



CASE STUDY

Transforming employees into a formidable line of cyber-defense at UK utilities provider.

Customer

- Sapphire Utility Solutions is a fast-growing UK business delivering the utilities many take for granted.
- Founded in 2013, it specializes in the clean water, wastewater, gas, digital network and infrastructure sectors

Challenges

- Low levels of phishing awareness among staff
- Large number of mobile workers and devices

Solution



Benefits

- Lower click-through rate and higher user awareness
- Rapid incident response
- Highly effective malware protection
- Helps publicize the value of IT department in protecting the organization



For rapidly growing companies, the challenge is often ensuring cybersecurity keeps up as new staff join and threat actors start to take notice. So it was with UK business [Sapphire Utility Solutions](#). Founded in 2013, it has roughly tripled in size and turnover during the past two years, according to Infrastructure Manager, Ryan Adams.

“We painted a bit of a target on our back, opening ourselves up to increased threats,” he says.

Fortunately, Ryan and IT Director Mo Dawood have one thing in common: a passion for cybersecurity.

“It takes precedence over everything else,” he says.

With Barracuda, the duo have the perfect partner to drive up security awareness and minimize cyber risk, even as their company comes under greater scrutiny from cyber-criminals.

The mobile threat

One other factor stands out about Sapphire Utility Solutions: the size of its mobile workforce of engineers and remote working operatives. Comprising around 70% of the 1000-strong workforce at the company, many use personal webmail addresses for company business, making filtering challenging. Ryan also highlights their “inventive” use of company devices, which can put staff at risk of scams and other email-borne threats. Senior management are also frequently targeted by business email compromise (BEC) scams.

As the company migrated to Microsoft 365, it became clear that additional email protection would be needed. After running demos with several providers, Mo chose [Barracuda Email Protection](#) - “the most comprehensive offering at the right price point,” and the firm has not looked back since.

“I firmly believe that no matter which email service you have you can’t always rely on the people providing those services to protect you enough,” Ryan argues. “We looked at Microsoft’s offerings and they’re just not as easy to use. For something we just wanted to get the job done, Barracuda fit the bill.”

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Comprehensive platform-based protection

Barracuda Email Protection offers powerful email filtering, cloud backup, encryption, data loss prevention (DLP), user awareness training and incident response from a single platform. [Advanced Threat Protection](#) uses multi-layered checks such as behavioral analysis and CPU-emulation sandboxing to detect zero-day threats. [Impersonation Protection](#) takes things to the next level with AI capabilities that spot malicious behavior like BEC which is designed to circumvent email gateways.

Then there’s [Security Awareness Training](#), which features hundreds of real-world threat templates so that IT teams can run realistic simulation campaigns to educate their employees. Meanwhile, [Incident Response](#) has been designed to slash the time between threat detection and remediation.

From “scary” campaigns to peace of mind

The platform has kept Sapphire Utility Solutions virtually malware-free for over 18 months, although most of the malicious emails Ryan and his team see are craftier than that, using LinkedIn details to target senior management. Typically, these are BEC scams designed to trick users into paying fake invoices or transferring funds.

“It’s unusual for malicious links or malware to get through. I suspect that’s because protection is pretty strong,” Ryan says.

However, he has noticed an uptick in BEC attempts from webmail addresses, which the company needs to allow given that many of its mobile engineers use these for work. That’s made having a reliable threat protection platform and social engineering awareness training even more important. Fortunately, Barracuda’s Security



Awareness Training has been invaluable, allowing Ryan to run campaigns in groups of 30 users.

“The first couple of campaigns were fairly interesting and scary at the same time, based on the number of people that clicked through. But then, two things happened. First, fewer people clicked on those links, and second a number of people forwarded suspect emails to our department to confirm whether they were legitimate or not,” he explains.

“The impact has been huge. We’ve educated users without having to spend a lot of time and effort doing so.”

The tool is still run every month to maintain awareness and ensure any new starters are brought up to speed.

“We’re a growing company, so we need to be proactive and not let people get too comfortable,” Ryan argues.

On the off chance that emails slip through Barracuda’s filters, there’s Incident Response for rapid remediation.

“It’s instant. As soon as we’re aware of the threat ... we can log onto the control panel, add the email and within a minute we know the tool has gone through all mailboxes, found any instances, deleted them and informed the users they’ve been subject to something malicious,” he adds.

This is beneficial not only for keeping staff safe from the impact of inbound threats, but also “lets those staff know what we’re doing for them,” explains Ryan.

“We love the product, we’re really happy with it.”

All that remains is, Ryan admits, is to familiarize himself with more of Barracuda Email Protection’s features so the firm can leverage even more benefits from the platform.

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Sapphire Utility Solutions

Learn more:

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
Email Protection™



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.