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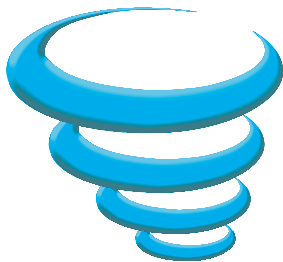
Brainlink Deploys Sophos to Solve Security Challenges and Ensure Workforce Compliance at Major Construction Firm

Partner-at-a-Glance

Brainlink International, a Manhattan-based IT and security managed services provider, helped premier construction firm E.W. Howell resolve the security challenges and workforce compliance issues for a porous networked environment through the deployment of Sophos iView.

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Industry
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Sophos Solutions
Sophos iView
Cyberoam Central Console – Virtual Edition

Sophos Partner
Since 2014

Brainlink International, a managed security services provider (MSP) headquartered in New York City, NY, has been in business for 22 years and became a Sophos partner in 2014. Brainlink focuses on industry-specific, customized services for the financial sector (private equity and wealth management firms) and large-scale construction, architecture, and property management companies with revenues of $50 million to $2 billion. Brainlink has successfully leveraged Sophos network solutions to solve the unique security and policy compliance challenges of divergent environments.

'Sophos iView has made life easier for our IT department and field construction crews. Thanks to Brainlink's extensive, in-depth knowledge of Sophos products and their continued support, we can clearly see network traffic and derive details, along with policy violations by employees.'

Dan Williams
CFO
E.W. Howell

Business Challenge

Rajesh Goel, CISSP and CTO of Brainlink International, has worked as a security professional for three decades and is undaunted by a challenge, especially when it comes to securing his clients and making it easier for their users to comply with policies. Over the years, Goel, who is dedicated to providing the highest level of specialized security to his clients, has shared his insightful knowledge and experience via television appearances on CNBC, Bloomberg, and other major media outlets.

When E.W. Howell, a multi-billion dollar construction contractor that has served the greater New York City area for over 125 years, asked Brainlink to find a better way to secure its highly porous work environment and reduce bandwidth usage, Goel was eager to tackle the problem head on. At typical E.W. Howell construction sites, workers rely on a variety of endpoint devices for communication and demand uninterrupted connectivity. In this fast-paced environment, security needs to be highly effective, but it can't get in the way.

E.W. Howell encountered a puzzling situation at a Stonybrook Hospital construction site staffed by 10 of its employees: bandwidth consumption was unusually high. In a typical month, most of the company's sites use an average of 60 gigabits, but, at the hospital site, the bandwidth consumption amounted to more than 200 gigabits per month.

Sold on Sophos

In 2012, Goel was introduced to Cyberoam's technology at the IT Nation industry conference Cyberoam was acquired by Sophos and is now fully integrated into the Sophos product portfolio and is part of the collaborative Sophos security system. After doing his due diligence by consulting with 20 to 30 fellow MSPs and other industry colleagues, Raj decided to fully evaluate Sophos iView. "When I investigate new products and partners, I also approach this effort with my customers in mind," states Goel. "The needs of our clients come first, and we look for products that will do the best possible job of fulfilling their requirements."

"As an MSP, we weren't satisfied with the reporting and monitoring capabilities of other firewall products. It became unwieldy for us to run logs on 40 to 60 firewalls on a daily basis. With Sophos iView, analytics, reporting, and incident handling is done seamlessly through a single pane of glass," notes Goel. He and his team recognized the power of Sophos iView, particularly with respect to its security information and event management (SIEM) capabilities.

After running the product through rigorous testing at his office, Goel was convinced that partnering with Sophos and implementing Sophos iView was exactly what Brainlink needed to fill in the gaps for its construction company customers. To further simplify the reporting process, Brainlink developed its own customized interface. "The functionality our clients get from the Sophos iView product is far superior to security architectures I've worked with in the past that cost upwards of $1 million."

Sophos iView Uncovers Policy Violations and Helps Minimize Threat Activity

Using Sophos iView, Raj and his team monitored employee Internet usage at E.W. Howell on a daily basis. E.W. Howell employees at the Stonybrook Hospital site were using the Internet to log into and view jobsite security surveillance cameras. Using Sophos iView, Brainlink discovered that bandwidth usage was excessive because employees inadvertently failed to minimize their browsers in the course of their work-related activities. "Because of our investigation based on the data we were able to gather with Sophos iView and the daily Security Analyzer we built on top of it, we ended up saving the client $180,000 a year in bandwidth expenditures alone," affirms Goel.

As a result of this successful and revealing test, the construction firm embraced Brainlink as a trusted ally and decided to implement the Sophos solution. At E.W. Howell, Brainlink displaced WatchGuard with the Sophos Unified Threat Management (Sophos UTM) platform enhanced by Sophos iView. Now E.W. Howell can generate an extensive set of reports and tailor them to fit their requirements. Additionally, Sophos iView provides consolidated reporting across multiple Sophos UTM firewalls and a complete view of all network traffic from a single console. Compliance reporting for standard industry regulations is made easy, and long-term storage for security and backup facilitates audits and forensics.

"Sophos UTM and Sophos iView have been a real boon to our productivity and to our ability to stay compliant," says Dan Williams, CFO from E.W. Howell. "In an environment like ours, we have millions of porous borders, and users out in the field are constantly moving inside and outside the corporate network. It was virtually impossible to monitor that activity with the tools we had. In the past, whenever we had malware or virus outbreaks, we always had to clean up the mess after the fact."

"Sophos iView has made life easier for our IT department and field construction crews," Dan goes on to say. "Thanks to Brainlink's extensive, in-depth knowledge of Sophos products and their continued support, we can clearly see network traffic and derive details, along with policy violations by employees."

Ensuring a More Secure and Productive Workplace

With Sophos iView, Brainlink helped E.W. Howell detect and mitigate virus outbreaks and other malware threats and curtail rogue employee behavior. "Sophos has become the lynchpin vendor for our construction industry clientele," says Goel. "Sometimes the behaviors of well-intentioned employees can expose their companies to risk. Sophos UTM and Sophos iView help ensure adherence to policy and contribute to a more secure and productive workplace."

"Sophos iView has made life easier for our clients and for our team," remarks Goel. "In addition to offering robust and sophisticated technology, Sophos upholds a channel-first strategy, which harmonizes with the way we like to do business. There's never any channel conflict. Sophos is totally dedicated to achieving positive outcomes for its partners and our customers."

A More Secure Future

With Sophos UTM and Sophos iView as the foundational security technology for its construction sector customers, Brainlink looks forward to further strengthening other aspects of their clients' computing infrastructures. Currently, Goel's three main concerns are the Shamoon virus, which has been used for cyberespionage attacks; strong encryption for improved protection against data theft and leakage; and finding a robust ransomware solution that can act as a "vaccine rather than just a band-aid." Goel is in the process of evaluating Sophos SafeGuard Enterprise Encryption 8, which provides transparent encryption across personal computers, mobile devices, USB removable storage, and the cloud.

"We're looking forward to deepening our relationships with the Sophos team, who have been welcoming and supportive all the way," says Goel. "We're also impressed by the breadth and depth of the Sophos product portfolio and believe that this partnership can help us extend additional services and solutions to customers who are faced with both commonplace security challenges and security challenges specific to their industry."

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