

Pioneering DIY retailer future proofs SD-WAN security.

New firewall capability strengthens multi-site connectivity, delivers seamless end-to-end visibility.



It was only a matter of time

As Senior Systems Administrator for Hubo, one of Belgium's largest DIY retail chains, Jan Van Regenmortel knew the time was coming when its centralised network would no longer be fit for purpose. Connectivity via the retailer's headquarters meant Van Regenmortel and his small IT team were struggling to manage its multiple locations. Poor visibility also meant the network was more porous and vulnerable to cyber threats from criminals that become more inventive and sophisticated by the day. This couldn't go on.

"All internet traffic was coming to our stores using our HQ. But, this was not a long term solution. We wanted to migrate firewall security to each of our shops, so we needed to be able to scan store traffic and visualise what was happening out in our locations. As a team of four, we have responsibility for the whole IT server and network infrastructure at Hubo so we needed something that could be easily controlled as a small team," said Van Regenmortel.

Taking stock and stepping up security maturity

Van Regenmortel knew that traditional network and endpoint security would be ineffective as he scanned the future. "We needed more than a hardware refresh. We were looking at implementing SD-WAN - a very different architecture that enabled local internet breakouts at every location. Hubo has over a hundred stores across the country, so it was critical that the new firewall solution delivered uninterrupted network availability and direct access to cloud services," he added.

Profile

- Belgian DIY retail chain
- Located in Wommelgem, Belgium
- 1,000 employees
- 150 shops, including 75 franchise stores

Challenges

- Migrate firewall security to stores
- Simplify network management and improve visibility
- Enhance connectivity and regulate traffic

Solutions

- Barracuda CloudGen Firewall

Results

- Easy to monitor and visualise network performance
- Store set up takes minutes thanks to automated deployment
- Flexibility to support increasing traffic and demand
- Cloud-based apps run at peak performance.

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Hubo

Improving bandwidth efficiency was also essential. “Not all of our stores had fibre in the area, so they had low bandwidth to start with. We needed a way to prioritise traffic to ensure continuity of our business critical operations.”

Taking on the challenge

“As a small department replacing the old firewall and upgrading our on-premise hardware was a big challenge. We looked at four or five of the leading firewall vendors and tested a few firewall and wifi combinations. Barracuda CloudGen Firewall was one of them,” continued Van Regenmortel.

“When it became clear that we would opt for the Barracuda offering, we still had to decide which company would advise us on our architecture and support us technically. During our testing, we turned to the expertise of Data Unit engineers. We were really impressed with their open communication and it was obvious they knew what they were doing. So when it was time to decide on a partner for our solution, we stayed with Data Unit. The fact that they had the best Barracuda certifications in Belgium made the decision that much easier.”

The three companies worked together in a single partnership to design the network security solution for Hubo’s stores. Barracuda quickly set up a proof-of-concept trial. “Most proofs-of-concept take around a month. The Barracuda team was flexible from the start and we were able to double check and test the devices over a couple of months. Everything went smoothly. We didn’t have any performance problems at the time. And everything is still working seamlessly.”

Taking back control

With the Barracuda CloudGen Firewall, Hubo’s team effortlessly use Barracuda NextGen Control Center: a single, unified platform to control and manage the network.

Stores take just minutes to set up thanks to automated deployment. Van Regenmortel explained: “Managing everything with a single ruleset saves us time and resource. Being able to apply one global ruleset means the team can easily migrate settings from one store to another. When we need to change an application, we just change one rule which is applied to all locations. We can connect our shops and temporary stores at the flick of a switch.”

The Barracuda solution has also taken out the guesswork when detecting and solving issues. “Seamless, end-to-end visibility means we can easily visualise and monitor network performance and quickly troubleshoot problems and any immediate threats.”

“We can also more effectively monitor our cloud-based applications to ensure everything runs at peak performance. Scanning next-gen applications was really hard on our old hardware so we always had performance problems. VPN has also been a big plus for us – we’ve also started to use that now.”

He concluded: “Deploying the Barracuda firewall solution has really transformed the way we work. There wasn’t anything else on the market to compete and we are delighted.”

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