

TAS Supports and Resolves Massive Website Analysis and Improvement Need Resulting From Lack of Resources and Knowledge Provides Policies and Solutions for Greater Operational Stability and Optimization



SUNTORY SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY

Akamai selected for global standards

Suntory System Technology Limited is responsible for IT systems within the Japanese Suntory Group, and first started using Akamai services when building an overseas data center to centralize its domestic and foreign websites.

“Latency was slowing down display times when Japanese users viewed websites hosted at the global data center. To fix that and help them view the websites without slowdown, we adopted Akamai’s Content Delivery Network (CDN). We felt that Akamai was the ideal solution for CDN stability from all locations, since they have cache servers across the world,” states Assistant Section Chief Tomoki Koyama of Suntory’s IT Infrastructure Operation Service Dept.

Next, Suntory began gradually migrating websites to the cloud, starting in 2016. They were interested in adopting Akamai web security solutions for the cloud, since they had implemented on-premises web security for the data center. On that front, their selection of Akamai services for web security solutions was prefaced by their reason for adopting a CDN.

Optimizing operations to cover about 580 websites with limited resources

However, things didn’t simply fall into place when using Akamai. Of the two problems Suntory faced, one was a resource issue. “Suntory Group operates about 580 consumer, B2B, and other websites. We had our hands full with the work of just applying Akamai’s Web Application Firewall (WAF) to all of our websites,” observes Yohei Shinkawa of the IT Infrastructure Operation Service Dept. Moreover, web security solutions had to be applied anew each day, as the company adds websites intermittently for new product advertising campaigns and similar reasons.

Their other issue was expertise in optimizing Akamai operations. With web security solution configuration issues coming to the surface as the number of their operational websites rose, Suntory could sense that specialized expertise would be critical in optimizing operations. “Since we had a huge number of websites, we hadn’t been able to perform full optimization when implementing content delivery settings and web security solutions. That meant we were having frequent, unexpected events from deficient web security solution settings and so forth,” Shinkawa notes.

High hopes for support from TAS specialists

The IT Infrastructure Operation Service Dept. of Suntory System Technology Limited is positioned as an IT professional group, but it isn’t easy to learn the technical details of Akamai systems while handling other work. “We did some simple designing when we adopted Akamai services. But there were a lot of settings available, and we were often uncertain about points like security levels and the need to use particular functions. Of course, I doubt we would have had major issues if we could have focused on Akamai exclusively, but unfortunately we were short on both resources and time. When we considered what to do to make things more userfriendly, that led us to the Technical Advisory Service (TAS). We decided we wanted a dedicated technical advisor and expert on Akamai,” adds Koyama.

In May 2018, Suntory began using the TAS, which placed them in contact with Akamai’s service support team. Although cost did pose an issue in adopting the TAS, Suntory resolved at the early stage to prioritize high security levels, stable operations, and faster delivery settings.

Company

Suntory System Technology Limited
Head office: 530-8204
2-1-5 Dojima, Kita-ku, Osaka
Suntory Annex 7F
Capital: JPY 20,000,000 (approx. USD 180,000)
Established: March 1990
<https://www.suntory.co.jp/sst/>

Industry

IT Engineering

Solution

- TAS (Technical Advisory Service)
A dedicated technical advisor serves as the contact point for the Akamai service support team, and visualizes latent points for improvement in customer web environments. These advisors provide technical consulting and guidance, as well as periodic updates and engagement reviews, while also optimizing the effects of investment in Akamai.

Key Impacts

- Achieved Akamai web security solution optimization and CDN acceleration through TAS analysis
- Reinforced stable operations and optimization policies through TAS support
- TAS supports ongoing Akamai solution usage

Suntory System Technology Limited

Founded in 1990 as a Suntory Group IT startup. At present, its work is focused on IT systems within the Japanese Suntory Group. While actively opening new information and technology frontiers as a group of IT engineering professionals, the company also works to build system development, service operation, and digital marketing infrastructure focused on quality and the work site. They provide all Suntory Group companies with IT solutions from data strategy proposals through system development, user support, and more, leveraging their IT skills, group company work expertise, and planning and organizational skills.



