such as a competitive edge in recruiting. "One of the big challenges that the DoD has is attracting talent away from the tech companies. Now, you're no longer relegated to a localized area. So, from a recruiting standpoint, the Zoom platform has really enabled the government to shift how it gets talent," added Masten.

And Masten is ready to help support the modern government workplace that will attract and retain this talent. He's already looking at new Zoom solutions and how he can weave them into his programs, as he noted, "We're hoping to make it so one person can be in the room writing on a [Zoom Whiteboard](#), and somebody sitting in their house can see that on their screen and interact and with it live. I think that's going to be really critical."

And he thinks the government is in a position to continue growing and evolving too. "We're seeing a policy shift from the government...there's an evolution of progress, the DNA of the organization changes because of the technology that they have," he added.