



Use Case for Software
Vendors: Sales Cycle

Table of Contents

Purpose and intended audience:	1
AppZero is the solution so, what's the problem?	1
AppZero solution ... just enough technical detail to make the business case(s)	2
At a glance virtualization for ISVs	3
Package once – run everywhere	3
The Proof of Concept is the pinnacle of pre-sales activity	4
Here's where AppZero comes in	4
PoC to production ... and beyond	5
Win/win – do it your way and we can go away	6
Technology that improves ISV business	6

Purpose and intended audience:

Your company's product is software. Revenue comes from selling software, not from demoing it or from proving the concept. But reality requires that before you can realize any revenue, you must first do the labor-intensive, revenue-free work that is the proof of concept (PoC) and the less-demanding, but more frequently required, demo.

This paper introduces the ways AppZero can strip the labor required to configure and implement your PoCs and demos – whether on site or in the cloud. Resulting business gains include:

- Reduce the time it takes to configure PoCs and demos from hours and days, to minutes
- Increase the quality of PoCs and demos by eliminating configuration errors
- Speed the sales cycle cutting time from initial demo to purchase order

The intended audience for this paper is anyone responsible for generating software sales revenue, supporting a software sales cycle, or implementing software for a customer. Independent software vendor (ISV) sales, professional services, and sales engineers will be particularly interested in how AppZero software can directly impact the sales cycle, while IT professionals will find advantages in the time saved throughout the product lifecycle. (A companion technical drill down paper is available.)

AppZero is the solution so, what's the problem?

People are the problem:

- *Sales professionals* think that sales engineers take too long setting up demos and PoCs – and it's rare that the process goes smoothly. Frequently the availability – or shortage -- of solid sales engineer (SE) headcount governs the speed and volume of sales activity. There are only so many technically strong SEs who are also sales-savvy enough to stand up in front of prospective customers – and when those SEs are booked, new sales activities stall.

Want: easier and smooth PoCs, higher win rates, faster time to purchase order; more commission and lower cost of sales

- *Sales engineers* and customer-facing technical professionals are pretty universally agreed that installation and configuration work is very time consuming, painful, boring, and doesn't even always work. For folks who like technology, doing this routine and repetitive thankless work is the worst part of their jobs. And sales just doesn't get why we can't provision an enterprise application as easily as a phone app.

Want: installation and configuration work removed from PoC and demo efforts; freedom from the inconsistencies of customer environments and demands

- *Customers* are the bane of software sales. They change their minds and when they do, they change their demands – demo on our machine in our datacenter. Nope. Do it in the cloud. Now that I think of it, make it a PoC. And, in a world with few guarantees,

you can bet your lunch money that whatever environmental requirements the customer has promised to provide will bear almost no resemblance to what actually awaits your SE on site.

Want: a way to protect the sales process from the wild card that is the prospective customer while simultaneously delighting them; customer-proof your demos, PoCs, and implementations.... And make your customers happy at the same time.

Use of AppZero's software addresses all of these sales-cycle related problem sets, without requiring application re-write, re-engineering, or any change to the logical flow of established business processes. Everyone can do more of what makes them productive and less of what is simply routine or problematic. Customer-facing professionals and customers alike benefit, as does the bottom line.

AppZero solution ... just enough technical detail to make the business case(s)

In a nutshell: AppZero *packages* up an application (Windows and Linux server; Windows desktop) ... for *instant deployment* with the simplicity of a copy ... which is made possible because the application has been *preinstalled, preconfigured* and *encapsulated* in a file that holds elements or items that the application may need to run well, but ... *does not contain an operating system (OS)*. The result is that fully configured applications can be instantly deployed at the click of a mouse for instant, error-free PoCs, demos, and implementations.

Application agility – the freedom to quickly and precisely provision and deploy even complex, multi-tiered application – is the point of AppZero's OS-free encapsulation. The secret is in what this approach prevents, as much as in what it enables.

In traditional installations, an application becomes entwined with the environment as it associates itself with configuration files, binaries, libraries, the registry, making changes to the underlying OS as it runs. In no time, the application is inseparable from that environment – rigid and immovable. So, each time an application is needed somewhere else, someone needs to do the grueling, repetitive, error prone, and time-consuming work to install and configure it.

Because AppZero packages an application with all it needs, but without an OS, the application can be freely moved anywhere that there is a machine– physical or virtual, in a customer's datacenter or in any number of clouds – as long as there is a compatible OS running. Point and click, copy and move deployment = instant PoC and demos.

When the application runs, it is moderated by a light intercept layer that isolates the application from the OS. This layer redirects any modifications that are made to an application's artifacts (files, registry) keeping them contained in the AppZero encapsulation file (described in call out box below). This encapsulation means that as the OS runs and changes, application changes are not entwined with the OS. So, the application is free to move again ... and again. The application can move from cloud to cloud, with no lock-in, and back to the data center. Any changes that are made during the course of a PoC are captured and easily harvested when the PO is signed and implementation commences.

