



Sports-Accessory Firm Connects, Protects

A case study in network security

BACKGROUND

With a unique line of sports accessories that allow fans to “wear the game,” GameWear has achieved remarkable growth in the highly competitive market for team-logo merchandise. Execution across the entire sales-and-supply chain is the key to winning the battle for shelf space in sports stores and stadiums. That calls for instant access to information across a broad base of manufacturing sites, retailers and sales representatives – some based in the U.S., some around the world. To secure those connections and keep them reliable, GameWear teams with eMazzanti Technologies, a technology consulting firm with scores of satisfied clients, a knack for understanding and solving business issues, and a winner of WatchGuard® Partner of the Year.



CHALLENGE

GameWear was poised for fast-track growth but needed to improve its ability to share information and communicate. According to CEO Frank Cerullo, “We have sales representatives across the country, customers in other countries, and manufacturing, warehouse and distribution facilities. They all need to access information about our products, from product images to manufacturing specifications.” However, this had to be accomplished while satisfying the need for security, and as he says, “I’m very, very cautious about giving people access to our IT infrastructure, access to our office, a window into the kind of business we run.

“The lack of a fully secure option often made me cautious about choosing any option at all - at least until someone could prove to me that the security concern could be satisfied”

WATCHGUARD® SOLUTION

Cerullo turned to Carl Mazzanti, Chief Executive Officer of eMazzanti Technologies, their trusted IT consultant. Mazzanti reassured GameWear that they could run an FTP server for information-sharing, satisfy a number of other needs, secure their business against intrusion, and make it all easy to manage by installing a WatchGuard firewall.

Mazzanti installed a WatchGuard Core™ X750e with a full Unified Threat Management Software Suite including WebBlocker, Gateway AntiVirus/IPS and spamBlocker. The firewall is configured to run all services fully proxied, with a locked-down set of rules. The X750e protects several dozen desktop PCs in the GameWear office as well multiple servers, and also allows secure remote access via SSL-VPN.

BENEFITS

Once the WatchGuard unit was in place, the impacts on the business were far-reaching. “Now our employees can work anywhere at any time, and that’s invaluable to us,” explains Cerullo. “Our Internet does not go down, and it’s exceptionally fast because of the policies we have set up with the FireWare Pro OS. Our FTP site is protected, all our machines are protected. It just goes on and on. We use VoIP phones internally, and it’s something I was considering moving away from because of the breakups and lack of clarity. Carl Mazzanti said that we should really consider giving WatchGuard a chance and he was right. All those problems went away when we used the quality-of-service capabilities.”

“WatchGuard allowed us to do a lot of things that we had to do, in order for us to gain the competitive advantage that we needed.”

Triple-Digit Growth, Three Years Running

GameWear has experienced triple-digit growth for three consecutive years. The WatchGuard firewall has been a key enabler by securing an ever-growing volume of FTP and VPN connections. “I would say our number of unique items has doubled,” declares Cerullo. “We were probably in 3,000 doors, now we’re in something like 7,500 doors. We had 100 or so people working remotely, now we have over 200 people out in the field selling our products.”

“Our Web server is also really important. The site has grown tremendously, in terms of the percentage of the business it represents to us. In addition to e-commerce, our site, www.wearthegame.com, has become a critical marketing resource that pays dividends in our retail stores.”

Secured Connections Made Worry-Free

As head of an entrepreneurial company, solid, trouble-free security lets GameWear’s founder focus more on growth, and less on growing pains. “I’ve been everything from a CEO in high-level negotiations to the guy sweeping the floor and shutting the lights out at the end of the day, and everything in between,” says Cerullo. “It’s good to know we don’t have to worry about security. I know the WatchGuard appliance is there, it’s not vulnerable, it can handle the growth. It has essentially been problem-free for us. It’s an excellent piece of hardware, and we’ve got an excellent firm in eMazzanti Technologies maintaining it for us.”

Above All, Trust in Relationships

Cerullo gives a great deal of credit to his trusted relationship with his consulting firm – and in eMazzanti’s relationship with WatchGuard. “I don’t think we would have been able to ramp up

the way we did had I not found a partner I could trust with turning over the keys to our IT store,” he says. “I don't think I would have the confidence in a lot of other companies to allow them to come in, take responsibility for our security and let WatchGuard do what it does so well. WatchGuard and eMazzanti have been a significant component to the competitive advantage that we've captured.”



www.wearthegame.com

GameWear™ is a nationally recognized sports accessories company whose products convey the look and feel of the game. All items resemble and are made from the genuine materials of the sports ball. The bracelets, necklaces, keychains, cell phone cases and MP3 player cases have been extremely well-received in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Japan. The GameWear line is the only product of its kind to feature the officially licensed logos of every team in every major professional sport, more than 100 collegiate teams, and all-time great athletes' names, jersey numbers and signatures.



www.emazzanti.net

eMazzanti Technologies provides computer network solutions for growing businesses, from initial setup to ongoing support and management. The firm's services include network design, security, disaster recovery, remote connectivity and beyond. In addition to network consulting services, eMazzanti offers a portfolio of managed services and an online store showcasing more than 500,000 hardware and software products from leading technology manufacturers. An innovative and comprehensive approach to network services has earned eMazzanti the trust of a rapidly growing client base and recognition by many of the industry's foremost publications.

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ABOUT WATCHGUARD

Since 1996 WatchGuard has been building award-winning unified threat management (UTM) security solutions that combine firewall, VPN and security services to protect networks and the businesses they power. We recently launched the next generation: extensible threat management (XTM) solutions featuring reliable, all-in-one security, scaled and priced to meet the unique security needs of every enterprise. Our products are backed by 15000 partners representing WatchGuard in 120 countries. More than a half million signature red WatchGuard security appliances have already been deployed worldwide in industries including retail, education, and healthcare. WatchGuard is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, with offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, and Latin America.

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