



Axpo Group Uses SecureTrack for Firewall Operations Management

Case Study

The Environment

The Axpo Group is rapidly adding new customers and as a result, security operations must be very flexible and responsive. In order to set up and provision new services quickly while maintaining security, Axpo Informatik decided to virtualize key parts of its firewall and server infrastructure. This change enabled Axpo to significantly reduce the time it took to set up a firewall for a new customer. Axpo Informatik needed a management solution that could handle virtual as well as physical firewall architecture. Axpo Informatik's firewall infrastructure is based on a redundant Crossbeam X40 Cluster running Check Point VPN-1 Power VSX. Their firewall management includes a central Check Point Provider-1 server with a dedicated log server that enables them to support 10 customers with 29 physical and virtual firewall systems. Critical systems are configured as hot standby clusters. The network connections to and from the Crossbeam system are based on VLAN and Multilink Trunk technologies.

The Challenge

Maintaining and operating 29 firewalls with numerous objects and rule bases involved a great deal of repetitive, manual work. Whenever a change was made, the operators had to determine which customers and rule bases were affected, and then had to update each object in each rule base manually. Many customers were using the same infrastructure, so the complexity and risk were compounded. With three firewall administrators, it was very difficult to keep track of each configuration change and analyze its security impact. It had become nearly impossible to keep the rule base and object databases consistent and secure.

While the existing management platform provided centralization, Axpo Informatik still required a unified, top-down view of the security policy. Axpo needed a solution that would enable the team to serve customers promptly while ensuring that every change was coordinated and app.

The Solution

Axpo Informatik selected Tufin SecureTrack to provide a comprehensive view of firewall policies across all customers and objects. SecureTrack's unified graphical interface made it easier for firewall administrators to visualize the firewall policy, understand changes and take action.

SecureTrack's firewall change management addressed Axpo Informatik's need to maintain accountability and consistency with comprehensive real-time tracking and reporting of changes. By comparing every change to defined corporate standards, SecureTrack enabled Axpo Informatik to identify violations and potential security breaches before any damage could occur.

Since the rule bases were so complex and difficult to maintain, Axpo Informatik started using SecureTrack's rule base cleanup and optimization features to locate and remove unused rules and objects. This enabled the firewall team to eliminate possible security holes while significantly improving performance and hardware resource utilization. SecureTrack's innovative policy analysis capability enabled Axpo Informatik to understand the logic of the rule base and simplify complex firewall security policies. Since Axpo Group is a public company, SecureTrack's auditing and compliance features are an added bonus, providing full accountability, a complete audit trail, and compliance with important international regulatory standards.

The Benefits

- Improved network security
- Increased network and service uptime
- Lower operating expenses
- Enforcement of corporate security guidelines
- Risk management
- Business continuity
- IT governance and regulatory
- Improved firewall performance
- Proactive security enforcement

Tufin at a Glance

Offices: North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific

Customers: More than 1,600 in over 50 countries

Leading verticals: Finance, telecom, energy and utilities, healthcare, retail, education, government, manufacturing, transportation and auditors

Channel partners: More than 240 worldwide

Technology Partners & Supported Platforms: Amazon Web Services, BMC, Blue Coat, Check Point, Cisco, F5 Networks, Fortinet, Intel Security, Juniper Networks, Microsoft Azure, Openstack, Palo Alto Networks, VMware and more

SecureTrack was installed and supported by Clounet, a leading Swiss system integrator. "Installing SecureTrack was very simple. Within a couple of hours the product was already fully operational. Since then, Axpo Informatik installed an upgrade on their own and we have both been very pleased with Tufin's support," said Christen Martin, Partner at Clounet. "Axpo evaluated other solutions and selected SecureTrack for its combination of real-time capabilities and ease of use."

About Tufin Orchestration Suite™

Tufin Orchestration Suite™ is a complete solution for automatically designing, provisioning, analyzing and auditing network security changes from the application layer down to the network layer. It minimizes errors and redoes for rapid service delivery, continuous compliance and business continuity.

Tufin provides world-class security policy orchestration solutions that enable organizations around the world to manage network configuration changes accurately and efficiently.

By orchestrating complex processes involving multiple teams, applications, servers and network devices, Tufin addresses the challenges of a variety of stakeholders throughout the organization, while enabling them all to collaborate more effectively.

About AXPO

The Axpo Group is a leading Swiss energy supply company. With power plants throughout northeastern and central Switzerland, Axpo supplies electricity to over three million people daily.

Since 2001, Axpo Informatik has been providing technical and commercial IT services to the members of the Axpo Group and its customers. Axpo Informatik is based in Baden with five regional support offices in Aarau, Beznau Dietlikon, Schaffhausen and Zurich. A highly sophisticated organization, Axpo Informatik currently serves 3,500 users throughout Europe and manages more than 500 applications.

In addition to a wide range of business, logistics and operational systems, Axpo Informatik is responsible for supporting the trading system for Switzerland, France, Italy and Austria. Ensuring the highest levels of security and accessibility for these systems is imperative.

"We are spending much less time manually updating each of our firewalls and can focus our attention on our customers. SecureTrack automation has made our team more efficient."

Bühler Werner,
Team Manager, Axpo Informatik

"After several months of use, SecureTrack has made a measurable impact on Axpo's firewall operations and has helped us to reduce service interruptions and network downtime. Now we know exactly what changes are being made by whom and SecureTrack enables us to analyze our rule bases across different firewalls at any time."

David Spale,
Security Officer, Axpo Informatik