“Green” Retail Cosmetics Company Gets Serious About Cybersecurity In Its Stores

Business Challenge
Named one of the 50 best employers in Canada, Lush Cosmetics has built a loyal customer base with its fun, creative Fresh Handmade Cosmetics line and its strong ethics. With more than 250 stores in North America, business is thriving, but lack of visibility and control of security in a growing retail store network made management nervous.

As Lush was growing, they didn’t want to get bogged down with operating complicated networks and providing IT support in retail stores spread across the U.S. So they outsourced security and firewall management to a managed services provider.

By 2014, Lush had grown to 230+ stores. This network had become business critical, and having it in someone else’s hands was becoming a liability. What’s more, they just couldn’t get the threat analytics they wanted from the firewalls currently installed in stores. They decided to bring security back in-house.

“We had no visibility of threats we were exposed to in stores or how they were being dealt with,” says Paul Jackson, IT Director. To be fully PCI compliant, they needed to be able to access logs of intrusion attempts at the very least. But the details available from the current system were lacking and difficult to extract. “It was time to rectify this situation, and bring the security of the store network back under our control,” continues Jackson.
Integrated Network and Security
After evaluating a couple of branch security options from the usual suspects, while already being familiar and happy with Fortinet in their Administrative offices, it was clear that Fortinet’s solution based on FortiWiFi would be easier to manage and would provide the best visibility and control of both wired and wireless security. Plus there would be no learning curve.

“So far, we’ve been very lucky. We’ve never had a serious breach. But we’re not taking any chances,” Jackson admits. “Cyberattacks will get more frequent, and more nasty. We must have the proper security framework to protect corporate assets and customers’ identities today, and tomorrow,” Jackson adds.

With FortiWiFi they have everything they need in a single “put-anywhere” appliance: switch ports for PoS terminals, Wi-Fi for staff, WAN/VPN, WAN optimization and the full gamut of security services from web filtering to data loss protection.

Best of all, the security is backed by FortiGuard Labs, which continually researches the latest attacks and delivers frequent real-time updates to Fortinet products, automatically providing immediate protection against newly discovered virus and malware threats.

“The replacement project went without a hitch,” says Dale Hobbs, Manager of Network and Security Systems. “In only four weeks, we ripped and replaced the existing firewalls with a FortiWiFi 60D in more than 200 stores!” A few larger stores added a FortiAP access point as well, to expand the coverage area.

Lush has implemented Intrusion Protection, URL filtering to block access to malicious sites and virus scanning. They also use application controls to block various apps such as BitTorrent, while prioritizing PoS and ERP traffic. There are near-term plans to begin using Data Loss Prevention. 

Centralized Management
Through FortiManager, Hobbs controls the infrastructure and the security for every store from his office in Vancouver, and gets detailed usage analytics down to the individual device, user or app, regardless of whether the device is wired or wireless.

Threat analytics and reporting are equally easy. “I get alerts for anything important, and I can see at a glance what threats are happening anywhere in the network, and drill down to the devices involved. It is very intuitive. Our regulatory PCI-DSS compliance reporting is now a one-button press,” explains Hobbs.

Doing More with the Network
Stores are small – 450-500 square feet. That’s a counter, a couple of tills and displays of beautifully arranged, handmade toiletries and cosmetics. PoS terminals are wired and the Wi-Fi is exclusively for staff. Shoppers are not there to hang out. There’s really little need for guest access. “Our priority is security. We don’t want technology for technology’s sake. It has got to give us a real return,” remarks Jackson.

Lush is considering using the Wi-Fi and FortiPresence to learn more about shopper behavior from visitor presence metrics across all stores. “Anonymous, high-level data about store traffic would give us new perspectives on a store’s sales performance, staffing levels, layout and many other commercial criteria,” Jackson continues.

With complete visibility of application usage, Lush can now consider whether other applications such as Unified Communications and surveillance could move to the network. For example, moving the phone system to VoIP could save up to $100K per year in telecom costs.

“In the past, we had to be careful not to swamp our low-speed WAN with non-critical traffic. Now we have the tools to properly engineer the bandwidth and prioritize apps end-to-end. So we can do much more with the network,” says Hobbs.