At a glance virtualization for ISVs

Quick history (with apologies to IBM, which first virtualized on their mainframes in the 60s): Geniuses at VMware (now owned by EMC) came up with the idea to separate an OS from the underlying machine thereby making it possible to have software-based Virtual Machines (VM), each running its own OS on a physical server. Because there could be numerous VMs running on any server, the savings from consolidation won the company a giant share of a market they created. And it wasn't long before ISVs saw a way to make their applications quickly portable – packaged up on a VM.

Why VMs aren't a great answer for ISVs: The problem with distributing applications on VMs (frequently called Virtual Appliances) is twofold: 1.) the resultant package is huge because it contains the application and the OS, making it very cumbersome to distribute over a network. Weighing in at multiple gigabytes (GB) it can take days to copy over the Internet, and 2.) Microsoft frowns heavily on folks distributing their OS, so this approach is only good for Linux applications. This restriction is not good news for the Microsoft-dominant crowd of ISVs.

Why AppZero's OS-free approach works so well for ISVs: AppZero's OS-free encapsulation makes it 1.) very small (MBs vs. GBs) and suitable for deployment over any network. The difference in time that size makes is the difference between moving an application over lunch instead of days and, 2.) not a matter for Microsoft attention or charge because your application is travelling without an OS.

Plus: AppZero is hypervisor agnostic, which means that, in addition to being fit for deployment on physical machines, encapsulated applications are equally at home on any cloud – free to move without re-engineering or any lock-in. “Free to move” means just that.

**Application virtualization:* Some people use the phrase “application virtualization” to mean running an application in a VM environment (virtualized). By contrast, AppZero does application virtualization by actually separating the application from the OS so that it can run in both virtualized and physical environments. AppZero encapsulates an application and its dependencies (except for an OS) in a file that we call a Virtual Application Appliance (VAA). The application runs in the VAA and is always ready to move, complete with any configuration changes or updates it might have made.

Package once – run everywhere

AppZero has tools to create VAAs from existing applications as well as from new installs. (Note: see Virtualization call out box for definition of VAA*)

1. In the case of a brand new installation of an application, AppZero uses a snapshot approach. A snapshot of the machine is taken before the application is installed and again after installation. The AppZero creation tool captures the differences, including any configuration changes. This approach means that you can continue to use whatever configuration tools your SEs are used to for such activities as creating specialized configurations, pre-populating databases, or setting up custom security. All that work is captured by AppZero's creation tool and contained in the VAA along with the application, which is now ready to be repeatedly moved with a copy.

2. AppZero also automates the capture and encapsulation of an existing application and its dependencies. In this case, an SE runs the application in a fresh/empty VAA on a target machine (preferably on a LAN for security and speed). As the application executes on the target machine, AppZero retains a connection to the source machine. When the application that is running on the target machine cannot find something it needs (such as a file, or configurable element ...), the connection makes it possible to find the “missing piece” and deliver it to the target application for inclusion in the VAA. This approach assures an accurate capture of dependencies and requirements as defined on-demand by the executing application itself.

Applications packaged in an AppZero VAA are very easy to move, which allows ISVs to do more with existing SE and sales resources – doing it better and faster than even the best technical talent in the firm can do:

- Run the application anywhere and everywhere – package once
- Run it instantly – there is no installation of the application, simply copy and run
- Run it error free – effectively establish a “gold” configuration, which also frees up SE time

The net effect is as if you cloned your most talented SE, making sure their work is available at every customer demo, PoC, or implementation – at no additional cost.

The Proof of Concept is the pinnacle of pre-sales activity

You spend a lot of time, effort, talent, and expense on PoCs. Why? Because, for better or for worse, the PoC is often the make/break point in the sales cycle. And it is also frequently competitive. The last two or three standing are given the same amount of time and resource to perform the same set of requirements under the watchful eyes of influencers and decision makers.

Does this picture sound familiar? The customer has promised a clean machine and the assistance of their top ops guy for this trial. But when your SE arrives on site, the machine is anything but clean, the ops guy is off putting out a fire, and the selection committee has decided they want to see it running in a cloud after all. Change and uncertainty dog every PoC. If anything goes wrong in the process, the customer will assume that you and your application are the culprits.

But even if the customer side of the equation were as smooth as silk, installation and configuration of complex applications is a tricky business on its own. Often it’s a group effort. Statistically it is very error prone. Given the choice, it’s not the aspect that most sales VPs would choose to showcase to prospective customers.

