Furniture Manufacturer Protects Data On-premises and in the Cloud

Steelcase is a renowned manufacturer of office furniture. Founded in 1912, the company focuses on user-based research and design to create spaces for the world's leading organizations.

Recently, Steelcase introduced Workplace Advisor and Personal Assistant, a space sensing network and mobile app created to help organizations harness big data to optimize the workplace. A continuation of the company's human-centered design focus, the solutions equip organizations with the tools and data they need to use real estate effectively and allow employees to have more productive days at work.

Steelcase operates globally and distributes through a network of independent and company-owned dealers, as well as selling directly to end-users.

Turning to the Cloud

Steelcase celebrated its centennial anniversary several years ago, and it has always viewed technology as a key differentiator. Stuart Berman, global security architect at Steelcase, comments, "We have a strong belief that if you're not leveraging technology as part of your core business philosophy then you are not going to be in business very long."

As one of the earlier adopters of virtualization and cloud-based solutions, the company has repeatedly utilized new capabilities to drive its business forward. Berman explains: "We use the Microsoft Azure platform for our web infrastructure, but we're not simply just a customer. We entered into a strategic relationship to partner on initiatives that have to do with understanding the nature of the workplace and how to help people interact with it more effectively."

Relying on Fortinet

Steelcase had been a long-time Fortinet customer for its internal systems. The company has deployed Fortinet FortiGate next-generation firewalls (NGFWs) to secure its perimeter and for end-to-end protection. FortiAuthenticator provides Steelcase with centralized user identity management and simplified administration for authentication. FortiAnalyzer

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> – Frank Stevens, Cloud Security Architect, Steelcase

delivers a consolidated view and comprehensive reporting across all Fortinet devices in the widespread Steelcase environment. A cloud-based spam filtering service was recently replaced with the Fortinet FortiMail secure email gateway to provide powerful multivector detection and protection capabilities.

FortiAP access points and FortiSwitch secure access switches are deployed at multiple locations across the company. FortiClient instances are leveraged to provide real-time actionable visibility across key areas of the infrastructure. Supplemental monitoring, management, and provisioning for many of Steelcase's extensive number of Fortinet appliances is achieved with the highly flexible FortiGate VM solution.

As the company began ramping up its use of Azure, it was a logical move to leverage the broad portfolio of Fortinet cloud-related solutions. Developers at Steelcase gain access to the Azure environment by using VPN tunnels established between on-premises FortiGate devices and a combination of the Fortinet FortiGate VM for Azure and FortiWeb VM web application firewalls (WAF) hosted in the cloud.

High Stakes

In addition to its Azure environment, Steelcase is developing a cloud-based ecommerce system using Amazon Web Services (AWS). Frank Stevens, a cloud security architect at Steelcase, comments, "The security controls and visibility provided with the cloud platforms are basic and not to the level of sophistication that our policies require. Our strategy is to use Fortinet to supplement gaps in the Microsoft and Amazon products, such as the lack of logging or analytics for outbound traffic, and the presence of rudimentary firewalling for inbound data."

Berman adds, "The cloud will continue to become more and more important. It makes sense to use a common Fortinet platform for both the Microsoft and Amazon cloud service platforms: Doing so gives us the protection we require and economies of scale as we don't have to learn and maintain two different systems."

The precision and control of the FortiGate NGFWs provide additional benefits for Steelcase. Stevens comments, "Amazon launches a lot of analytics to continually measure the performance of its cloud domains, but this distorts our own marketing data when we try to determine visitor behaviors on our various sites. We use the FortiGate firewalls to target and suppress the unwanted traffic, enabling us to get an accurate picture of what's actually going on."

Details

Customer: Steelcase Inc.

Industry: Retail

Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Business Impact

- Unified cross-domain protection—on-premises and in multiple cloud service platforms
- Addressed security and visibility gaps in other services
- Simplified training and management
- Consolidated reporting across all Fortinet devices

Solutions

- FortiGate
- FortiGate VM
- FortiAuthenticator
- FortiAnalyzer
- FortiWeb VM
- FortiMail
- FortiAP
- FortiSwitch
- FortiClient

The wide range of Fortinet solutions deployed by Steelcase are unified within the Fortinet Security Fabric. The intelligent framework enables security bandwidth to scale across multiple cloud platforms. The Fabric is explicitly architected to smoothly interact with non-Fortinet products. "The nonproprietary approach is very important to us. Fortinet makes it very easy to access its data for use with other components in our security stack," Stevens says.

The Internet of Things In-house

Steelcase is experiencing a strong increase in the tens of thousands of endpoints that are connected into its environment at any given point in time. "One of the driving factors in the growing device count is the upsurge of Internet-of-Things [IoT] connections," Stevens says.

Internet of Things (IoT) has become integral to internal operations at Steelcase. IoT-enabled devices have been extensively deployed in HVAC systems, lighting controls, and general building facilities to conserve resources and save money. "Using an IoT-controlled lighting system in one of our distribution locations alone has saved us considerable money," Berman points out.

Stevens adds, "As IoT expands, it's imperative that we continue to maintain security standards across our entire infrastructure ... we're only as strong as our weakest link. We use Fortinet in conjunction with our software-defined network to provide the segmentation and isolation that we need."

Berman summarizes, "Steelcase's relationship with Fortinet continues to deepen. Our extended IT infrastructure is absolutely critical to everything we do, so it's invaluable to have the seamless protection Fortinet provides across our physical and cloud-based domains."

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