

CASE STUDY

# Fortinet Delivers a Comprehensive Suite of Proven Products for Pike Enterprises

From managing and upgrading infrastructure to performing on-the-ground utility maintenance, Pike Corporation keeps towns and cities connected. Without the right security in place, Pike teams would not be able to confidently support their wide range of projects and field services that impact millions of residents and business operations in the United States.

As one of the leading providers of energy, telecommunications, and gas infrastructure solutions in the United States, 75-year-old Pike Corporation turned to Fortinet for their protection.

## A Full Suite of Mature Enterprise Products

Walter Schulze is the lead network architect for Pike Enterprises, a division of Pike Corporation, which offers corporate support for all other divisions in the company. Schulze joined Pike Enterprises two years ago, and when he arrived Fortinet was already a fixture in the company. "From what I understood, it was a 'best of breed' decision for the buildout of a multi-data center infrastructure initiative," Schulze explains. "There were data center firewalls, as well as branch office firewalls, provided by Fortinet already in place."

As Pike Corporation continues to grow its numbers and expand its market in the utility sector, Pike Enterprises must keep its endpoints covered and protect against security breaches that threaten to disrupt operations. Schulze expresses that "the infrastructure hardware that Fortinet provides has a very compelling use case for enterprises. Fortinet has been in the industry long enough where their products are mature, and offers a comprehensive suite of enterprise products."

## Flexible Solutions for Mobile Needs

About 12 months ago, the Pike Enterprises team made the decision to refresh the Fortinet Network Firewall hardware. "Whenever that happens, there is always a question of whether or not there is going to be a vendor change, but we elected to stay with Fortinet for multiple reasons," says Schulze.

Schulze put his faith in Fortinet, stating that, "Competitors have options for other enterprise products, but Fortinet brings a full suite of enterprise products to customers, and for that reason it seemed to be a very easy decision."

Recently, Pike Enterprises discovered that cellular WAN is becoming a burgeoning use case for its deployments. For instance, the company supports small construction trailers and mobile command trailers that need internet access, and use the WAN services provided by the FortiGate Network Firewall. "In small environments like where cellular really seems to be taking off, FortiGate has fit the bill quite well," Schulze says of the flexible and scalable security solution. Schulze adds that the team is now testing FortiExtender, which provides more cellular WAN connectivity options, to add to their mix.



*"The elimination of risks, in my opinion, should be a paramount focus of a network architect, and there are no compromising features with Fortinet. It is a very mature product, and it has everything that we wish, and more."*

– Walter Schulze, Lead Network Architect, Pike Enterprises

## Details

**Customer:** Pike Industries

**Industry:** Power and Utilities

**Location:** Mounty Airy, North Carolina

## Business Impact

- Provided secure access for employees working on-site
- Eliminated additional single points of failure for branch offices
- Offered adaptive solutions for cellular WAN
- Helped the organization navigate an ever-changing threat landscape

## Eliminating Single Points of Failure

Pike Enterprises also leverages Fortinet Secure SD-WAN, a Gartner Magic Quadrant leader and all-in-one solution for next-generation firewall services and secure SD-WAN. Schulze explains that other SD-WAN options in the market typically offer what he calls a “two-box solution.”

“Vendors want you to install a virtual machine or they want you to install some form of merchant silicon that has a virtual machine running on it,” Schulze explains. “I just do not like the two-box solution if I am going to be providing something to a branch office. I do not want to load them up with a bunch of single points of failure.” Instead, Schulze prefers an appliance that has been purpose-built, such as the “system-on-a-chip” that Fortinet provides in its latest generation of branch office firewalls.

“In my experience, the major concern when architecting a solution is eliminating the single points of failure,” says Schulze. “The reason being that we are providing a service to employees in which they need to do their jobs.” Fortinet’s solution mitigates the risk of introducing addition points of failure for Pike Enterprises. “The elimination of risk should be a paramount focus of a network architect,” Schulze emphasizes, adding that “There are no compromising features with Fortinet—it is a very mature product, and it has everything we want, and more.”

## Adapting to an Ever-changing Threat Landscape

Schulze is already looking toward the future of Pike Enterprises. Schulze notes that “Cellular is a continuing question mark for what part it will play in enterprise WAN solutions,” and that “Fortinet has done a good job positioning themselves to provide solutions to enterprise architects.” He is optimistic about the adaptations to an ever-changing threat landscape.

“Three years ago, ransomware was on the periphery and now it is front and center,” Schulze explains. When asked what will be happening three years from now, Schulze replies, “I do not really know, but to have a company like Fortinet to help me navigate an ever-changing threat landscape and stay ahead of it is very reassuring.”

## Solutions

- FortiGate Secure SD-WAN
- FortiGate Network Firewall
- FortiExtender

*“I have yet to come across another competitor that has a product that can sway me from continuing to use Fortinet at Pike Enterprises.”*

- Walter Schulze, Lead Network Architect, Pike Enterprises