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How Explore St. Louis Gains Efficiencies and Cost Savings by Consolidating to One Cyber Security Vendor

INDUSTRY	HEADQUARTERS	COMPANY SIZE
Business Servicesy	St. Louis, Missouri	150 employees

OVERVIEW

The St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission (Explore St. Louis) is the official destination marketing organization responsible for selling St. Louis City and St. Louis County as a convention, meeting and leisure destination. As the operator of the America's Center

Convention Complex, Explore St. Louis works to attract city-wide conventions, hotel meetings, sporting events, group tours and individual leisure travelers to St. Louis, in collaboration with more than 750 regional partners, including hotels, restaurants, attractions and service providers.

OUR SOLUTION

Harmony
Secure Users & Access

Quantum
Maestro

Infinity

> " Since partnering with Check Point, we're more efficient and can do more with less. This means that our relatively small team can be more proactive and spend our time focusing on time-sensitive IT issues.
>
> *Darren Ison, Director of IT at Explore St. Louis.* "

CHALLENGE

As a public commission, all of Explore St. Louis's information is public, including personally identifiable information (PII). This makes protecting user data information critical for the organization. However, Explore St. Louis found that successfully securing all facets of its security infrastructure properly, using a small team, continued to grow increasingly daunting.

Darren Ison, Director of IT at Explore St. Louis, and his team are not only responsible for securing the organization's IT infrastructure and endpoints, they also must fortify the cyber security of America's Center Convention Complex, which hosts an average of 109 yearly events, attracting 600,000 visitors every year. According to Darren, "One of our biggest challenges is our large external production network, which spans the St. Louis Convention Center and the Dome. Because of this, the number of potential breach entry points is vast, ranging from the center's automation systems, IoT devices, to the Wi-Fi network."

SOLUTION

Explore St. Louis adopted the Infinity Platform Agreement to purchase its products. Darren Ison, Director of IT at Explore St. Louis explained "We chose the Infinity contract model for the flexibility it provides and the predictable OpEx budgetary spend I could have over three years. Things can change quickly in cyber security and the agreement allows us to expand as needed."

Explore St. Louis leverages a range of solutions that provide the organization with end-to-end protection. This includes Quantum Security Gateways, which deliver uncompromising performance with advanced threat prevention, policy management, remote access VPN and more across the on-premise network. Darren said, "We chose Quantum Gateways for their low CVEs, and its great reputation in the market. I am aware of a lot of well-known companies that use Quantum Security Gateways and that says a lot."

Darren Ison also uses Quantum Smart-1 Cloud for its comprehensive security management of on-premise security gateways, and perimeter devices, including security event analytics and reporting from a single, centralized Smart Console.

Layered on top of the network security solution, Explore St. Louis, deployed Check Points workforce security solutions. This includes Harmony Email and Collaboration, which detects and blocks the most advanced phishing attacks across inbound, outbound and internal communications. Ison explained that Harmony Email and Collaboration has two unique advantages over competitors.

The shared Harmony Email and Collaboration provides two working modalities – in-line or off-line. This allows you to choose how you use the tool. "We have the ability to use it inline or passive, and this ensures our users get their email in a timely manner and we still keep them protected. Harmony Email also gives me unique insights into my Azure environment, allowing me to quickly and easily see where users log in and what they do in the environment, giving us extra visibility and protection."

Another workforce security solution Explore St. Louis leverages is Harmony Endpoint, which provides comprehensive, 360-degree endpoint protection at the highest level. As part of their consolidation, Explore St. Louis was looking for a single pane of glass and therefore chose the Check Point endpoint solution for its full visibility into their endpoints. Darren stated the product made a lot of sense for them and allowed them to consolidate VPN function. It has also helped the small IT team Darren leads to provide more comprehensive security for the complex environment they manage.

"One of our favorite Harmony Endpoint features is the ease of deployment – packaging, deployment, removal and upgrading are all dead simple."

After evaluating competitive Infinity Managed Detection and Response (MDR) providers, Darren decided Infinity Managed Detection and Response (MDR) was an ideal fit because it offers a complete SecOps-as-a-Service offering that takes a people-driven approach, leveraging Check Point's top analysts, researchers and incident response staff. The Infinity MDR dashboard provides in depth visibility into day-to-day attacks, as well as permissions and tickets. In addition to the insights the dashboard provides on everything from endpoint, gateway and email events, it allows for modification as needed.

"Given the size of our team, the Infinity MDR approach made perfect sense," explained Darren. "We can rely on Check Point's expertise to monitor our infrastructure, including the network, all endpoints, email, cloud and even IoT devices. It's a huge advantage to have the Infinity MDR team react and handle issues on our behalf, which allows us to focus on other priorities."

OUTCOME

Since partnering with Check Point, Explore St. Louis has become more proactive and able to respond more quickly to threats because the IT team receives information on vulnerabilities and potential breaches in real-time. The organization is more secure and Darren sleeps better at night knowing Infinity MDR is on duty.

"What surprised me most about consolidating our security products with Check Point was how many issues we missed previously," said Darren. "We're far more confident in our security defenses, and I definitely sleep better at night knowing the Infinity MDR team is handling threats and issues for us. Check Point has exceeded all my expectations, and I couldn't be happier with not only how attentive they are to our specific needs and concerns, but also the consistent and thorough protection Check Point's solutions provide."

The consolidation also has saved Explore St. Louis money by eliminating the need to hire more in-house security staff or buying disparate, disconnected solutions to secure the organization's infrastructure and data.

Check Point continues to provide Darren and his team with visibility into the day-to-day threats, permissions and support tickets via the centralized dashboard which provides insight into everything, including email, endpoint and firewall-related events.

As for the future, Darren is excited about AI's potential to deliver even better incident mitigation and response.

"I was thrilled to hear that Check Point will soon be offering Infinity AI Copilot, which, in my opinion, has the potential to revolutionize threat hunting, analysis and resolution," he explained. "It will be a game changer for us. We'll be able to utilize it to do time consuming, but extremely important tasks like threat hunting."

ABOUT CHECK POINT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. (www.checkpoint.com) is a leading AI-powered, cloud-delivered cyber security platform provider protecting over 100,000 organizations worldwide. Check Point leverages the power of AI everywhere to enhance cyber security efficiency and accuracy through its Infinity Platform, with industry-leading catch rates enabling proactive threat anticipation and smarter, faster response times. The comprehensive platform includes cloud-delivered technologies consisting of Check Point Harmony to secure the workspace, Check Point CloudGuard to secure the cloud, Check Point Quantum to secure the network, and Check Point Infinity Core Services for collaborative security operations and services.

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