FURTINET®

CASE STUDY

Fortinet Helps Drive-In Restaurant Chain Improve Management and Visibility—and Keep Its Traffic Flowing

As a quick service restaurant (QSR) chain, Checkers Drive-In Restaurants has built a reputation for super-tasty hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries, and milkshakes. Currently, Checkers has 265 corporate-owned locations, and another 600 franchise locations across 38 states.

To centrally manage and secure this distributed network environment, Checkers standardized on the FortiGate Secure SD-WAN platform from Fortinet. "We need to manage a large number of locations at scale, and the only way to do it successfully is to have a product like what Fortinet offers us," says Minh Le, chief information officer at Checkers.

Gaining a Reliable, Highly Available, Scalable Infrastructure

When Le first joined Checkers two and a half years ago, the company's infrastructure was very unreliable, with no standardization. "We had a really old version of SD-WAN that just kept breaking," Le says. Looking for a vendor with a solid reputation in the security space, he reached out to Fortinet.

As a result, Checkers deployed a centralized, cloud-managed solution, with single-pane-of-glass visibility, and fast, hassle-free scalability. "Fortinet has been a lifesaver," says Le. "We open 55 locations per year and need to roll everything out quickly and easily, and the FortiGate Secure SD-WAN solution allows us to do that. Management and administration used to be like a 500-pound gorilla; now, it is like a little chipmunk."

"And Fortinet has some of the best people I have ever worked with in my career. They are knowledgeable, transparent, responsive, accountable; everything I want in a vendor."

Checkers quickly replaced its old, unreliable SD-WAN network with a FortiGate Secure SD-WAN solution at its 265 corporate-owned restaurant locations. The company immediately gained high availability, in addition to centralized management, and full control on security. "It is a perfect fit for our business to have our primary broadband coming into each restaurant, with a backup cellular connection," says Le. "It used to be an active-passive configuration, but we are leaning towards active-active, where if the broadband piece gets over-saturated, some of the traffic goes through the secondary connection as well."

Improving Cost Savings, Productivity—and Sleep

After deploying the Fortinet solution, Checkers requires fewer resources to manage the equipment. "With Fortinet, I was able to go from a team of five people just managing all the different infrastructure elements, to one person and a help desk," says Le. "The resulting cost savings could easily be in the hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars over the two- or three-year period that we are currently engaged in. And we are expanding, so those savings will continue to grow."

Going forward, Le appreciates that Fortinet can help Checkers' expansion efforts. He is also looking to standardize on the FortiGate Secure SD-WAN solution at the 600 franchise locations over time. "Technology should not hold us back from scaling, so integrating Fortinet into our process makes sense," says Le. "Our goal of opening 100 restaurants a year is easily achievable with this solution. And I can sleep better at night, knowing that Fortinet's threat intelligence is protecting my restaurants."

Checkers®
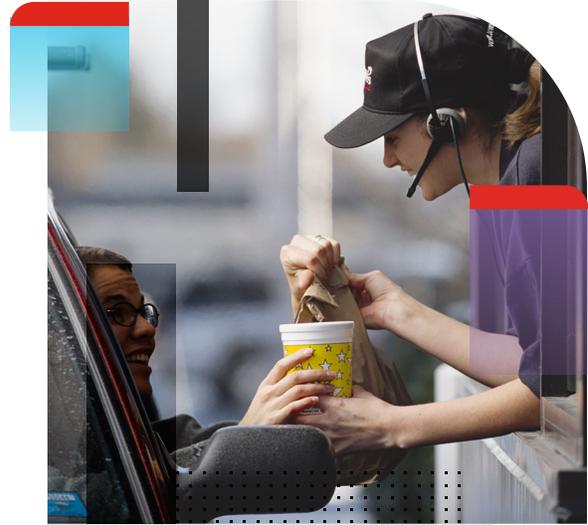
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– Minh Le, Chief Information Officer, Checkers Drive-In Restaurants

Details

Customer: Checkers Drive-In Restaurants
Industry: Retail
Location: Tampa, Florida

Business Impact

- Saved Checkers millions of dollars in personnel costs over a two- to three-year period
- Provides high availability and centralized management at scale, with full control over security
- Outstanding threat intelligence helps protect hundreds of locations
- Enables Checkers to meet their goal of opening 100 restaurants per year

Solutions

- FortiGate Secure SD-WAN
- FortiSwitch
- FortiAP
- FortiCloud

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