Suntory System Technology Limited, IT Infrastructure Operation Service Dept., Assistant Section Chief Tomoki Koyama (Left)
Suntory System Technology Limited, IT Infrastructure Operation Service Dept., Yohei Shinkawa (Center)
Akamai Customer Solutions Group, Engagement Manager Takashi Kakelhi (Right)

Successfully optimizing Akamai's security solutions and accelerating the CDN

Immediately after adopting the TAS, they focused on stability in web security solutions. The TAS listened to Suntory's concerns with regard to the causes of issues and means of improving operations, and carried out a review (and security optimization) of architecture and operations based on those concerns. Afterwards, Suntory went to work resolving issues in its new policy creation process. Coinciding with the conclusion of their website migration, this resulted in a major reduction in issues such as deficient settings in web security solutions. "The monitoring and other parts were very involved, and we couldn't handle them ourselves. We also realized that each website would need tuning individually," Koyama explains.

On the CDN front, slow speeds had become an issue on primary websites. The TAS analyzed Suntory's websites toward that end, proposed adopting cache server settings to address the issue, and gave a lecture on how to do so. On top of that, they advised Suntory on the use of acceleration options (HTTP/2). "I feel like these policies have cut a full second off of our page loading times. You can actually see the acceleration on a graph, as well," Shinkawa observes.

Proposing policies for further optimization and operational stability

With goals established for stability in web security solution operations, monthly meetings have shifted phases to a cycle of issue discovery - analysis - new policy proposals - implementation - service optimization, all in relation to Akamai services. Engagement Manager Takashi Kakehi of Akamai's Customer Solutions Group, the team behind the TAS, notes the following about the situation: "Since they made a list of issues when TAS adoption began, we could prioritize items to address, visualize problems, and get to work right away. That allowed us to make the best possible proposals for Suntory System Technology. With that stage handled, we're now making a variety of policy proposals to further optimize and stabilize operations."

The implementation of SiteFailover stands as a concrete policy example supporting stable operations. The issue in this case is the heavy load placed on origin servers. Since there are concentrated periods of access following content delivery via social media in particular, heavy loads are unavoidable. After TAS advisors proposed implementing SiteFailover, the system now uses a standby system to display a concentrated access period screen and inform users that everything is running smoothly.

Suntory staff report extremely high satisfaction with the TAS. "I think having a full-spectrum consultant helped. It isn't easy getting standard support services to understand our situation, although that's true for companies other than Akamai, as well. On that point, TAS understands everything about our company. We stay in close contact, and feel that they're a very reliable partner," Koyama says.

Keen to continue using Akamai services in future

Suntory also highlights automation as its next goal. Akamai had recently announced an API/CLI (management tool) as an automation solution, and Suntory received a proposal for related training. "I want to implement monitoring scripts first, and make automated operations possible," says Shinkawa.

He went on to explain that given their satisfaction with Akamai's services and the TAS, they are also interested in Akamai's diverse lineup of other services. "We plan to make a list of Akamai services we could use. We hope to continue to adopt Akamai services as needed, over the future," Koyama clarifies.

In response, Akamai's Kakehi notes that for our part, "we will aim to work on proposals for even more effective use of Akamai solutions in the future."



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Tomoki Koyama



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IT Infrastructure Operation Service Dept., Yohei Shinkawa



Akamai Customer Solutions Group
Engagement Manager Takashi Kakehi



Akamai Technologies GK

Email: info@akamai.com Website: <https://www.akamai.com>

Tokyo Head Office Kyobashi Trust Tower, 2-1-3 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0031, Japan

Tel: +81-3-4589-6500

Fax: +81-3-4589-6501

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