

Swinton Insurance

Swinton Insurance uses Symantec™ Cyber Security: Managed Security Services to help create a strategic security roadmap, reducing security response from days to hours

Swinton Insurance (Swinton) is a multi-channel insurance broker. Sensitive data, customer details, and card transactions are at the heart of their business. Transactions take place online, over the phone or face-to-face in their network of UK retail branches. It's the job of James Fletcher, Head of IT Risk at Swinton, and his modest team to protect the sensitive customer information on which the business is based. Swinton's security team have been live with Symantec Cyber Security: Managed Security Services for over three years. The service continues to evolve and provide more and more value to the business. As James Fletcher explains, "There are hefty challenges around Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards — it's a moving target and coupled with other legislation and regulatory controls. A robust information and IT security strategy will make you agile enough to succeed in this landscape."



“In my view, you can and should reach compliance through good security practice and not for its own sake. Combine the best elements of the relevant requirements with business needs and you'll create a robust information and IT security strategy that pays its way.”

James Fletcher
Head of IT Risk
Swinton Insurance

Providing value to customers

When Ken Scowcroft started comparing prices from lots of insurance companies over 50 years ago, Swinton Insurance was born. He passed on the savings to his customers and by 1964, he'd opened his first branch. With annual revenues exceeding £30 million (\$46 million), today Swinton is still a household name, offering a broad portfolio of insurance products.



ORGANISATION PROFILE

Site: www.swinton.co.uk

Industry: Finance

Headquarters: Manchester, UK

Employees: 5,000+

KEY CHALLENGES

Swinton Insurance needed to collect and use security information more effectively to create better customer outcomes and comply with industry regulations.

SOLUTION

The company turned to Symantec™ Cyber Security: Managed Security Services because it makes 24x7 threat and security log monitoring cost-effective.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Time to threat remediation reduced from several days to a few hours
- 24x7x365 coverage without doubling the size of the internal team
- Significantly reduced costs while improving security compliance and best practices
- Ability to make informed decisions and take action against threats more quickly
- Trusted provider with specialist knowledge and capability
- Partnership model with Softcat delivers additional business value

SYMANTEC PLATINUM PARTNER

Softcat Ltd

There's an intense ongoing programme of IT modernisation and transformation going on at Swinton, including significant investment in security controls and solutions. "There's certainly been a cultural shift around security here. It's driven by the desire to provide improved customer outcomes, a change in risk appetite and keeping up with ever-changing compliance requirements. However, we also need to manage and get value from the legacy systems we have."

With another iteration of the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) about to take effect, compliance is indeed a high priority. Another high priority, says Fletcher, is implementation of best practices and technology that improves the bottom line, "We are always keen to make sure security is never just a PCI or compliance fix. In my view, you can and should reach compliance through good security practice and not for its own sake." In fact Fletcher recommends, "Combining the best bits of the relevant requirements with business needs. Then you'll create a robust information and IT security strategy that pays its way."

Enhancing security

As part of this approach, some years ago, Fletcher identified a worrying gap. "Basically, we had ineffective logging solutions. We just wouldn't know about a cyber-attack because we had no credible system in place. If we found something out, we would dig manually and correlate timescales. The analysis was handled by a few individuals rather than the power of many experts. We were in a fairly weak position."

The initial on-site approach, in earlier compliance projects, delivered no real added value or compliance says Fletcher. "We just didn't have the internal operation to consume the information being collected, but I knew employing a team of people would be prohibitively expensive. Clearly, we needed a managed service provider." Fletcher worked with trusted partner Softcat and happily admits that they found plenty of technology solutions but, "It's also about people and service wrapped around. There was no other credible off-site managed service. Symantec's offer was the clear leader."

Three years on, the Symantec™ Cyber Security: Managed Security Services (MSS), Security Operations Centre (SOC) is seen as an extension of the team covering incident management from detection to conclusion, "That really is the way it works and we're not seen as just a small fish. Symantec ensures every incident matters and is processed. We have support from real people, a global team dealing with threats to our business. It's not just a portal. It's comforting to have a security expert help us make good decisions." Fletcher is sceptical of generalist managed service providers, "We wanted a provider focused on security with a specific skill set," he explains.

Attacks are ongoing

Fletcher adds that half the battle is knowing what is happening, "Symantec Managed Security Services gives us one version of the truth. There is a level of activity all the time, not just what makes the news. It's all day every day. Threats are organised, created by well-thought-out illegal set-ups run by intelligent people with good skills, state of the art tooling and access to global security intelligence."

It's Symantec that gives Swinton the visibility and initial identification of a threat. "It then allows for a discussion of the threat; we use forensics on the Managed Security Services output, look at transactions, and validate whether a compromise has happened, all at point of need."

When the Shellshock and Heartbleed virus vulnerabilities were identified and announced worldwide, Fletcher explains, "We saw it happening and got the information we needed to make an informed decision and response fast. By having a threat related context to review in the portal, we can see whether we're a target. We're not wondering about exposure while we work it out. Our time to remediation is much faster: it's minutes and hours rather than several days."

Cost-efficient 24x7 coverage

Fletcher is also very clear on the financial aspects. "If I was still trying to run security monitoring in-house I would certainly need more resources. For starters we don't even have internal

24x7 coverage in the Security teams.” Fletcher explains that the internal route would mean either tapping into 24/7 teams not skilled in Security operations or more than doubling the size of the current Security team, “A massive investment that would only just cover our needs. So a blended approach is best, we live and breathe our assets and Symantec has the security expertise and knowledge. On-boarding devices can be challenging but the team is responsive and we all work well together.”

As early adopters, Swinton has seen the service evolve and mature and the value derived has increased over time, “We’re now looking at horizon scanning and intrusion detection. We’ve seen ongoing change and improvement to the service. Yes, it helps with compliance, and we’ll meet Payment Card Industry version 3.0, but by going back to our IT strategy, we see where the real value is.”

Softcat, a trusted partner

For additional assistance on security, Swinton turned to Softcat Ltd, a Symantec Platinum Partner. Softcat are one of the United Kingdom’s top IT infrastructure providers, with expertise in sourcing, designing, delivering, and supporting the smallest to the most complex IT solutions.

Swinton work with Softcat on a number of projects and working with a trusted partner gave Swinton additional reassurance, explains Fletcher, “Softcat provided us with a well-formed team. They help with ongoing development and change, such as considering new security products and solutions to meet our needs.”



“Softcat provided us with a well-formed team. They help with ongoing development and change, such as considering the next generation of firewalls. They help us understand what we need.”

James Fletcher
Head of IT Risk
Swinton Insurance

For more information:

Contact your local Symantec Sales Representative or Business Partner, or please visit:

www.symantec.com/managed-security-services

