SCHEELS Increases Security Effectiveness and Saves Costs

Customer Name: SCHEELS

Size: 6,000+ employees

Industry: Retail

Location: United States,
26 stores across 11 states

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Josh Diemert
Lead Systems Administrator,
SCHEELS

Since it's founding in 1902, Scheels has grown from three acres of potatoes to a sporting goods chain with 26 locations in 11 states, including the largest all-sports store in the world. It's an unlikely trajectory but one that was propelled by a commitment to customer service that began with the retailer's founder, Frederick A. Scheel, and remains a cornerstone for success.

Just as SCHEELS sporting goods experts are dedicated to ensuring customers get the most from their shopping experience, SCHEELS IT experts Josh Diemert and Perry Stockwell are dedicated to helping the company get the most from its infrastructure and resources while protecting the company from cyber threats. For years, SCHEELS relied on a vendor-managed security solution that had become costly, difficult to manage, and used aging infrastructure. Set to open two more stores by 2020, the company realized that it needed to ensure that its infrastructure could scale and keep pace with both the dynamic threat landscape and its growing business.

"Our vendor-managed solution was difficult to work with and expensive," explains Josh Diemert, Lead Systems Administrator, SCHEELS. "Every time we wanted to make a change to a policy it could take up to a day and it wasn't always done correctly."

But the prospect of moving away from an outsourced model had to be carefully considered. "Our IT team runs lean – we needed a way to bring security in-house without adding a whole lot of work for our staff," adds Diemert.

At the same time, the company was considering a structural redesign that would eliminate the need to backhaul traffic to the corporate office, which would improve service quality to its stores and reduce bandwidth costs. Making this change would also require that the team have greater visibility and control over Internet access at each store to manage security in-house.

"When Cisco came out with the ASA with FirePOWER™ Services and the FireSIGHT Management Center we had the centralized visibility and intelligence we needed to manage security ourselves with better results and less cost than our previous vendor-managed solution could provide," says Diemert.

SCHEELS has nearly 80 Cisco ASA with FirePOWER Services models deployed, the vast majority being the ASA 5506-X. In addition to the stateful firewall, the team uses FirePOWER Services including Advanced Malware Protection (AMP) for Networks, URL filtering, Application Visibility and Control (AVC), and NextGeneration

With Cisco ASA with FirePOWER Services, SCHEELS can:

Cut response time from hours to minutes.

Detect and stop threats that evade the anti-virus solution.

Deploy devices at new stores in couple of hours vs. more than a month.

For More Information

Visit www.cisco.com/go/security.

IPS to deliver more integrated and effective security. The team centrally manages all the stores through the FireSIGHT® Management Center. Perry Stockwell, SCHEELS' systems administrator, relies on the intelligence provided through this single pane of glass, including the events log, URL filtering, indicators of compromise (IoC), and prioritization flags, to strengthen the retailer's security posture.

"The FireSIGHT® Management Center allows us to see what's happening and make changes quickly. For example we can push out a policy change in under an hour, when previously it would have taken at least eight hours working through a third party," Stockwell explains. "And the system will do a lot for us automatically – blocking malicious links without us having to do anything, preventing infected guest machines from connecting, and restricting user access according to policies."

Stockwell points out that one of the biggest security concerns for retailers right now is ransomware. In the battle against threats that use email as an attack vector, Stockwell believes that employee education on safe habits to ensure they know how to recognize and not click on potential malware is an important part of any security program. Still, mistakes will happen and threats are increasingly sophisticated so multilayered protection is also necessary to help defeat advanced malware. For example, Cisco AMP for Networks has allowed the team to catch malware that the anti-virus solution has missed. Stockwell elaborates, "The extra layer of malware protection at the network with AMP for Networks has helped us detect malware that was attempting to call out to a command and control server, and block it before it was successful."

As SCHEELS continues to expand with a new store in Colorado and another in Texas, the team is confident in its ability to keep pace. "With our previous vendor, getting devices into a store was a very lengthy process and could take over a month," notes Stockwell. "Given how quickly this initial rollout went, we feel we have the process down and a template we can use to get a store up and running in a matter of hours."

"We are always looking to improve security everywhere," concludes Diemert. "Moving to Cisco saved us money and is allowing us to apply resources to additional areas – increasing our endpoint protection with AMP for Endpoints is our next area of focus."

Products and Services

- Cisco ASA 5506-X with FirePOWER Services
- Cisco ASA 5516-X with FirePOWER Services
- Cisco ASA 5525-X with FirePOWER Services
- FireSIGHT Management Center

- Cisco FirePOWER Services in use:
  - Cisco Advanced Malware Protection (AMP) for Networks
  - URL filtering
  - Application Visibility and Control (AVC)
  - Next-Generation IPS