



CASE STUDY

Leading Credit Union Stays 100% Responsible and Secure



Coopenae is the leading financial institution in Costa Rica, as well as all of Central America, thanks to its impeccable track record over the past 50 years. Its reputation has been earned by offering a wide range of financial services that it provides quickly to its customers. This credit union not only leads the financial market but also has been transformed into a vehicle that improves quality of life for more than 100,000 internal and external customers.

Coopenae's priority is safeguarding client confidentiality at all times, which is why it felt the need to strengthen its internal security. "Inside our organization the idea arose to create a strategic plan that would allow us to protect our customers' information. In the end, we decided to carry out this plan with Fortinet, not only because Fortinet had supported us in strengthening our security prior to this but also because they understand what we want to provide for our customers—tranquility and reliability," says Milton Morales, manager of technology at Coopenae.

Coopenae's security project took place 14 years ago, when the credit union acquired its first Fortinet solution: the FortiGate security appliance. This new technology allowed the company to begin what would become one of the most effective security strategies for it and its thousands of customers.

"Our partnership with Fortinet has been a great investment. Before acquiring the FortiGate, we couldn't filter the internet, so there was no way to detect attacks or set up anti-virus protocols on the external perimeter. This was why we wanted to get our hands on it. However, we realized we did not have enough security visibility for the internet and everything that follows," explains Guido Fuentes, information security chief at Coopenae.

Excellent Experience, More Security

FortiGate not only provided Coopenae with a clearer picture regarding the importance of having security solutions, but it also allowed the credit union to see the need for an internal tool to facilitate analysis for the massive amount of data it manages. For this reason, the credit union decided to acquire FortiAnalyzer. This new addition aids the technology department's management, allowing the team to monitor everything that happens on the network.

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– Guido Fuentes, Director of Information Security, Coopenae

Details

Customer: Coopenae

Industry: Financial

Location: San José, Costa Rica

Following the introduction of these new solutions to its structure and with a view to new acquisitions, Coopenae felt the need to centralize management of all its firewalls, electing to use FortiManager to do so. The excellent results it experienced caused Coopenae to continue to entrust the financial security of its thousands of customers to Fortinet.

Subsequently, Coopenae introduced FortiWeb to its platform, providing a firewall dedicated to its transactional site. FortiSandbox allows Coopenae to manage attacks in a different way, providing additional tools for all that these entail. The credit union elected to continue introducing new tools, including FortiDDoS, FortiAuthenticator, and FortiToken, which have addressed other possible vulnerabilities in Coopenae's structure.

All of these solutions allow Coopenae to strengthen the main pillars of its security methodology: availability and continuity. "Thanks to the security equipment we have acquired from Fortinet, we have excellent service availability, but above all, solutions that enable us to have redundancies in our system, providing us with a continuum of unique products," says Fuentes.

Cloud or On-premises: No Difference

A recent third-party application purchase again showcased the breadth of the Fortinet solutions portfolio. The cloud-based application utilized Amazon Web Services (AWS) for data, computational, and networking services, but the included security features didn't meet Coopenae's stringent requirements. "Amazon provides good protection but we wanted to extend the same levels of world-class security that we had already implemented in our own infrastructure so that all of our data was secure, irrespective of location," states Fuentes.

An Amazon Virtual Public Cloud (VPC) was created to accommodate a FortiGate VM01v-AWS—a virtual appliance explicitly designed for the AWS platform—and a FortiWeb web application firewall (WAF). Prior to entering the Coopenae infrastructure, all inbound traffic is routed and inspected by the FortiGate next-generation firewall (NGFW) in the VPC. Enabled by the Fortinet Security Fabric, the VPC acts as a seamless extension to the existing Fortinet defenses to provide continuous protection across the company's cloud and on-premises environments.

Technical Account Manager Is Coopenae's Ace in the Hole

Fortinet's efficiency as a cybersecurity developer extends further thanks to its focus on after-sales service. For Coopenae, technical account managers (TAMs) were necessary because of the high demand for service availability and continuity, as well as the numerous Fortinet solutions Coopenae has deployed.

"The contributions of our TAM allows us to dedicate ourselves to finding new trends and to continue innovating on our platform. In my case, I've reduced time spent on operations to focus on strategy, which has allowed my attention and productivity to go toward the products I develop," says Fuentes.

TAMs are one of the most important services Fortinet provides to Coopenae, as Fortinet has aligned itself with the credit union's procedures and policies, standardizing reports and accountability presented to management. These reports help provide a clearer view of the work done and the return on investment the TAM offers the business. "As a manufacturer, we can get the most in terms of configuration from all of the solutions the technology department has in place, and we put it to work in accordance with the business needs of the credit union. Thanks to this, we have seen many improvements in optimization and resource use; Coopenae's departmental TAM has been vital," says Rodolfo Castro, manager of systems engineering for Central America for Fortinet.

Business Impact

- Uncompromised security infrastructure that serves as a model for other credit unions
- Improved service availability and business continuity
- Augmented security in Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud
- Ability to pivot from operational details to focus on strategic initiatives

Solutions

- FortiGate, FortiGate VM
- FortiAnalyzer
- FortiManager
- FortiSandbox
- FortiWeb
- FortiDDoS
- FortiAuthenticator
- FortiToken
- FortiDirector
- FortiAP

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– *Guido Fuentes, Director of Information Security, Coopenae*

Results That Benefit All

Coopenae has positioned itself as the leading credit union in Costa Rica and Central America by providing its secure technology platform to a number of other credit unions as an economy of scale, but it has also won other achievements. One is the development of a Public Service Platform, which is located separately from Coopenae, though it comes with the same efficiency and security provided by the credit union.

For the head of data security of Coopenae, he notes, “One of the greatest security feats the credit union has achieved is that the security of its technology platform has never been compromised. This allows the company and its associates to enjoy this service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.”

Continuity and Reliability

During the 14 years they have worked together, Coopenae and Fortinet have proved to be a perfect security duo. This has been supported by the great confidence more than 100,000 members and employees from about 200 institutions place in Coopenae when it comes to protecting their transactions and data.

This is why Fortinet focuses on adapting its services to each customer. The purpose is to advise the team on new technologies and to involve both the customer and the Fortinet team in ongoing plans to improve investments, an effort which stems from the customer service that differentiates Fortinet the most—which is exemplified in its TAMs.

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The credit union is currently evolving, migrating its 26 Costa Rican branches to FortiAP for secure wireless access. Once it is deployed, all Coopenae branches will enjoy full wireless security.

“The great technologies we have implemented within our company give us the opportunity to offer transparent and secure service,” concludes Morales. “Today, we can proudly say we are the leading credit union in Costa Rica and Central America, and we will continue working with Fortinet to maintain that status and remain a strong and pleasant company that delights its members with its easy, agile, and secure offerings.”

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