New Security Procedures and Training Exceed US Customs and Border Patrol Certification Requirements

Xilinx

Situation: Xilinx, with headquarters in San Jose, CA, is the worldwide leader in complete programmable logic solutions. With more than 3,300 employees, and multiple offices in the United States and overseas, Xilinx leads the Programmable Logic Device market which is one of the fastest growing segments of the semiconductor industry. Xilinx chips can be found in a wide variety of digital electronic applications ranging from HDTVs to wireless base stations and portable handsets. The import and export of chip and chip-related products requires stringent security as do the company's offices which contain classified information and trade secrets.

In 2006, Ron Pennington, Global Security Manager for Xilinx, and his evaluation team who worked in diverse areas of the company including purchasing, IT and finance, issued a Request for Proposal and reviewed the leading physical security companies.

"We wanted a company that could bring industry knowledge and expertise and who led their industry in training," said Pennington. Allied Universal Security Services which has earned national recognition for its training programs on Training magazine's Top 125 list, was chosen.

Xilinx presented a formidable post-9/11 security challenge to Allied Universal with the advent of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism. C-TPAT is a joint government-business initiative to build cooperative relationships that strengthen overall supply chain and border security. Through this initiative, U.S. Customs and Border Protection asked Xilinx to ensure the integrity of their security practices and communicate their security guidelines to business partners within their supply chain.

"Xilinx had to go through a validation process to obtain C-TPAT certification from the U.S. CBP," said Pennington. "It was vital that we achieve this certification as it will maximize security protocol and simplify and expedite our supply chain processes. Moving our products quickly and safely through customs is critical and this certification will help make that happen."

Challenge: An effective security program was in place but the team faced a challenge when Xilinx began to pursue a certification that would require enhanced security. Working closely with Pennington, Allied Universal's challenge was to put programs and policies in place that would ensure C-TPAT validation.

"C-TPAT is an evolving program that helps facilitate trade to and from the U.S. and around the globe, securing it from acts of terrorism and assuring that goods arriving in the U.S. are legitimate and that appropriate duties and fees are paid," said Larry Zulawski, Allied Universal's National Account Manager for Xilinx, North America. "We first looked at the Xilinx supply chain and analyzed security protocol nationally and internationally to evaluate current security processes and determine what needed improvement."

Location:

Xilinx San Jose, CA

Statistics:

> Leader in complete programmable logic solutions
> Customs and Border Patrol Certification
> Multiple office locations

One change was enhancing the visitor process by mandating that photo IDs not only be checked at all locations, but that they also be compared against the restricted party list. This list identifies individuals and companies who are restricted or prohibited from exporting or providing services of any kind of any party contained in the U.S. government's export denial, debarment, and blocked persons lists

"Keeping our employees versed in security regulations is crucial, and I asked Allied Universal if we could create an online training academy and resource repository for C-TPAT," said Pennington. "I am a one-man security 'band' who views our company's support organizations as our life-blood. When you ask what keeps me up at night, it's that 3 a.m. call when our dispatcher is asked a question by an employee in direct need of assistance. I didn't want that answer to be coming from a three-ring binder with coffee stains. We needed an online, constantly updated resource that would be easy to use and accessible by all employees."

Allied Universal, the security industry's training leader, regards training as a critical element in providing high-quality security services. Delivering consistent training programs in a variety of formats, including an online training academy, helps ensure training is readily available to Allied Universal employees throughout the country. That same philosophy would prove to be an important piece of the Xilinx C-TPAT certification.

Enter Greg Travelstead, Allied Universal's Security Site Manager for Xilinx at their Colorado facility, who has deep security sector expertise and is also highly skilled in building web applications. Using Microsoft Office SharePoint which facilitates collaboration and provides content management features, along with the Adobe CS3 Web Development Suite, Travelstead built an online Xilinx Training Academy. A comprehensive program was developed that offers a complete C-TPAT study guide and interactive testing. "The technology we rolled out ensured that Xilinx's global needs would be assured with training modules and information targeted to that region and practice area," said Travelstead.

Results: In March 2008, Xilinx received word that their C-TPAT certification submission was rewarded with Tier 3 validation, which only 5 percent of companies receive on their first application. "This certification has real benefits for Xilinx as it simplifies and expedites our supply chain processes," said Pennington. "Customs and Border Protection's site evaluation went extraordinarily well. The CBP evaluators were impressed with the company's stance regarding C-TPAT and cited several best practices among our procedures. Security received good reviews across the board and there were no recommendations for security improvements. The evaluators recommended Xilinx for their highest rating."

In addition, this highly important Customs and Border Patrol certification, the Allied Universal and Xilinx collaboration also resulted in an enhanced security program overall. The already efficient security program was revamped and the end product is a standardized and consistent program across all sites.

This included not just developing new systems but also putting them into action and ensuring that the new procedures would continue. Communications with the officers was just as important as the training.

"To fully implement this training and the new security procedures, we needed our security personnel to understand and embrace why we were doing this," explained Zulawski. "We employ top-quality personnel here but many of them are part-time so we needed to be constantly aware of the importance of communication."

The Xilinx security officers, the majority of who are retired law enforcement and work part time for Allied Universal at Xilinx, were very receptive to the need for the new certification and enhanced security program. Thanks to the new online training academy, all 65 security officers in North America completed the new training within five days.

"Not only were the officers trained quickly, but the training results were easily uploaded into Allied Universal's internal system that tracks training compliance," Travelstead added. "Compliance will be an important element moving forward and Allied Universal's systems ensure only properly trained officers are at the Xilinx sites."

"We expended a great deal of effort to review, update and document all of our C-TPAT related processes and procedures," adds Pennington. "We closed gaps and tightened our security posture across the board and developed and delivered a best-in-class training program which includes C-TPAT training. In fact, the training impressed CBP so much that they asked for a copy and permission to use it as a "best practice" example for other companies.

Moreover, we have assisted other business groups at Xilinx in acquiring an appropriate level of preparedness based on our work and attained knowledge. C-TPAT certification is a constant process requiring annual updates to Xilinx's profile with CBP and periodic site validations at supply chain involved locations. Allied Universal has been a valued partner in our company's stance of constant improvement in order to remain in the top tier of security operations," said Pennington.

The C-TPAT certification process is lengthy and the relationship between Allied Universal and Xilinx was an important component of the high rating awarded by Customs and Border Protection. This year-long initiative involved much more than meeting minimum requirements.

The development and implementation of an online training academy may not be the typical expectation of a security services company. But that type of service is what Pennington has come to expect from Allied Universal. The Xilinx and Allied Universal teams worked together to develop solutions that would not only meet certification requirements but also help ensure the best possible security protocols and training for all Xilinx sites.