

# Unifying channel management

Each week in *ARN*, we interview the local channel manager of some of the world's most influential hardware and software vendors. This week, Fortinet's sales director, South Asia and A/NZ, Benjamin Teh, comes to the table with JENNIFER O'BRIEN.



An up-and-comer in the unified threat management (UTM) market, Fortinet is planning to make its mark in the Australian channel. Who better to lead the reseller team than Teh, who becomes as animated as an excited child reaching into a cookie jar when discussing anything related to security.

Hailing from a distributor and reseller background — having trained in computer science and engineering — Teh is looking to boost sales in the UTM space and enhance enterprise security.

IDC defines UTM security appliances as products that unify and integrate multiple security features onto a single hardware platform. Network firewall capabilities, intrusion detection and prevention, and gateway antivirus functionality all fall under the UTM umbrella. According to IDC, the UTM segment of the threat management appliance category was the fastest growing segment of the security market in 2004.

By 2008, IDC predicts UTM spending will account for more than half of the \$US3.45 billion threat management market — outpacing traditional firewall/VPN appliances to reach a 58 per cent share.

Given the encouraging market outlook, Teh wants to challenge the likes of Cisco and position the company as a formidable player in the UTM space. His immediate goals include breaking into the financial sector and capturing a chunk of market share from the antivirus players.

#### How did you get involved with the company?

**Benjamin Teh (BT):** I've been involved with security for quite some time. I came from the channel, working up and down the chain for a reseller called KNX and a distributor.

Then four years ago, I joined WatchGuard as a regional sales engineer. I was educating users about the risks and threats and the need for security. It wasn't all about the product, but talking about positioning and the need for security.

#### What's the main Fortinet product? What does it do?

**BT:** We offer the FortiGate series of ASIC-accelerated antivirus firewalls, which detect and eliminate content-based threats from email, Web and file transfer traffic — such as viruses, worms, intrusions and inappropriate Web content — without degrading network performance.

There are about 18 products in the FortiGate line, addressing different capacities and end-user environments. The products are designed for telecommuters and SOHO, the SMB market, for mid-size enterprises and for large enterprises and service providers. The company recently launched new additions to the portfolio including FortiMail, a

secure messaging system; and a managed anti-spam service called FortiGuard-Antispam.

#### What's the main problem the product line addresses?

**BT:** Conventional network protection systems, such as firewalls and host-based antivirus software, lack the dedicated hardware required to perform the deep packet analysis, content reassembly, and application-level screening to detect these threats without imposing unacceptable delays on real-time network applications. Fortinet's series of antivirus firewalls provide systems that deliver complete network-level and content-level protection at the network edge.

#### How does Fortinet differentiate from its competitors?

**BT:** The product delivers a full range of network-level and application-level services in integrated, easily managed platforms. Security devices these days need to be a lot more knowledgeable about the traffic streams that are coming into the network.

They need to make a judgement about whether the traffic is secured or has been tampered with. UTM appliances allow us to be a bit more intelligent because we don't just offer firewall functionality, but also content inspection.

#### What's the distribution model? Any changes on tap this year?

**BT:** We work with Whitegold and Lan 1 in Australia. There are no changes to the distribution ranks but we are looking for suitable partners to take us into key vertical markets. We have partners in the managed security space today and are successful. We've also been strong in the education sector. We want to break into the financial sector and government space.

We're also looking to have local training centres here in Australia to conduct certification training. Today, Fortinet does that on its own. With the change, the distribution partners could take over the role. That's one possibility, although it's early days.

#### What are some of the main challenges in the local security market?

**BT:** A lot of companies have put in point solutions. They've bought a bunch of technologies, hacked it together in the network and that's considered security. But it needs to be consolidated so the devices are a bit smarter. Financial institutions, for example, have monolithic networks with point solutions in place. For them to change the way they think of security is challenging.

But companies can use the FortiGate products in conjunction with their current infrastructure. The units can be used with existing firewalls, VPN gateways or other security devices, which protects investments in legacy systems.