

# Club Automation Case Study

Club Automation drives new business growth, safely migrates its health club management application to AWS, protects customer data, and provisions firewalls in 15 minutes instead of several hours by using Barracuda NextGen Firewalls on the AWS Cloud. The organization provides cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) software for health and athletic clubs throughout the United States. Club Automation migrated its applications to AWS and uses Barracuda firewalls provisioned through the AWS Marketplace.

## The Challenge

Not long ago, Club Automation was a small upstart company in the health club software industry with a big goal: to revolutionize the entire industry with a SaaS enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution that manages all parts of a health club's business. The company is now experiencing explosive business growth. "We came into the club ERP space as an underdog, but we've grown extremely fast," says Max Longin, a founding partner at the company. "About 70 percent of our total revenue as a company has come in the past year." Even so, Longin considers this a period of "controlled growth." "We have not really been marketing ourselves—our new customers have been coming to us through word of mouth. Our concern has been that if our systems are not ready to scale to support more growth, we could compromise performance and our customers' experience."

To address that concern, Club Automation sought to move its SaaS application to a new cloud technology provider. "We needed more agility and scalability than we had with our previous hybrid-cloud solution, which included a secure but legacy private-cloud environment," Longin confirms. "We had to scale ahead of required capacity, which was costly and required a lot of planning. We wanted to be more agile, so we could quickly roll out new apps and features for our customers."

As Club Automation considered new cloud technologies, it also needed to ensure strong security for its application workloads. "We operate in a cardholder environment, and our solution needs to be PCI compliant and highly secure," Longin says. "We can't allow access to our backend systems by anyone other than our developers. We had to eliminate attack surface areas within a cloud environment, and we needed the security to enable our business to move our workloads to the cloud safely."

## ABOUT CLUB AUTOMATION

[Club Automation](#) is a leading cloud-based software provider with a mission of contributing to a healthier and more active world by empowering more-efficient health and fitness club management. Based in Chicago, the company offers a software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution that enables health and fitness clubs to run their facilities effortlessly.



**ClubAutomation**

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Max Longin,  
Founding Partner, Club Automation

## Why Amazon Web Services

Club Automation decided to move its SaaS application to the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud, in part because AWS addressed the company's security and performance challenges. "Previously, we were not set up to support geographic growth, because we only had a few dispersed data centers and we had challenges deploying security quickly and getting solid performance in all areas of the United States," Longin says. "We looked at Microsoft Azure, but it wasn't the right solution for our needs," says Longin. "AWS fit like a glove, and it offers the best services for our business." Club Automation runs its web servers on [Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud](#) (Amazon EC2) instances and runs background jobs on [AWS Elastic Beanstalk](#), a service for deploying and scaling web applications. The company is also using [Amazon Aurora](#), a hosted relational database service, to store and manage customer membership and financial data.

To safely migrate its SaaS application workloads to AWS, Club Automation chose to work with [Barracuda Networks](#), an AWS Partner Network (APN) Advanced Technology Partner with an AWS Security Competency certification. Barracuda provides firewalls engineered for AWS to help customers deploy a comprehensive security architecture and increase protection against cyberattacks and advanced threats. "I had a previous business relationship with Barracuda and was impressed with the stability of the solutions," Longin says. Club Automation deployed Barracuda NextGen Firewalls to help secure the company's AWS environment. The firewalls are installed on an Amazon EC2 instance in the Club Automation [Amazon Virtual Private Cloud](#) (Amazon VPC). Each firewall sits in a public subnet, protecting against unauthorized access to the private subnets where the cardholder data environment is located.

Club Automation was able to easily purchase and deploy the Barracuda firewalls through the [AWS Marketplace](#), an online store where customers can find software and services from AWS partners so they can build solutions and run their businesses.

## The Benefits

By moving its SaaS application to the AWS Cloud, Club Automation has been able to keep up with its rapid rate of growth. "AWS makes it very easy for us to scale and innovate," says Longin. "We needed the right platform to enable growth, and we have that. Instead of having to carefully control growth because of platform limitations, we can scale on demand to support an increasing number of clubs with our application. We no longer have any restrictions on how large or fast we grow." The company now has the agility to respond quickly to customer needs and can deploy its solutions 30–40 percent faster. Longin says, "We have to innovate by giving clubs the features they're looking for."

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Club Automation is taking advantage of Barracuda firewalls to help secure its growing number of AWS services. "We are using the Barracuda NextGen Firewalls, provisioned through the AWS Marketplace, to effectively guard our application against web-based attacks and application layer attacks," says Longin. "The Barracuda solution plugs in seamlessly to our AWS environment, and it is doing its job of minimizing the attack surface area and helping our customers keep club member cardholder data protected."

Club Automation has also decreased the amount of time the configuration process took with its previous firewall solution. Barracuda offerings on the AWS Marketplace support [AWS CloudFormation](#) templates, which allow developers and administrators to deploy applications within a stack of AWS-related resources. "The Barracuda firewall is a self-service, cloud-based solution that takes less than 15 minutes to get up and running, as opposed to the hours and sometimes days the previous solution took," Longin says. "Provisioning new users is much simpler and faster. Instead of opening a support ticket and waiting for it to be addressed, we can just go into AWS and provision new users ourselves. This is a key benefit for us as we keep growing."

Relying on Barracuda, Club Automation enabled its IT team to securely move its SaaS workloads to AWS. "We had considered using a cloud solution a few years ago, but cloud offerings were not what they are today, and security solutions like Barracuda's were not available," says Longin. "Our move to AWS would not have been possible without Barracuda firewalls," remarks Longin. "Using Barracuda helped us safely transition more of our workloads to AWS, and we expect our full production environment to be all-in on AWS by the end of the year."

In addition, Club Automation benefited from the ease of deployment from the AWS Marketplace. "It couldn't have been more simple," says Longin. "All we had to do was find the solution and then quickly configure and deploy it through the AWS Marketplace. In the software industry, it's rare when something works as expected, but the AWS Marketplace did just that." In the near future, Club Automation expects to use the marketplace for the upcoming Barracuda metered billing service. "With metered billing, we will be able to consume Barracuda services in the same way we consume AWS services, which will be very cost-effective for us," Longin says.

Previously, Club Automation had been holding back on expansion and had only grown through word of mouth, because it was concerned that its IT staff could not support rapid expansion. Now, using AWS, the company is poised for major growth. "We are ready and able to grow," says Longin. "We have started hiring inside sales representatives and creating marketing plans, because we have a platform that enables scalability and expansion while also allowing us to maintain our high standards of customer service. To keep growing fast, we need agility and innovation. That's what fueled our transition to AWS and Barracuda, and it will continue fueling our growth in this industry."

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