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(508) 339-5163
www.spadetechnology.com
info@spadetechnology.com

Solutions & Success
The Inside Story

Spade Technology Delivers Effective IT Support And Proven Cybersecurity Processes To This Advanced Material Distributor

This advanced material distributor has been in business for well over a hundred years, operating as a specialty chemical resource around the world. With two locations in the US and three dozen employees supporting clients around the globe, this advanced material distributor manages a large and complex operation — of which their IT is a very important part.

This advanced material distributor's leadership understands the role that technology plays in their operations, and their security and compliance. They see IT support as a necessary investment, and so, not just any IT company will do.

This Advanced Material Distributor Needed To Find Effective IT Support For Their Staff

Originally, Spade Technology was considered as a candidate for this advanced material distributor's IT management needs in 2011, but they opted for a different provider. Unfortunately, this didn't go as this advanced material distributor had hoped.

The quality of support with this previous IT support provider was severely lacking. The company's Operations Manager encountered significant issues with the support that was offered to this advanced material distributor's users, including ineffective solutions, misleading information, long wait times for fixes and even rude interactions with the support team.

That's just one of the reasons they decided to hire Spade Technology. Friendly and effective support for their staff is a key priority in their IT, which they trusted the Spade Technology team to deliver.

"Users seem to be happier with Spade's customer service," says the Operations Manager. "Spade has helped our company further our protection."

Spade Technology Offered Cybersecurity Expertise

This was another priority for this advanced material distributor, which they hoped to focus on by hiring Spade Technology — they knew they needed to protect their data more effectively.

The previous IT company didn't have the cybersecurity acumen that this advanced material distributor was looking for. When they elected to try working with Spade Technology, they were eager to implement a carefully developed strategy for their cybersecurity.

This area is one of Spade Technology's specialties, for which they offer a carefully developed service: SecurityWerks. As a part of SecurityWerks, the cybersecurity specialists at Spade Technology assessed this advanced material distributor's IT environment, their IT needs, and developed a detailed roadmap to make sure their data is properly secured.

This was especially important for this advanced material distributor's compliance practices. As a business operating around the globe, this advanced material distributor has to maintain certifications and comply with a number of regulatory systems, such as ISO 9001.

In the course of the SecurityWerks assessment, Spade Technology identified certain areas where this advanced material distributor's cybersecurity put them at risk of noncompliance. In developing their cybersecurity roadmap, Spade Technology delivered a set of policies, procedures, controls, and technologies, all working together to protect this advanced material distributor's systems in a proven way and support their compliance.

Delivered solutions and services include:

➤ SIEM

Security information and event management (SIEM) technology provides a secure cloud service that provides 24/7 security and operation monitoring to oversee a given business' security needs.

A SIEM solution offers a monitoring service, with adaptive threat protection that identifies active cyberattacks and takes action in real-time to protect the business.

By integrating intelligence from global threat monitoring feeds, this solution responds to network-based zero-day exploit attempts, drive-by downloads, and advanced malware that routinely bypass conventional firewall and antivirus technologies

➤ SonicWall Firewalls

The firewall is the first line of defense for keeping data safe.

A firewall is a particular type of solution that maintains the security of the network. It blocks unauthorized users from gaining access to your data. Firewalls are deployed via hardware, software, or a combination of the two.

A firewall inspects and filters incoming and outgoing data in the following ways:

- With Packet Filtering that filters incoming and outgoing data and accepts or rejects it depending on your predefined rules.

- Via an Application Gateway that applies security to applications like Telnet *(a software program that can access remote computers and terminals over the Internet, or a TCP/IP computer network)* and File Transfer Protocol Servers.

- By using a Circuit-Level Gateway when a connection such as a Transmission Control Protocol is made, and small pieces called packets are transported.

- With Proxy Servers: Proxy servers mask your true network address and capture every message that enters or leaves your network.

- Using Stateful Inspection or Dynamic Packet Filtering to compare a packet's critical data parts. These are compared to a trusted information database to decide if the information is authorized.

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➤ DUO MFA

Two-Factor Authentication is a great way to add an extra layer of protection to the existing system and account logins.

By requiring a second piece of information like a randomly-generated numerical code sent by text message, businesses can make sure that the person using their employee's login credentials is actually who they say they are. Biometrics like fingerprints, voice, or even iris scans are also options, as are physical objects like keycards.

There are three categories of information that can be used in this process:

- **Something the user has:** Includes a mobile phone, app, or generated code

- **Something the user knows:** A family member's name, city of birth, pin, or phrase

- **Something the user is:** Includes fingerprints and facial recognition

➤ VPN

One of the most proven techniques to make sure data is safe is to use a virtual private network (VPN). A VPN creates a secure tunnel for protected data to transit the Internet, using a network of private servers.

A VPN encrypts data as it moves from a device to the VPN and then continues onto the Internet through what's called an exit node. A VPN creates the appearance that the data is coming from the VPN server, not from your device. That makes it harder for an attacker to identify the source of the data.

➤ **Sophos Endpoint Encryption**
In layman's terms, encrypted data is formatted in a secret code that would be meaningless if intercepted. It is one of the most efficient ways to secure a database given that decryption can only occur through a key, which is essentially a "secret password". In this case, there is a need for updated encryption software to ensure that private information is only accessible through the database program.

Encryption technology is a great way to protect important data. By making data unreadable to anyone who isn't supposed to have access to it, you can secure files stored on your systems, servers, and mobile devices, as well as files sent via email or through file-sharing services.

Spade Technology Provides Microsoft Migration And Integration Guidance

As such a long-standing business, this advanced material distributor has a rather complex IT environment, incorporating a number of different software applications that aren't easy to integrate with one another. In particular, they had struggled for some time to get their remote access software to work with older Microsoft software that their staff used every day.

When they brought Spade Technology on, it became clear that they needed to update their old Microsoft software to a new Office 365 Outlook setup. Migrating systems like this can be complicated and requires time and expertise — both of which Spade Technology was able to deliver.

"Microsoft Office 365 and the outdated software was having a hard time working together but the Project Manager from Spade who worked with me on this project never gave up," says the Operations Manager. "He worked evenings, weekends — even 4th of July! It meant a lot that he used his personal time to help our company complete the migration."

Spade Technology Has Developed A Secure & Well-Supported IT Environment For This Advanced Material Distributor

To this day, Spade Technology continues to support this advanced material distributor's IT systems and users. They provide a range of specialized services from ongoing policy workshops and incident response testing/training, to penetration testing and SOC services, all of which keep this advanced material distributor's IT environment secure and optimized.

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