

The Matthews Company Case Study

Retail - Construction

Situation

The Matthews Company is one of the largest home-builders in California, with operations starting more than 25 years ago. With a total of 300 employees, 150 The Matthews Company employees are involved with the construction of each home, requiring them to be on-site for the majority of any particular project. This presents a unique situation for The Matthews Company to cope with because remote offices are just that - remote, often nothing more than a trailer on acres of undeveloped land.

As soon as a residential community work site is determined, the office is brought in and equipped with DSL so employees can communicate with headquarters. An Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program has also been rolled out to ensure smooth resource and materials management. Now that processes such as inventory control, order tracking and customer service, can be managed securely online, the need for a controlled network environment was even more critical.

With no firewall in place, the satellite offices were rapidly exposed to all kinds of attacks and infections, including spyware and adware. IT Director, Joseph Mann, quickly recognized that The Matthews Company could no longer function without having security systems in place to protect its network, "The decision to place a firewall in production is not an option in today's technology environment - it is a requirement," Mann said.

Solution

Fortinet came highly recommended to Mann. He and his staff compared the FortiGate antivirus firewall solution to similar products from Check Point and Cisco. They evaluated each product based on product price, licensing costs, feature-set and ease of deployment. Both the Check Point and Cisco products were more expensive than the FortiGate systems, and would have required Mann to hire more staff. In addition, the competitive products only included a firewall, and did not offer a Unified Threat Management security solution. Considering these factors, The Matthews Company decided on the FortiGate-300.



"After installing the firewall, we were able to quickly (within an hour) determine what machines were infected and remove them with no re-infections. We have had no new infections through the firewall."

- Joseph Mann, IT Director

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It took Mann and one of his IT Managers less than five hours to deploy the FortiGate system. Upon initial launch, 48,000 Internet sessions were discovered - obviously The Matthews Company' computers had been hijacked and were being controlled by someone outside of its network. Within hours of operation behind the FortiGate-300 system, many infected machines were found and removed from the network for disinfection. With the removal of the "zombie" computers, employees were able to use email again as well as restore printer connections.

The on-going maintenance of the FortiGate-300 has required little time from Mann and his staff. Due to the intuitive GUI, the IT team at The Matthews Company was comfortable using the FortiGate antivirus firewall in a very short time, and with automatic updates from the FortiProtect Service, the FortiGate-300 system is always equipped to protect The Matthews Company' network from the latest attacks.

Success

Within days of the launch, a significant decrease in spam was noticed throughout the company. The company had previously been losing hours of valuable productivity every day due to the amount of spam employees received. "We went from having thousands of spam emails a day to less than 20 spam emails a day," said Mann. Spyware and adware infections were immediately cut due to the FortiGate's software and FortiASIC's ability to block grayware (including spyware and adware) at the network level before it enters the corporate network.

More than 120 users and 18 remote sites are currently being protected by the FortiGate-300 system. The Matthews Company has had such success with the Fortinet Real-Time Network Protection solution, that plans are underway to deploy FortiGate-60 systems in each of their sales offices and construction sites.

Mann describes the overall benefit of the FortiGate-300 as its ability to save his team time. "We are no longer fighting infected PCs over and over. After implementation, the system requires little to no daily maintenance. We don't worry about break-ins, and we sleep at night," Mann said.

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