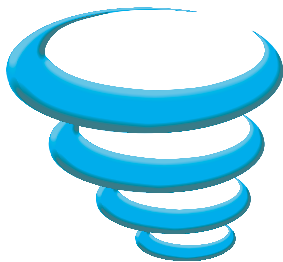




## PARTNER CASE STUDY

# Brainlink's Sophos Implementation at NYC Private Equity Firm Boosts Network Performance While Providing Unparalleled Analytics



## Partner-at-a-Glance

Brainlink International, a Manhattan-based IT and security managed services provider, helped a New York City private equity firm resolve bandwidth, network availability, and policy compliance issues through the deployment of Sophos UTM and iView.

### Brainlink

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Long Island City, NY 11101

### Industry

IT and Managed Security Services

### Website

[www.brainlink.com](http://www.brainlink.com)

### Sophos Solutions

Sophos iView  
Cyberoam Central Console – Virtual Edition  
Sophos Email Gateway

### Sophos Partner

Since 2014





**Brainlink International, an IT and managed security services provider (MSSP) 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 private equity and wealth management firms that manage portfolios valued up to \$4 billion. Brainlink's clientele also includes large-scale construction, architecture, and property management companies. Brainlink has successfully leveraged Sophos network solutions to solve the unique security and policy compliance challenges of divergent environments.

*'With Sophos iView, we can clearly see network traffic and derive details, along with policy violations by employees. And that's what Sophos iView tells us and our customers.'*

Rajesh Goel, CISSP  
CTO and Co-Founder  
Brainlink International

## Business Challenge

Rajesh Goel, CISSP and CTO of Brainlink International, has worked as a security professional for three decades and, in his words, "grew up in the New York City financial industry, working with hedge funds management companies and on trading floors where he became extremely security-focused and compliance-oriented" early on in his career. Goel, who has shared his insightful knowledge and experience through television appearances on CNBC, Bloomberg, and other major media outlets, is deeply familiar with the cybersecurity risks faced by private equity firms. Goel and the Brainlink team understand the sensitive and personal nature of the data held by private equity firms and why they are attractive targets for cybercriminals. Compliance with data privacy mandates is critically important, as any violations result in costly breaches, loss of reputation, and intense scrutiny by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and other financial industry regulatory bodies.

One of Brainlink's private equity firm customers was wrestling with multiple issues: poor network performance; failing and unstable firewalls; continual loss of connectivity to the Bloomberg Professional service, which provides traders with up-to-the-minute market data; and risky employee behaviors. The firm, which had been a longtime Checkpoint user, discovered that its traders were losing access to Bloomberg throughout the course of the day, which was a serious business concern.

While Brainlink tried to do some troubleshooting, “the Checkpoint product did not allow us to drill down and find out where their bandwidth was going,” says Goel. Brainlink also discovered that the firm’s Checkpoint firewalls, which were deployed five to six years ago, were, as Goel puts it, “dead and dying,”—they were constantly failing and locking up, putting the company network at tremendous risk.

## Sophos Boosts Network Performance and Provides Superior Analytics

Over a period of nine months, Brainlink resolved these issues and recommended that the private equity firm implement Sophos Unified Threat Management (Sophos UTM), enhanced with the Sophos iView analytics and monitoring tool. The day after deployment of the high-availability cluster, the private equity firm saw a 40% jump in network performance. As Goel notes, “The capabilities of Sophos really delivered, and the ROI is off the charts. Checkpoint upgrades would have cost our customer four to five times more than the Sophos implementation.”

Goel feels that, while Brainlink undeniably “had the math on their side” in making the case for Sophos, it was ultimately the analytics that sealed the deal. “Checkpoint technology doesn’t come close to the level of analytics and reporting provided by Sophos iView,” declares Goel. “The features and functionality we get from the Sophos iView product today is far better than the million-dollar architectures I worked with 10 years ago.”

“Our finance sector customers really appreciate the ability of Sophos iView to monitor daily traffic and bandwidth usage by employees. Their number one concern is making sure employees are not exposing sensitive data and opening up the floodgates to potential security incidents,” adds Goel. “In highly regulated industries like finance, ensuring that employees uphold policy is of utmost importance.”

