Confidence in a connected world. ✓ Symantec.™

ECSEC

'Hell's Kitchen' Contractor Goes to Heaven with Symantec

What a way for a company to approach its 50th Anniversary. ECSEC's server had been compromised by an intruder and was relaying thousands of spam messages every hour selling counterfeit software. As a consequence, emails to/from this small, dynamic UK retail and bar refurbishment firm were blocked intermittently—right in the middle of a high profile fit out of a TV programme restaurant. Data protection was at risk too: a particularly important workstation in the accounting department running several critical applications, for example, was woefully under protected. By partnering with Symantec and Vitality Consulting Services, ECSEC received the best birthday present imaginable. An integrated Symantec data protection and messaging security solution gives ECSEC the confidence that its network is operating correctly, confidence that data is properly secured and backed up, and confidence that when an ECSEC project is undertaken that the network can be relied upon to perform. Business productivity has risen by 25 percent, costs are down, and 99.9 percent of spam email has been eliminated.

Contractors to 'Hell's Kitchen'

British diners and shoppers may not recognize the name, but if they've eaten in a Carluccio's or a Giraffe restaurant, or shopped in Brown's in South Molton Street in London, they will have experienced what ECSEC (formerly known as the Eastern Counties Shop Equipment Company) can do. The company is one of the UK's leading retail design and retail shop fitting, restaurant, and bar refurbishment contractors. In fact, ECSEC is so widely recognized in the industry that it was chosen to build the restaurant that featured in the popular British TV programme, 'Hell's Kitchen'—whereby a celebrity chef trains 10 celebrities to be professional chefs and produce dishes for a restaurant of celebrity diners.

Keeping the business running is not all about long lunches though. ECSEC is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary and the small team running the company has worked hard to build a reputa-

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Website: www.ecsec.com

Industry: Business Services

Headquarters: Newmarket, U.K.

SYMANTEC SOLUTIONS
Data Protection
Messaging Security

Why Symantec?

· One-stop security and data protection solution

· Cost-effective, easy-to-use approach to tackling backup, malware, and spam threats

VITALITY
Living, Breathing, Technology

tion for delivering projects of the highest quality, within budget, and on time. That commitment to design and shop fitting contacts has paid off: turnover has also increased from £2.9 million to £9 million in five years. However, there's one area of the business that the team wouldn't claim to be experts on—and that's technology. And as the business grew, technology (and in particular information security) had become a comparatively neglected area of the business.

Brian Trundle, director of ECSEC highlights just how serious the issue of information security had become. "We're not large enough to have dedicated IT staff and there's no doubt our IT security was starting to creak. In fact, it was close to sinking the company. We were exposed to people hacking into our systems—one guy was using our platform to try hacking into NASA!"

Server compromised to sell counterfeit software

One particular incident highlights the depth of the problem. When ECSEC was in the middle of the high profile fit out of the studio restaurant featured in Hell's Kitchen, the company's Microsoft Small Business Server had been compromised by an intruder and was being used to relay thousands of spam messages every hour selling counterfeit software. As a consequence the server was being blocked intermittently by ECSEC's internet service provider (ISP). The challenge for Brian Trundle and his team was to properly secure the network and to ensure that enough resources were available to simultaneously complete the high profile project on time, and allow the restaurant to open and to finalise the company yearend accounts. There wasn't any margin for error with project deployment and the solution simply had to work. Finally, the incumbent security software failed to block spam and this was an increasingly unwanted problem and a desire was expressed to fully automate the daily backup.

ECSEC turned to Vitality Consulting Services, a Cambridge-based IT services company, for help. Vitality conducted a comprehensive technology audit and uncovered numerous problems with ECSEC's systems, ranging

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

• Counter all-pervasive spam
• Improve service to end-user clients

Technology Challenges

• Network storms broadcast by an old hub
• Mail server configured as an open mail relay and the network had subsequently been compromised
• Data protection at risk

Symantec Products

• Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery Desktop Edition
• Symantec™ Protection Suite Small Business Edition

Technology Environment

• End users: 9
• Hardware: HP® ProLiant ML350 G5, various generation HP desktops and laptops
• Operating Systems: Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003 Premium, XP
• Applications: Access Accounts, Microsoft Office, AutoCAD

