

Success Story

Security Gateway Gives Control Back to IT

Kansas City Life Boosts Productivity and Saves Money with Astaro

Kansas City Life Insurance Company's Internet security devices were nearing the end of their lifecycles. Researching their upgrade options, the company, a long-time Cisco shop, wondered if they could find a security solution that did the seemingly impossible--simplify and unify network security.

"We're a medium-sized organization, and one of the things we were hoping to do was find a security solution that didn't require extensive, narrow expertise to manage," said Keith Beatty, a senior network engineer for Kansas

City Life. "Our legacy Cisco PIX's served us well, but we didn't like that we couldn't maintain them entirely ourselves." Beatty believes that a competent IT staff should be able to handle minor configuration changes and basic troubleshooting without a bunch of product-specific training.

Additionally, Beatty hoped that he could find a product that could combine several security options into a single product with a consistent, unified interface. The costs for layer after layer of point-product licenses were getting out of hand and prohibitive.

KC Life IT Serves a Mixed User Base

Beatty and his fellow five-member IT team serve approximately 700 end users in the KC Life home office. Additionally, the company has several thousand agents across the country. Most have their own networks, but its headquarters hosts the email servers for many of them, as well as providing a web portal for agents and VPN access to those needing more network access. All told, the KC Life network has about 100 servers and 700 in-house PCs running Windows XP.

The company first investigated simply upgrading with Cisco, but Cisco was phasing out PIX devices, and Beatty didn't believe that their mid-market offerings were a good fit for his organization. KC Life also took a look at Fortinet and SonicWall before discovering Astaro and its line of Security Gateway products. "Once I saw Astaro, I stopped looking," Beatty said. "I was shocked they could do so much so affordably."

Open Source Meets Security

Finding the answer to KC Life's security needs involved a bit of serendipity. "I've been getting more and more interested in open source," Beatty said. He cited the usual reasons for being drawn to open source: stability, the ability to customize and add-on to the products, and the absence of draconian end user agreements.

"Many open source business solutions have value," Beatty said. "The downside, at least in an organization without a big IT staff, is that open source is time consuming."

But Beatty found Astaro, a company that bases their technology around various open-source projects, improving them, supporting them, and tailoring them to enterprise needs: the best of both worlds.



About Astaro

Astaro is a leader in delivering Internet security appliances. The Astaro Security Gateway simplifies Email, Web & Network Security and has won numerous industry awards as it protects over 32,000 networks in 60 countries. Astaro products are distributed by a worldwide partner network with more than 2,500 solution partners offering local support and services. Astaro Corporation is headquartered in Karlsruhe, Germany, and Burlington, Massachusetts, USA.



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Customer Service is Key

Astaro's customer service is also an important factor for Beatty. "Getting good service and support can be very difficult with some companies," Beatty said. "The last time I called Cisco, I got someone overseas. That in itself isn't a problem. The problem is that the service people are several steps removed from the core of the company," Beatty noted.

There is also a psychological disadvantage that comes with vendors who outsource customer service. "There's nothing worse than not being able to get customer service when you need it most and not knowing exactly when you'll get

it," Beatty said. "When you need to buy blocks of time in advance, you can feel pretty stranded when something goes wrong. You end up having an unhealthy dependency on vendors. I wanted to break that habit."

Astaro simplifies the customer service process by providing customers around the clock support with local Astaro technicians. Beatty has noticed the difference: "I feel much more at ease knowing that I can get complete support whenever I need it from someone who really knows the products I am using."

Tailoring Astaro Security Gateway to KC Life

Astaro Security Gateway, a UTM appliance, combines a full range of security features, including central administration, e-mail encryption, secure SSL VPN connectivity, firewall, virus scanning and comprehensive clustering functionality to help customers maximize security investments. Beatty explained, "While I liked having all of those features in one product, what was most important to us was ease of use," said Beatty.

KC Life can now manage its entire security package in-house and through one consistent, browser-based interface.

Kansas City Life didn't need each and every feature Astaro offers, and they were able to pick and choose to meet their needs. If they need additional features in the future, they just turn them on. "I like that there's not another steep learning curve every time you do something new," Beatty said.



The Bottom Line: Achieving ROI

While KC Life didn't do an official ROI report, they quickly realized that Astaro would immediately benefit the bottom line. "We didn't have to justify on cost because we had problems that needed immediate attention. That said, Astaro saved us money right away," Beatty said.

Kansas City Life realized the benefits of UTM and its combination of several applications into one box. This saved both real dollars in terms of

cheaper ongoing licensing and maintenance, and so-called soft dollars, meaning that IT can be more productive and end users are better served.

"We have more control overall," Beatty said. "We have more tools at our disposal, and when we need new features, it's simple to get them. I like to be hands-on, and so does my IT staff. It just makes sense to let us manage and maintain our own security."

Kansas City Life Insurance Company



**KANSAS CITY LIFE
INSURANCE COMPANY**

Kansas City Life Insurance Company (NASDAQ: KCLI) was established in 1895 and is based in Kansas City, Missouri. The Company's primary business is providing financial protection through the sale of life insurance and annuities. The Company's revenues were \$439.2 million in 2007, and assets and life insurance in force were \$4.4 billion and \$31.1 billion, respectively, as of December 31, 2007. The Company operates in 49 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, please visit www.kclife.com.

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