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– Michele Fini
 EMEA IT Manager
 QubicaAMF



QubicaAMF provides bowling centers with safety and remote technical support via Fortinet solutions

Introduction

QubicaAMF Worldwide is a leading manufacturer and marketer of bowling and amusements products. With over 100 years of combined experience in the bowling and amusements industries, it offers a complete line of innovative, quality solutions for bowling and Family Entertainment Centers.

The company was officially set up on June 14, 2005, when industry leaders AMF Bowling Products and Qubica Worldwide decided to join forces. Qubica, a relatively young Company, was founded in 1993 in Bologna, and was able to grow exponentially in just a few years, thanks to the development of its very innovative and high-tech Bowler Entertainment System and Conqueror Pro centralized management system. On its side, AMF has revolutionized the bowling industry a number of times, from the invention and production of the first automatic pinspotters in 1946, to the creation of the first automated scoring system more than 30 years ago, just to name a few.

Synergies between the two companies, one younger, high-tech, innovative and technology driven, and the other widely experienced both on mechanical and electromechanical bowling products (pinspotters, ball returns, lanes, etc.) and consumers products (house balls, pins, rental shoes, etc.), enabled the new company to succeed with shared objectives.

Details

Customer Name: QubicaAMF
Industry: Other
Location: Italy (Headquarters)

Challenges

- Qubica needed to establish a secure communication channel for technical support without interfering with any other systems that were in place within the network
- Qubica wanted a scalable and flexible solution that could ensure technical support worldwide and that could easily be adapted to customers' needs

Objectives

- To find a solution that could satisfy a wide range of infrastructures
- To increase IT security, management and control

Deployment

- FortiManager®
- FortiGate-300C
- FortiGate-20C
- FortiGate-40C
- FortiGate-60C

QubicaAMF's strategy is to develop new products and solutions for the bowling industry, thanks to an impressive Research & Development team, employing over 50 people full-time.

QubicaAMF employs 100 people in Bologna and about 400 in the United States, plus some commercial offices in Europe. The company's mission is to work together with its customers, the owners of bowling centers, to develop their business with innovative solutions leading to an ever-new and fun bowling experience.

The Challenge

The Italian headquarters of the company develops Conqueror Pro software, the core of QubicaAMF solutions, which manage all activities within the bowling center: games booking and scoring as well as accessory activities, such as loyalty cards, bar orders and electronic payments.

To ensure remote accessibility and offer technical support for the safe management of software updates, QubicaAMF decided to implement within these centers a firewall-protected network to allow safe connection between the Conqueror Pro in bowling centers and the QubicaAMF central systems. The goal was to establish a secure communication channel for technical support without interfering with any other systems that were in place within the network. A proprietary firewall, developed internally, has thus been used for a few years. Over time, however, the company decided to adopt a standard solution.

"We evaluated solutions from leading market players because we wanted a scalable and flexible solution that could ensure technical support worldwide and that could easily be adapted to our customers' needs. In most cases bowling centers have small networks, but there are also customers with large chains that have rather complex and sophisticated networks. We therefore needed a solution that could satisfy a wide range of infrastructures. For QubicaAMF, customer attention is paramount and we try to offer the most suitable solution according to their different needs," said Michele Fini, QubicaAMF EMEA IT Manager.

The Solution

Ease of use, especially the FortiManager® centralized management console that lets you install updates and monitor all firewalls installed in bowling centers around the world, was the key factor that drove the choice of Fortinet.

"When we tested the FortiGate® network security device together with FortiManager console, we realized that we had found the right solution, both in terms of ease

of configuration, and for monitoring and updating all machines," continued Michele Fini.

In 2012, the technological choice was made in two months by comparing the various solutions on the market. Within a couple of months the prototype was developed, then two centers were selected, one in Italy and one in England, for the initial tests with customers. After ensuring that the solution was working as expected, further tests on one British and one German center were carried out. Within one month, three different pilot centers, using different services, had been tested. "Two months after the first installations we kicked off the final product, which has since become the standard," explained Fini.

The Fortinet solution is now used worldwide by QubicaAMF. From choosing the solution to the actual implementation, it took only six months. The drive for change came from Italy, but since the technical support services are also located in the United States to follow local customers, it was decided to extend the solution there, after implementing it in Europe. Fortinet products were also implemented in QubicaAMF corporate headquarters.

