

ALPHA GRAINGER TIGHTENS ITS CYBER DEFENSE WITH FIREEYE

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Alpha Grainger Manufacturing, Inc. manufactures and markets standard and custom-made screw machine products in the United States. Its products include valve blocks, breech plugs, handle bar necks, reflector bezels, coupling nuts, lead screws, scallop nuts, and aqua stat wells made with various metals, including aluminum, brass, bronze, copper, steel, and stainless steel. The company serves customers in aerospace, aircraft, automotive, electronics, food, medical, military, and recreational industries. Alpha Grainger Manufacturing, Inc. was founded in 1973 and is based in Franklin, Massachusetts.

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Alpha Grainger Manufacturing, Inc. has always been a forward-thinking organization. In 2010, the Massachusetts based supplier of precision screw machine products installed what was at the time the third largest solar electric system in the state. This 425,000-watt system along with a 300,000-watt system added later help power the small business’s production headquarters. “We were green before there was ‘green,’” said Michael Hennessy, director of technology services at Alpha Grainger.

This forward-thinking strategy has been applied to every aspect of the Alpha Grainger operation from the design of its 90,000-square-foot headquarters to the implementation of an advanced cyber security solution. “When we were looking to boost our security, it wasn’t because we were reacting to a problem. We were being proactive so that something doesn’t happen,” said Hennessy.

MOVING BEYOND FIREWALLS AND ANTIVIRUS SOLUTIONS

As with many small businesses, Alpha Grainger started out with firewalls and antivirus software. But Hennessy and other company executives became concerned about the growing number of cyber breaches across industries. They decided a deep analysis of cyber security solutions was needed to ensure the company had the most effective, up-to-date defense.

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“Our primary goal in terms of security is protecting intellectual property,” says Hennessy. “The challenge is the unknown—the adversaries or cyber terrorists who may be out there, ready to cause trouble and disrupt any business including ours.”

In 2015, Hennessy looked at a variety of solutions. “I assessed about 10 different technologies from companies including Bit9, BeyondTrust, Trusteer and Tenable Network Security.” After careful evaluation, Alpha Grainger selected three FireEye products to boost its defense: FireEye® Network Security (NX), for its network, FireEye® Endpoint Security (HX), for managing its client computers, and FireEye® Email Threat Prevention (ETP) Cloud. “We got rid of our Microsoft Exchange Server several years ago and went with a cloud solution for email. So ETP matched up well.”

ENHANCING PROTECTION & VISIBILITY

“Comprehensive protection and visibility were major factors in the purchasing decision. The idea was to find a solution that could not only protect against advanced

known threats but also help Alpha Grainger see and fight against the emerging ones—to complement and go beyond the capabilities of firewalls and antivirus software.

“FireEye lets us see into what’s happening out there and in our network,” says Hennessy. And the FireEye solution provides an accurate view. The firewall at Alpha Grainger identifies a high percentage of false positives. With the FireEye solution, “We’re not getting false positives. The FireEye results are extremely trustworthy.”

According to Hennessy, an important part of the FireEye advantage is the ability to manage and grade an issue. “Often, management thinks any virus is almost the end of the world. With FireEye, I can bring real evidence to display about the nature of the issue and that we’ve been able to manage and contain it. Making all of those unknowns known quickly helps to take the pressure down for everybody in the organization.”

The complexity of cyber security solutions also played a prominent role in Alpha Grainger’s purchasing decision. The company has a small IT staff. Hennessy wanted a solution that, in his words,

“wouldn’t impact performance.” It had to offer straightforward technology that didn’t require a significant amount of training to operate and time to maintain. Hennessy determined that many non-FireEye solutions were too complex for his environment. “They would have required staff increases and added responsibilities just to keep the protection going.”

GETTING THE JOB DONE

On the other hand, the FireEye solution, “struck a great chord with us. It looked like something that would just get the job done, do it right and allow us to have a minimum of effort managing the system.” To confirm his opinion, Hennessy conducted reference checks with FireEye customers. “One of the customers’ most significant findings was the overhead for running FireEye technology was fairly low. It’s been designed right”—right for today and the future.

In his market analysis, Hennessy determined many of the cyber security companies appeared to be resting on their laurels with “continuous improvement” being nothing more than just light, incremental changes.

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But Hennessy sees FireEye as different. “It’s a progressive company. FireEye is making the significant investment in major updates on a regular basis to ensure its products can respond to new, previously unknown events in the future.”

PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY AND CONSULTING

Another unique advantage that influenced Alpha Grainger’s choice of cyber security partners was Mandiant, the FireEye company that offers incident response and assessment services. “We don’t know what might happen in the future,” says Hennessy. “But if we do experience an extreme event, it’s comforting to know we won’t have to start all over again with an outside consultant, doing all the initial legwork. We can call up Mandiant and talk with consultants who are already familiar with our toolset, to provide the quickest response, to effectively address the situation.”

FOR A RESTFUL FUTURE

All those FireEye advantages have made it possible for Hennessy to do something he was not able to accomplish in the past: “Sleep at night. That’s the biggest value,” he says. “I was looking for an advanced solution that could put the cyber security issue effectively to bed. And I found it. It enables us to focus our efforts and thoughts on our business. Truly, FireEye has exceeded my expectations and reset my goals for the future.”

To learn more about FireEye, visit: www.FireEye.com

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