Symantec Partner

• Vitality Consulting Services Limited, www.vitality-consulting.co.uk

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

• Reduced costs
• Increased business productivity by 25%
• Helped stop security threats—even from unknown attackers
• Detected and blocked malicious software in real time
• Alleviated risk from virus threats, spam, and other security issues
• Filtered inappropriate content, blocked files based, and prevented inappropriate communications
• Eliminated 99.9% of spam email
• Only 'very rare' instances of false positives
• Ensured stability, availability, and continuity of information throughout the organization

from a lack of server disk space, and a lack of server memory, to a lack of a meaningful firewall and network storms being broadcast by an old hub hidden under a desk at ECSEC's offices in Newmarket. The audit also revealed that the company's mail server was configured as an open mail relay and the network had subsequently been compromised. The existing Microsoft Small Business server had simply been poorly maintained and had lapsed into a perilous condition. And data

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Brian Trundle
Director
ECSEC

protection was at risk too: the audit identified a particularly important workstation in the accounting department running several critical applications which required a system level backup.

To the immense satisfaction of Brian Trundle and his colleagues, Vitality did not charge a penny for this root and branch audit. "Vitality did an excellent job. We're not technology experts, so we relied on their experience, professionalism, and knowledge to point us in the right direction. All we said to them is that we didn't want it to cost the earth," says Brian Trundle.

Vitality masterminds one-stop security and data protection solution

Vitality considered Microsoft Forefront and briefly looked at upgrading the existing MacAfee product; however, after consulting the VB100 ratings, Vitality decided on Symantec™. George Ilko, of Vitality Consulting Services Limited strategically planned the deployment and explains why Symantec was the preferred choice. "Symantec offered ECSEC a one-stop security and data protection solution. The combination of Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery Desktop Edition and Symantec™ Protection Suite Small Business Edition offer a cost-effective, easy-to-use approach to tackling backup, malware, and spam threats.

Backup Exec System Recovery 8.5 provides rigorous data protection for the HP ProLiant ML350 G5 server and nine users by capturing recovery points of the company's entire Windows system—including the operating system, applications, system settings, configurations, and files. This allows the team to restore their PC to an exact point in time prior to a failure. ECSEC's users can restore their own files and maintain synchronization between multiple desktops and laptops so the most up-to-date file versions are available on all of a user's computers—and it doesn't require a dedicated stand-alone server. The solution is delivered as part of an automated, offsite backup service, managed by Vitality. "We simply pay Vitality a monthly fee and they take care of the rest," says Brian Trundle. "We now have the confidence that whatever happens, our entire systems are safe from a disaster."

Ask Brian Trundle about the new information security solution Vitality has implemented and there's no talk of the underlying technology—just the benefits. "Again, Vitality took care of all the complexity. All I know and care about is that our systems are free from malware and spam threats, we no longer have hackers trying to connect NASA through our systems and I'm not hounded by emails trying to sell me sexual services!" Underlying this success is Protection Suite Small Business Edition. This easy to use, all-in-one suite protects ECSEC's critical business assets with multiple layers of protection to ensure the computer systems and information are secure and readily available at all times. Protection Suite Small Business Edition provides the team in Newmarket with end-to-end protection against unknown threats for the laptops, desktops and messaging server. It also enables ECSEC to identify and control the flow of sensitive information via email.

Brian Trundle is pleased with the final result. "The primary benefit is confidence that the network is operating correctly, confidence that although the business is permanently connected to the outside world that it is properly secured and backed up, and confidence that when an ECSEC project is undertaken that the network can be relied upon to perform. A complete disaster recovery solution is now in place with an automated offsite backup for peace of mind. All of this means ECSEC now spends less time dealing with poor network performance and spam and more time focusing on delivering higher service levels to its refurbishment customers."

Brian Trundle may disregard the nature of the technology behind this success, but he's familiar enough with it to know what difference it's made. 99.9 percent of spam email, for example, has been eliminated and the number of false positives is now so low, he "doesn't even bother checking it anymore." He also estimates that ECSEC staff are now 25 percent more productive, because less time is spent wading through spam or waiting for slow performing PCs to respond.

"We can't underestimate the value Vitality has delivered in all this," he adds. "It's thanks to their knowledge, experience, and understanding that we are in the position we're in now. They also work extremely hard. If I come past the office at the week-end or during the evening and the lights are on, chances are it will be Vitality just checking everything is running smoothly or working on a small IT issue. Add in the free IT audit they performed and you would be hard pressed to find a more committed IT services company."

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