## Building a Business on a Strong Foundation

According to Goel, Brainlink is building its entire security practice around the Sophos iView product Sophos UTM, and Sophos Email Gateway. At a ConnectWise IT Nation conference in 2012, Goel was introduced to Sophos iView when it was part of Cyberoam’s technology offering. Since then, Cyberoam had been 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,” explains 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 our 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 own office, Goel was convinced that partnering with Sophos and implementing Sophos iView was exactly what Brainlink needed to fill in the gaps for its customers. To further simplify the reporting process, Brainlink developed its own customized interface on top of the Sophos iView graphical user interface.

“Previously, one of our technicians would spend up to four hours a day doing a daily firewall review. Now we’ve got something far superior and more efficient,” affirms Goel. “Sophos iView is not your typical network security report that says it has blocked a million viruses. We’re not particularly concerned about seeing what is being blocked. With Sophos iView, we can clearly see network traffic and derive details, along with policy violations by employees. And that’s what Sophos iView tells us and our customers.”

“Sophos iView and other products in the Sophos portfolio have made life easier for our clients and for our team,” says Goel. “Sophos is totally dedicated to achieving positive outcomes for its partners and our customers. As a partner, we’re also pleased to see that Sophos, with its channel-first strategy, is in complete alignment with how we do business. Channel conflict is never an issue.”

## 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 its clients’ computing infrastructures. There are three issues that are top of mind for Goel currently.

*'We're extremely 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.'*

Rajesh Goel, CISSP  
CTO and Co-Founder  
Brainlink International

First, he's on the lookout for a product that can effectively protect his client from ransomware, which is a costly threat to deal with. Even though Brainlink has had five successful recoveries from ransomware at client sites in the last two years, Goel wants a more proactive solution—"a vaccine rather than just a Band-Aid." Looking at the overall security landscape, Goel anticipates that the next-generation endpoint security solution, Sophos Intercept, will protect Brainlink clients against the steady increase in crippling ransomware. Sophos Intercept can be installed and run alongside any competitive endpoint security software, boosting the levels of protection against unknown exploit variants and stealth attacks, with minimal impact to endpoint performance.

Goel is also concerned about the Shamoon virus, which has been used for cyberespionage attacks and took down over 30,000 Saudi Aramco workstations in 2012. Most Brainlink customers typically have 50 to 200 desktops, but Goel estimates that most solutions would take weeks to recover the desktops if they were attacked by Shamoon malware.

Goel foresees that he and his team can help customers thwart such threats while minimizing downtime and maximizing productivity with several Sophos solutions. Sophos iView is key because it offers an uninterrupted view of activities across the entire network and helps customers identify potential issues and attacks with greater immediacy. Goel also believes that the all-in-one protection offered by Sophos UTM can strengthen his customers' overall security and help combat advanced threats because it covers all the bases—network, web, email, and data loss prevention [DLP]. In addition, he finds that Sophos Email Gateway, built on a foundation

of advanced anti-malware and phishing detection technologies that are continually updated, is highly effective at intercepting zero-day threats and all emails with suspicious content. For an extra measure of assurance, Goel thinks that that Sophos Clean would also be a good addition to any company's security arsenal. This unique malware scanner discovers next-generation, signature-less malware, removes persistent threats from the operating system, and restores infected Windows resources with safe, clean versions. Sophos Intercept is yet another important security component because of its ability to prevent ransomware and block zero-day threats.

Finally, Goel sees a pressing need to strong encryption, particularly in the financial sector. "We open RFPs for clients concerned about data theft or data leakage by employees who are engaged in the right activities but using the wrong tools—like copying data to external USB drives or uploading sensitive information to Google Drive or Dropbox," he says. Goel is in the process of evaluating Sophos SafeGuard 8, which provides transparent encryption across personal computers, mobiles devices, USB removable storage, and the cloud.

"We're very much looking forward to deepening our relationships with Sophos team members, who have been consistently welcoming and supportive," relates Goel. "We're extremely 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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