Vem, Fortinet's partner, was central to QubicaAMF both in choosing the solution, once the needs were identified, and in supporting the project, from the analysis to the prototype. "One of the main objectives of the QubicaAMF project was the integration between distributed and heterogeneous environments and centralized systems, which provide the services," said Alessandro Boschetti, VEM sistemi Security and IT governance Team Leader. "For VEM it was a very important challenge because it allowed us to put all our expertise in the delivery and analysis stages of the project as well as in the area of secure networking."

QubicaAMF has installed in Bologna two Fortinet's FortiGate-300 network security appliances in high availability, which are the hubs of the various networks. In the bowling centers, however, different appliance models have been implemented: from the FortiGate-20C to -40C and -60C, depending on the size of the centers, all centrally managed through the FortiManager console. The centers feature a site-to-site link to QubicaAMF venues and therefore are accessible from the internal network for remote technical support and Conqueror software upgrade. In addition, the firewall handles traffic to the Internet for the web services provided by the centers and the protection of credit card transactions.

"We now offer new services that have been released recently, such as Facebook GameConnect, which publishes the results on Facebook in real time while you are bowling,

in addition to the usual web reservation and online score services. All is transmitted through VPN,” Fini added.

At present, there are about 50 firewalls in the world managed by FortiManager and QubicaAMF expects an average of one hundred installations per year, including new customers or replacements of old firewalls.

QubicaAMF also uses Fortinet systems for internet-based VPN connections among its offices: this is a side project that takes advantage of the same technology. It includes three locations in the United States, one in Mexico, one in Italy, one in France, one in UK and in the Netherlands, in addition to the ERP management system hosting provider, also located in the United States. Significant savings on networking costs to connect the various locations - these were previously based on private networks - were achieved without sacrificing the information reliability and safety. High-availability FortiGate-300C appliances have been implemented in main venues in Italy and the USA, while the FortiGate-60C has been adopted for smaller offices, resulting in about 280,000 dollars savings per year on costs for connecting the various venues.

The FortiGate-300C appliance offers flexibility combined with high-performance, advanced security technologies, including firewall, VPN, intrusion prevention, application control, web filtering at content level, all easily manageable from one single location. It also includes antivirus, antispam, antimalware, vulnerability and WAN optimization control. The FortiGate-20C, -40C and -60C appliances replicate the same features for smaller environments, providing full protection. The FortiManager systems offer a web-based secure interface to manage and control the entire Fortinet security infrastructure.

The Benefits

Thanks to the adoption of Fortinet solutions, QubicaAMF achieved immediate savings on communication costs among its venues, plus great benefits in terms of ease and speed of implementation of the solutions.

“When it was decided to migrate to a hosted ERP last year, Fortinet solutions made everything possible in a short time,

which was not possible previously with private network implementations. Lately, we have been able to create a hybrid cloud leveraging the same technology: we have connected a cloud VPN service to our venue, providing a private space in the public cloud, that is connected to our internal site and enabled us to install three new servers in just a few hours,” pointed out Fini.

The key advantage coming from the adoption of Fortinet solutions is to have enabled QubicaAMF’s technical support to use, configure and monitor firewalls at the bowling centers. The proprietary solution previously adopted, although technically valid, was not user friendly. In fact, the technical support staff found the solution extremely complex to use both for monitoring and operating.

“Thanks to the ease of use and ease of deployment provided by Fortinet’s products, we were able to transfer this activity to the technical support service, which not only deals with the installation and configuration of our software, but also with networking, completing the installation and monitoring the IT infrastructure at the bowling centers. This resulted in significant savings on our technicians’ time. It also helped to extend our ability to provide assistance, thanks to more resources made available by extending this activity to the technical support in the United States as well,” continued Fini.

Fortinet solutions have enabled the creation of more synergies. In addition, as Fortinet also offers the certification for credit cards transaction, QubicaAMF can provide secure transactions to its customers.

“We decided to supply the lower-end solution, in particular the FortiGate-20C, to all bowling centers as the management is similar to high-end products, with a single interface, but at reasonable cost. This gives us the opportunity to offer this solution as standard, enabling remote technical support, improving the quality of services offered to our customers and having, thanks to the monitoring carried out with FortiManager, the full visibility of our clients and any network-related problems from a single management console,” concluded Fini.



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