FORTINET

CASE STUDY

Mexican Customs Company Converges Networking and Security With the Fortinet Security Fabric

After 160 years in business, GOMSA is one of Mexico's most experienced and long-established logistics companies. While the company is multifaceted, its core business lies in customs services: managing imports and exports of all kinds of goods. The company's other services include maritime, land and air transportation, warehousing and distribution, and cargo insurance. GOMSA's headquarters are based in Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico, one of the most important seaports in Mexico. GOMSA also has offices throughout the country in Mexico City, Manzanillo, Lázaro Cárdenas, Tuxpan, Ciudad Hidalgo, Altamira, Nuevo Laredo, as well as in Laredo, TX, which is the principal port for goods transshipment between Mexico and the United States.

Managing secure and integrated information for the company's logistics business is crucial to ensure that shipments arrive at their destination on time. GOMSA has always aimed to implement systems that adequately support its operations to achieve its growth and profit objectives. Today, the company has a robust security ecosystem based on the Fortinet Security Fabric cybersecurity mesh platform.

Building a Secure and Consolidated Infrastructure

In 2008, GOMSA had an in-house-designed network infrastructure, requiring high investment and considerable communications costs. At that time, each location had its network infrastructure. As a result, site-to-site communication with an MPLS-based network was too simple, and information security was poor. As a result, users constantly complained about slow systems and a lack of information protection.

GOMSA needed to digitally transform its business, improve the customer experience, and increase employee productivity. The company sought a technology that would allow it to replace MPLS links with VPN to achieve greater speed and secure communication between branches. To that end, GOMSA implemented FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall (NGFW). This allowed the company to create VPN links to protect information and optimize network management.

Under the previous approach, it was difficult to control customer data because each office operated independently; there was no consolidated and common database for all locations. With Fortinet, the company developed a one-stop platform to centralize its operation. Thus, it could have a single communications network by integrating the active directory into this infrastructure and a single database for business management. "From the beginning, Fortinet allowed us to create a unified ecosystem to offer more speed and security. This improved our users' experience by ensuring proper access to critical business applications," says Francisco Tiburcio, Chief Technology Officer at GOMSA.

GOMSA
Go forward

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Details

Customer: GOMSA

Industry: Transportation

Location: Mexico

Number of Secure SD-WAN Locations: 9

Simultaneously, the organization replaced its sites' existing basic access points from other brands with FortiAP. It aimed to have all devices integrated by a single vendor. This would strengthen wireless connectivity at each branch with an integrated security solution that also enables secure Wi-Fi for employees and external users. The company also implemented Fortinet Secure SD-WAN for load balancing and service disruption detections.

Today, GOMSA has 550 users connecting daily to its network infrastructure, many working from home. To ensure secure and seamless connectivity for users, GOMSA implemented the FortiClient solution. Employees can now securely connect to VPNs, relying on advanced features such as web and content filtering, web security, and antivirus.

Safety at the Strategy's Core

The customs operation business involves sharing sensitive document information from customers and suppliers. At GOMSA, the IT team realized data safety had to be reinforced, although site-to-site communication had already been addressed.

Migrating to email and removing obsolete technologies such as fax required new security measures. After receiving attacks on its local Exchange email server, the company migrated to Office 365. GOMSA implemented the Fortinet email security solution, FortiMail, to prevent, detect, and respond to email-based threats, including spam, phishing, malware, and zero-day threats.

GOMSA has a rich network of websites and cloud services for its customers and suppliers. Today, GOMSA relies on FortiWeb to defend the attack surface of its internet-facing web applications and APIs. It has also implemented FortiSandbox, the AI-powered solution that delivers real-time, actionable intelligence through zero-day, advanced malware detection and response.

Centralized Management That Saves Time and Effort

When devices were located locally, service outages forced GOMSA's IT team to travel to that location or search for vendors. This resulted in additional costs in time and money. By implementing FortiManager for centralized management with automation-driven network configuration, visibility, and security policy management, the organization has achieved complete visibility and protection against security threats.

FortiManager enables GOMSA to respond promptly to user requirements. There is no IT staff in the branch offices, and they conduct all support from the headquarters in Veracruz. With FortiManager, GOMSA has gained greater operational efficiency, orchestrating all tools through a unique console. "With Fortinet, I have everything on a single platform that is robust, easy to manage, secure, and proven. Furthermore, it is not as expensive as other solutions on the market," Tiburcio states.

This deployment completed the total convergence of GOMSA's networks and security, enabling it to comply with international customs industry regulations on securing confidential information. Moreover, GOMSA's business involves customers in Europe and Asia who consume server resources 24×7. Previously, the infrastructure had service outages that resulted in a significant impact on the business. For instance, if a vessel departed without a customer's cargo, it would cost a lot of money in terms of storage and lost time.

Business Impact

- Secure platform for handling sensitive customer and supplier information

- Integration of multiple connectivity technologies under a single vendor

- High information availability across multiple locations with Fortinet Secure SD-WAN

- Centralized management to orchestrate the entire network from a single console

Products and Solutions

- FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall

- Fortinet Secure SD-WAN

- FortiAP

- FortiMail

- FortiSandbox

- FortiWeb

- FortiClient

- FortiManager

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The next step in GOMSA's technological evolution is to migrate a considerable portion of its current on-premises server systems in Veracruz to the cloud. The team also plans to move its local data center to a provider that offers greater support and security. Along this path, the company trusts Fortinet to continue supporting the business in its protection and connectivity strategy. "Fortinet is essential in this ecosystem. The Fortinet platform provides us with invaluable support for cross-site communication and cybersecurity while helping users access a protected environment," concludes Tiburcio.

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