

Elevate raises the bar on data security using Masergy's managed detection and response platform

As a relatively new company pioneering innovative approaches to credit relief, Elevate needs to further establish its reputation, and protecting customer information is an essential part of the company's continued growth strategy. This financial services and Internet business faces the same security challenges as most: safeguarding customer and company data. But rather than simply securing the physical assets where data resides, Elevate's strategy is to build a comprehensive architecture around protecting its customer information, explained Jim Desmond, Chief Security Officer, Elevate.

Part of this holistic approach means moving away from focusing solely on perimeter security and investing in rapid, detection-and-response approaches. "It's a fairly difficult concept to achieve," Desmond noted, as many find it difficult to shift their thinking.

The biggest challenge companies face is not if they will get hacked, but when. "We [as an industry] are involved in asynchronous warfare where the good guys are losing ground to financially motivated cyber criminals," he said. "Companies need to maintain a large professional army to fight a band of 150 guerrillas. The criminals only need to get lucky once. We have to 'be lucky' [in our defense] every single time."

That's part of the reason Elevate turned to Masergy Managed Security Services (MSS) to bring additional manpower and expertise to address the changing threat landscape.

Solution: side-by-side comparison leads to Masergy

Desmond feels that the managed security market is commoditized, as virtually every vendor reported to him the same capabilities, making similar claims about having the latest technology, going the extra mile, and having security professionals who care about customers. "Masergy was able to show us rather than just tell us what makes the company unique," Desmond said.



"I have quite a bit of trust in Masergy's ability to detect and react in a far more rapid and more cost-effective manner than my team alone. Without Masergy, I would have to add 3-4 more staffers to maintain a 24x7 rotation on security threat monitoring."

Jim Desmond CSO, Elevate



He chose Masergy after conducting a side-by-side comparison of MSS and Elevate's existing managed security service provider. "We ran one of the largest managed security service providers in parallel with Masergy, and after about three weeks, we were more than happy to cancel our contract with the large vendor," Desmond said.

Masergy earned the Elevate contract not only based on its innovative technology and ability to integrate with existing security point systems, but also based on its expert customer support. When Elevate security personnel called their previous service provider, they spoke to non-technical people who filled out trouble tickets in call centers. "They only knew the operational procedures displayed in front of them. They couldn't think outside of the box. They never did any extra analysis," Desmond explained.

Results: "all the difference in the world" for Elevate's IT team

Masergy Managed Security Services help Elevate offload security monitoring and reduce the workload for their IT team. "I have a staff of security professionals, but without Masergy, I would have to add three or four more staffers to maintain a 24/7 rotation on security threat monitoring," said Desmond.

There are a lot of security point solutions on the market that help companies secure their physical environment and reduce exposure to certain types of threats. However, these approaches "are not durable or extensible," noted Desmond. "Being able to filter all of the data and effectively find the proverbial needle in the haystack is the big challenge. The goal is to get your team to detect and react immediately."

Recognized results

- 20 hour/week productivity savings with managed firewall services
- 100% visibility into global threats
- 24x7 monitoring provided by security experts

Masergy helps with just that. MSS behavioral analytics and machine learning technology analyze traffic and computer behavior. By combining technology with human expertise, Masergy security professionals correlate current events with historic information and highlight anything that looks suspicious.

Elevate's security team appreciates the fact that MSS also automatically blocks suspicious traffic hitting up against its firewall. The 'auto-shun' feature creates access control lists (ACL) directly on the firewall in order to block Internet hosts that Elevate and Masergy don't trust. "This feature alone has saved my team 20 hours per week in firewall requests," said Desmond.

Correlating security and risk

Masergy is fostering collaboration. Elevate's IT security team is starting to work with the company's Risk Management department to share data and correlate events. Desmond uses the weekly threat management reports he receives from Masergy to identify potential fraudulent behavior, and he passes this information to the risk team.

Masergy's advanced technology, proactive threat monitoring, and the quality of the security professionals "makes all the difference in the world to us," Desmond concluded.