*The sad fact of ISV life is that while a good PoC doesn’t guarantee a win,
a bad one pretty much hands you a loss.*

Here’s where AppZero comes in

Shrink the install, set up, and configuration time to zero. Now, implementation of a fully configured application is a matter of copy and run. And, because the configuration is one that has been fully vetted back at the ranch, the PoC kicks off flawlessly as well as effortlessly. A good start that makes your technical staff look very competent and your product very reliable.

Plus, you have now gained the advantage of time over your competitors. How much time depends on the time you'd gain if your technical team could substitute the work normally required to do an install, setup, and configuration for a simple copy. You know your application and your teams, so you also know whether your savings would count in hours or days.

What will you do with freed up time that was originally allotted for installation and configuration? You are likely to spend the time actually working with your prospective customers, doing the promised work as well as getting deeper understanding of the dynamics and requirements Strengthening the working relationship and the confidence the customer has in your people, processes, and product.

What would having more time than your competitor mean to your results? Is it likely to increase your win rate? If so, AppZero means increased business. If not, AppZero still frees up valuable SE resources to be used in more opportunities, doing technical work rather than drudge work. And, the use of a gold implementation means reduced risk of problems, delays, and bad PoCs.

To recap advantages AppZero brings to pre-sales PoC and demos:

- Installation and configuration time is cut to zero
- 'Gold' implementations reduce the risk of error and are easily reused and shared
- Scarce technical resources are freed up, so you can actually do more with less
- The ability to more quickly engage opportunities makes sales more agile
- You have the flexibility to effortlessly accommodate customers as they change their mind
- Decrease the cost of sales
- The sum of the advantages increases the odds of winning more business.

PoC to production ... and beyond

Harvest the work done in your PoC: It is not uncommon for staff from the ISV and prospective customer to make changes and tweaks over the course of a PoC. These efforts and activities can be harvested because when the application is moved, it takes the application state with it. When the purchase order is signed and it's time for implementation, the application complete with any changes can be simply picked up and moved to a different machine – in your customer's data center or in any cloud.

Any cloud, anytime: There is no need to rework the application or change the configuration to suit the environment. Just copy to move an AppZero VAA to and from servers – physical or virtual in your customer's data center – and/or to/from Amazon's web services (AWS), IBM SmartCloud, Rackspace, Microsoft's Azure ... The ability to move into and out of disparate clouds without lock-in means that you deliver your application ready to participate in whatever cloud futures your customer may be planning.

Streamlined support: This approach works for complex applications as well. ISV applications can be combined with third party solutions, tailored, configured, and optimized, delivered in an OS-free VAA that is ready to be deployed on the customer OS. Should a problem arise, the VAA can be shipped back to the ISVs support center for close and accurate forensics that don't rely on a customer's interpretation of the production environment.

Support your application, not the OS: Because your application is packaged independently of the OS, the AppZero approach reduces the number of application/technical environment combinations your dev/test team needs to maintain and test. Your technical team can make

changes to the application without concern for the impact those changes will have on the underlying OS. In this arrangement, update and maintenance of application and supporting environments have clear lines of delineation, which frees the ISV to be agile in responding to market changes with innovation – a valuable differentiator in a competitive market.

Win/win – do it your way and we can go away

Non-intrusive: AppZero is non-intrusive to the technology and business environment an ISV has established. Nothing has to change for results to be better. Sales reps behave the same, but get better results from serving more prospective customers faster. SEs use their favored configuration tools but have to use them less often, being able to reuse and share work rather than repeating it. Established processes can be employed with an increased likelihood of smooth sailing because configuration errors are reduced. And development and test can do what they already do, but do it freed from concerns about the underlying infrastructure.

Everyone does the same thing, only better, faster, more simply, and with increased positive results.

Dissolve: We even have an answer for ISVs who want to experience the many benefits of using AppZero for PoCs, demos, and initial implementations, but stop short of wanting to use it in production. The answer? We can go away.

AppZero offers a Dissolve function that does just what the name implies – it dissolves. The application is delivered fully configured and ready to run. Life is good. The VAA is dissolved, and the application proceeds as if it had been natively installed. The application entwines itself with the OS and becomes enmeshed with the machine, losing its ability to be freely moved. But the ISV enjoyed all the pre-sales benefits of using AppZero automation.

Technology that improves ISV business

For now, we'll wrap up this paper with a consideration of the high-level business drivers behind AppZero's positive impact on the ISV bottom line. Use of AppZero in pre-sales activities lets you:

- Slash configuration and installation time to zero, decreasing the cost of sales, improving PoC quality, maximizing SE resources, and increasing win rate with associated revenue
- Easily deliver complex systems fully and accurately pre-configured
- Improve customer experience and perception of quality and competence
- Focus high-skilled technical service professionals on high-value services rather than on low-margin, repetitive, labor-intensive work that can be automated
- Reduce time to value for customers and speed time to revenue

If you want to learn more about AppZero technology specifics and details, you can always reach out to us directly or visit our site: www.appzero.com.

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