



S. M. Wilson & Co. builds a solid reputation on SentinelOne

Upgrading to SentinelOne improves security for a construction management company and its customers

IT and business challenges

S. M. Wilson & Co. is a large full-service construction management, design/build, and general contracting firm based in Saint Louis, Missouri. "We have a very mobile workforce," noted Mark Patterson, CIO at S. M. Wilson & Co. "On any given day, half of our employees are out of the office, working at remote offices or job site trailers that don't always have the best connectivity. Very few of our employees have a 'love affair' with their computers, but they realize they need to use them to get their jobs done."

"We need to protect all of our project plans, blueprints, and job site information, but protecting our reputation is actually more important than anything else," explained Patterson. "As a Construction Manager, our goal is to complete all projects on time, within budget, and exceed our customers' expectations. But if our computers start getting infected, our employee's performance becomes affected. If I blame the slowdown on 'bad Internet actors,' that's not a reasonable excuse."

KEY CHALLENGES

- Implement a more robust security solution for a company with a highly mobile workforce

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Achieved goal of zero downtime due to attacks since the deployment
- Eliminated 3-4 hours of security management time per week
- Obtained quick and easy deployment

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Looking for a better security solution

S. M. Wilson & Co. had been using McAfee as its endpoint security solution for several years. "McAfee is a signature-based endpoint security solution, and for years it was sufficient for our needs," Patterson said. "However, our laptops and servers would get infected occasionally, and we probably spent 3 to 4 hours per week fixing disks and applications that weren't working right or rebuilding computers after a breach."

S. M. Wilson & Co. started looking for a more powerful security solution earlier this year. "It didn't appear that our current provider was moving in a direction to get out in front of a lot of the more advanced threats that were out there," Patterson noted. "That's when we started looking at newer technologies that could offer us substantially better capabilities and efficacy than the standard McAfee or Symantec signature-based solutions."

S. M. Wilson & Co. has a small IT team that is responsible for all applications and security infrastructure. "Several of the larger security solution vendors told us they could serve as part of our staff and look at our logs, but we don't have the budget for, or the need for, that level of protection," noted Patterson. "We wanted to find a security solution that we could deploy and maintain ourselves—without having to hire programmers or specialists."

Mark Patterson, CIO, S. M. Wilson & Co.

"SentinelOne didn't add any complexity to our lives, and it absolutely helps us keep our people and customers safe. We've had zero downtime due to attacks since we put in SentinelOne. And that's the ultimate goal of any security solution!"

Looking at the alternatives

Patterson quickly narrowed his decision down to two security solutions, AMP from Cisco and SentinelOne. "My concern was that AMP doesn't offer any signature-based prevention at all," Patterson explained. "From everything I've read, 20% of viruses are potentially signature-based. Cisco told me that we didn't need that capability because AMP talks to the firewall. They explained they didn't want to add a lot of 'extra' features into their software because it would 'bog down performance.' So for signature-based attacks, we would need to buy another antivirus solution. But that didn't make sense to me—it sounded far less efficient than running one solution that had everything we need, like SentinelOne. I did some further research on the two solutions, and found that SentinelOne was getting the best reviews from several sources that I trust. So that's when we asked SentinelOne for a demo."

Choosing SentinelOne

S. M. Wilson & Co.'s contract on its McAfee antivirus solution was due to expire in May 2016. "I wanted to make sure we finished switching to our new security solution before the McAfee support ran out," Patterson reported. "So I put together a project plan to procure SentinelOne and install new firewalls. The timing was good because SentinelOne had just released its new version, and we were able to negotiate a great three-year deal. The timeframe for the cut-over was pretty tight, but we were able to get SentinelOne rolled out right before the McAfee maintenance ran out. We now have 170 endpoint devices on SentinelOne: Ten are servers, another ten are desktops, and the other 150 are laptops."

An easily managed system

"One of the things I love about SentinelOne is the ability to install, manage, and upload software updates by myself," Patterson said. "Since we have so many people working off-site with VPNs and Citrix, it was always a nightmare to push new software updates out to our users. With McAfee, I had to worry about all of the Windows 10 complexity. I just downloaded the new version of SentinelOne last night and pushed it out to all of our endpoint device users. When I came in this morning, I looked at the console and it confirmed that everyone had the update. I really like the idea that I can control things without having to involve the vendor or my staff."

Using the SentinelOne portal

"Another great thing about SentinelOne is its simple, intuitive portal," reported Patterson. "Cisco has marvelous engineers, but their software design is much more difficult to learn, making their portal harder to use. In contrast, the SentinelOne portal is very straightforward. As soon as I log in, it shows me all of the current threats, allows me to easily perform an uninstall, shut a computer down, see what processes are running, and find out who else in the environment may be infected by that virus. SentinelOne provides all of the tools that I need to give me deep insight into our endpoint systems."

Final thoughts

"SentinelOne didn't add any complexity to our lives, and it absolutely helps us keep our people and our customers safe," concluded Patterson. "We've had zero downtime due to a virus since we put in SentinelOne. And that's the ultimate goal of any security solution!"



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