



CASE STUDY

Minimizing cyber risk and maximizing IT productivity for leading UK auto dealership.

Barracuda Email Protection and Content Shield drive seamless, cloud-based protection for John Clark Motor Group.

Company

- John Clark Motor Group is a large, family-run automotive business selling new and used vehicles across Scotland
- Over the past 40 years it has grown to incorporate 37 businesses with a collective turnover of over \$1bn in revenue

Challenges

- Deluged with malicious spam, infecting six PCs per month
- Small IT team spending hundreds of hours per year on cleaning PCs

Solution



Barracuda
Email Protection™



Barracuda
Content Shield™

Benefits

- Backups offer peace of mind for security and compliance
- Highly effective threat prevention – blocking 100,000 suspicious emails per month
- Saves IT time otherwise spent cleaning PCs, configuring product and monitoring the dashboard



The auto dealership sector is not commonly associated with cyber-threat activity. But that's changing pretty rapidly, as threat actors spot an opportunity to exploit gaps in protection to launch business email compromise (BEC) attacks, steal sensitive data and hold companies to ransom. One [recent study from software firm CDK Global reveals](#) that 15% of US dealers experienced a cybersecurity incident in the past year.

In the UK too, dealerships are under fire. In the second half of 2022 alone, three major car groups were compromised by ransomware, including the country's largest Ford vehicle dealer group, [TrustFord](#) and listed [company Pendragon](#), which was hit with a \$60m ransom demand.

One company well placed to minimize its exposure to such risks is [John Clark Motor Group](#), one of Scotland's largest and best-known automotive businesses. Although an attractive target for financially motivated cyber-criminals, the £910m (\$1bn+) revenue firm hasn't had a single malicious email, that they know of, hit its network since partnering with Barracuda several years ago, says Head of IT, Stewart Herd.

Looking for better

With 1300 employees logging in via laptops and tablets from 37 discrete businesses, there was plenty to keep Stewart awake at night. Email security was a top priority. [According to CDK Global](#), 85% of the security incidents recorded over the past year were due to sophisticated phishing attempts that resulted in data breaches.

"We have been targeted in the past and what we've noticed is threats are becoming very customized now. People are spending a lot more time getting the right information before targeting us, so that was a concern," says Stewart. "At the back of our minds we're constantly looking at where the next threats are coming from."

However, the firm's previous email security provider, McAfee, was doing a poor job of stopping malicious emails, meaning Stewart and his nine-man IT team would spend considerable time and effort repairing and rebuilding as many as half-a-dozen infected PCs every month. After solving the problem initially by investing in a Barracuda email security appliance, John Clark Motor Group came to another fork in the road a few years back when it migrated to Microsoft 365. With its contract for the appliances up for renewal, it was time to decide whether to embrace cloud-based email security and backup.

"One of the worries with Microsoft 365 is there's no built-in backup as such, so there's always a risk you'll lose all of your data, and we have to keep seven years' worth for compliance reasons," Stewart explains. "We chose Barracuda Email Protection in the end as it was cost effective based on the number of users we had. Migration to the cloud was very straightforward and we could keep historical backups."

Up and running in no time

[Barracuda Email Protection](#) is a comprehensive suite of email security and backup services. It features Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) to tackle zero-hour and targeted attacks, and AI-powered capabilities to prevent account takeover and sophisticated impersonation attempts. There's also data loss prevention, incident response and encryption features. The [Cloud-to-Cloud Backup](#) module delivers unlimited storage and retention with rapid point-in-time recovery in the event of accidental or malicious deletion.

Stewart chose to layer this email protection with [Barracuda Content Shield](#) for powerful web security. It uses DNS and URL filtering to block access to malicious content and integrates with LDAP and Azure AD for streamlined policy enforcement.

Deployment was seamless, thanks to professional support from Barracuda.

"The initial setup process was very straightforward and within half an hour everything was going through Barracuda," says Stewart. "We had to configure the product, and the central Barracuda team helped us a lot here. They got us up and running in no time."

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Stewart Herd, Head of IT
John Clark Motor Group



Turbo-charged security

The products have undoubtedly kept John Clark Motor Group safe from web and email-based threats. The company hasn't had a single security breach since migrating to the cloud-based solutions, Stewart says. In fact, Barracuda Email Protection blocked over 100,000 suspicious emails in just a 30-day period, and caught more than 200 cyber-threats, 97% of which were classed as "advanced."

After configuring the product post-installation, Stewart and his team have been able to minimize false positives and also set up handy filters to scan and block spam emails featuring common phrases. The result has been to enhance security and productivity – not least for the IT team.

"I don't think we've actually had an incident where we've had to clean up a PC, which is amazing compared to what we used to have," Stewart says. "Before Barracuda we were having to clean up half a dozen infected PCs each month, taking them off the network and rebuilding them from scratch to get rid of the virus, but that's unheard of now."

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With each infected PC previously taking several hours to rebuild, the extra time given back by Barracuda has enabled the IT team to focus on proactively supporting the business “rather than dealing with the reactive side of IT,” he adds.

Stewart has also been impressed by the low management overheads, which has freed up even more time for the IT team.

“McAfee was a full-time job for someone – checking policies, checking scripts and making sure PCs didn’t have viruses on them. Since we migrated it’s been a lot less admin-heavy,” he concludes.

“It’s more automated now, with the AI doing a lot of the heavy lifting. There are also fewer incidents to investigate, and the way the software runs in the background, we get notified if there’s an issue but don’t need to go in and look at it every single day.”

Even now, Stewart and his team have just scratched the surface of what the products can achieve and have plenty of projects on their to-do list, including a pending trial of the Security Awareness Training module. With optimized web and email security, Barracuda has put John Clark Motor Group firmly in the driving seat.

Barracuda Email Protection™

For organizations that want to protect their businesses, brands, and people against the most advanced email-borne threats, [Barracuda Email Protection](#) is a comprehensive, easy-to-use solution that delivers gateway defense, API-based impersonation and phishing protection, incident response, data protection, and compliance capabilities.

Barracuda Content Shield™

[Barracuda Content Shield](#) provides granular policy enforcement, reporting, and robust content filtering by leveraging Barracuda’s extensive threat intelligence network. Barracuda Content Shield protects users from malicious sites and inappropriate content. Keep your business safer and employees more productive anywhere with real-time cloud-based protection against web-based threats. Barracuda Content Shield delivers advanced web security with a more limited feature-set.

About Barracuda

At Barracuda we strive to make the world a safer place. We believe every business deserves access to cloud-first, enterprise-grade security solutions that are easy to buy, deploy, and use. We protect email, networks, data, and applications with innovative solutions that grow and adapt with our customers' journey. More than 200,000 organizations worldwide trust Barracuda to protect them — in ways they may not even know they are at risk — so they can focus on taking their business to the next level. For more information, visit barracuda.com.