

Security and availability in extremely adverse environments

Barracuda CloudGen Firewall in use at the drilling experts EXALO



About Exalo

Exalo Drilling, based in Pila, Poland, is a leading supplier for onshore drilling services on oil fields in Central and Eastern Europe. Formed in February 2013, following the merger of five individual companies that were part of the PGNiG Group, Exalo has grown to 3,500 employees.

The merger presented EXALO CIO Piotr Grochowski with a major challenge: Integrating the five companies' IT infrastructure into one efficient, uniform IT landscape and maintaining secure highly available services, while adhering to overriding business objectives.

The IT Team comprises a total of 24 specialists and is split into three groups: IT Infrastructure, Application Development, as well as Business and User Support. Four employees are responsible for the IT Infrastructure.

Heterogeneous, distributed environment with maximum requirements

Another challenge for the Exalo IT team was EXALO's high level of heterogeneous distributed environments. Over 120 locations had to be connected in one corporate network. This encompassed not only corporate headquarters, subsidiaries,

Challenges

- Create a uniform firewall infrastructure at EXALO
- Secure connection of all 120 locations
- Secure connections of all drilling rigs in remote regions with poor infrastructures
- Efficient and affordable management of the complete solution
- Aligning IT infrastructure with business strategy

Solution

- Barracuda CloudGen Firewall
- Barracuda Firewall Control Center

Results

- Seamlessly integrated five companies IT infrastructures into one
- Centralized oversight of all 120 locations achieved
- Secured connections to all remote drilling rigs via satellite uplink
- Entire firewall network managed quickly and easily

warehouse facilities, and computing centers, but also drilling rigs in locations where there is no existing infrastructure to build upon or connect to, other than perhaps GPS coordinates.

Grochowski began searching for a firewall solution to fulfill these demanding requirements. He says “It was imperative for us to control and prioritize data traffic reliably. This applies to the employees in the office as well as those around the world that we interact with in real time through SAP and other communications services,” explains Grochowski.

Another critical requirement was to customize and implement a uniform and affordable VPN system. With five different organizations and the associated implications, this would have been impossible prior to the introduction of the Barracuda solution.

Grochowski expounds on the challenge, saying, “The specifications for implementing a solution were extremely high. We had to build a uniform, secure and highly available network that could link our entire infrastructure, including drilling rigs. With no IT personnel on the rigs, it’s not a trivial undertaking. It was also extremely important that we retained control of costs and data traffic. Plus, we had to guarantee that a new infrastructure could be managed by our small team. This not only included the firewall, but also management of the complete server and network landscape.”

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Piotr Grochowski
CIO
EXALO

Barracuda CloudGen Firewall outperforms the competition

EXALO did a comparative analysis of all renowned manufacturers, measuring key requirements and management features including, user friendliness (especially when for creating and activating rules across all devices at various

locations), price/performance, and application control. A clear preference emerged in detailed tests with the other suppliers. The Barracuda CloudGen Firewall was the only application that provided answers in all areas.

Rollout Expectations Surpassed

By February 2014, 60 of the 120 planned appliances were in operation. The Barracuda CloudGen Firewall F600 and F800 models were used for the corporate headquarters and the larger locations. Models F100 and F200 were implemented in smaller subsidiaries and on the drilling rigs.

Grochowski is pleased with the progress. He elaborates, “The extremely high expectations which we had for the Barracuda CloudGen Firewall were exceeded by far. The centralized management concept is unique. The entire firewall network can be managed quickly and efficiently, using just a few resources and low personnel expenditure. The same also applies for the VPN infrastructure, which is easy to administrate using the graphical interface by drag-and-drop. It’s in perfect harmony with our strategy for a lean, efficient IT Infrastructure.”

The Barracuda CloudGen Firewall is proving itself in other areas too. “Application control is extremely significant for us,” Grochowski explains. “It was important to see which applications are used by the employees so they could be blocked or prioritized as required. Once the solution was in place, we realized that much more is possible with the Barracuda CloudGen Firewall.”

He continues, “Besides prioritizing and allocating the associated bandwidth, we can now define alternative lines in case of line failure. Also, an invaluable advantage for our drilling rigs in regions with poor infrastructures, is that we can now set up connections for the appliances via satellite uplink. It means we can guarantee that we that our drilling rigs are connected even in the most remote regions in the world.

Cooperation between the IT Service Provider Sansec and Barracuda is running smoothly. “We can see that we are working with a partner who is trained in using Barracuda solutions. Barracuda’s customer support also reacts quickly and competently. All our specifications and questions have been met to the fullest so far,” comments Grochowski.

Conclusion: Companies with distributed environments are safe with Barracuda CloudGen Firewall

Grochowski's summary is clear: "We have never questioned our decision in favor of the Barracuda CloudGen Firewall. It's consistently exceeded our expectations. The centralized management, application awareness, the simplicity with which the appliances can be provided, and the efficiency distinguishes the solution overall. "I can confidently say, companies with complex distributed environments are always on the safe side with Barracuda CloudGen Firewall."

Learn more about the Barracuda CloudGen Firewall

barracuda.com/products/cloudgenfirewall

