Kaizen Platform

How Secure Internet Access Enterprise made it quick and easy to enhance the security of remote working

Recommended by a trusted colleague

"How can we best maintain our security when employees are accessing our systems from outside our corporate network?" Akira Maeda, SRE Manager of Kaizen Platform Inc. Platform Headquarters Production Division, had long held this concern.

Founded six years ago, Kaizen Platform began as a business that improved the performance of websites through A/B testing, but has now expanded the range of services it provides. Maeda explains: "In response to client needs, there were cases that didn't end with just simply improving a company's website. It was sometimes necessary to also change corporate culture, and doing this expanded the scope of our improvement work. We are a consulting business, but what makes us unique is that we use technology to perform diagnostic checks on companies. One of our defining characteristics is that despite being a consulting business, we aren't very reliant on individual expertise."

The diversity of the 100-plus employees in the Japanese branch reflects this, where the workforce is divided evenly among engineers, customer support, salespeople, and back office support. Although there are competitors overseas, Kaizen Platform is unique in Japan for being a business that does consulting with technology developed by its own engineers. As such, it's following its own business path.

Its approach to work is also progressive. It has made its "Engineers' Guiding Principles" publicly available on the web, and has encouraged employees to work remotely since the company's founding. To securely access its network when users were outside the company, employees were provided with cell phones that could be used in place of routers.

However, "Sometimes cell phones can't connect, like when they're underground, and so we'd have to use a public Wi-Fi network for work. That didn't seem secure to me. I thought we needed to take some kind of measures," says Maeda.

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Industry
Public Sector

Solution
Secure Internet Access Enterprise

Key impacts
- The goal of the implementation was to protect employee security while promoting remote work. It was completed within a short time with no major problems.

- Once Secure Internet Access Enterprise was implemented, Kaizen was able to fully grasp the reality of security threats and breaches, which had not been possible with previous analysis reports.

- Implementation improved security for Kaizen employees working remotely.

Luckily, there hadn't been any issues, but Maeda felt that security countermeasures should be put in place before anything went wrong. "Then a former colleague of mine recommended Akamai's Secure Internet Access Enterprise. He had experienced the same kinds of problems as me, and was the first to discover the value of using Secure Internet Access Enterprise for security. His recommendation became the deciding factor."

Maeda soon began receiving information about Akamai products. It turned out that Kaizen Platform had actually been using Akamai's content delivery network (CDN) since 2015. "Several of our major corporate clients had requested that we implement Akamai CDN in addition to DNS server redundancy," Maeda recalls. In mid-February 2018, Akamai met with Maeda's team to provide a detailed briefing on its products.

From a successful trial to quick implementation

It wasn't just the sales team that came from Akamai to deliver the first briefing — solution engineers were also present. As an engineer himself, this impressed Maeda. "I really appreciated receiving immediate and accurate responses to any questions I raised."

Akamai explained how to use DNS for security. As Maeda was in charge of running the DNS server, he initially expressed concerns about how a DNS server that can frequently be used in cyberattacks could provide security. He also asked how the remote working that had triggered his concern could be made more secure. Receiving an immediate, in-depth answer gave him even more faith in Akamai.
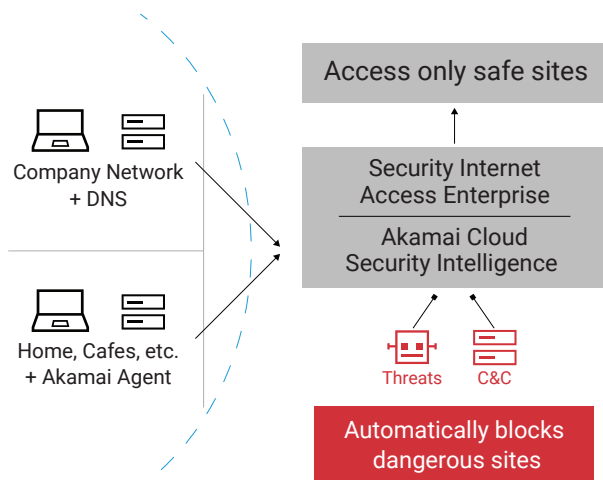
The same security boundary when working in the office or remotely

The second consultation moved on to more concrete subjects, such as how to use the system during a trial. "When introducing a new product, it often takes several months to proceed to the contract phase and then an additional several months to begin a trial. But Akamai told us 'You can try it right away.' Being able to try it without waiting fits well with our company's business style," explains Maeda.

When the trial started in late February, Maeda was prepared to encounter some issues, as he had when implementing security products in the past. "Installing security products would cause computers to slow down and disrupt the work of the engineers. But this time, there were no such issues."

Because they had experienced no problems during the trial, Kaizen Platform decided to implement Secure Internet Access Enterprise after only one month, instead of the usual two-month trial period. Secure Internet Access Enterprise officially started running at the end of April 2018.

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Secure Internet Access Enterprise dashboard and reporting shows Kaizen's security posture

The Secure Internet Access Enterprise dashboard and reporting revealed there were more security threats on its network than Maeda's team had previously thought. He says: "Our previous security reports had never included data on threat trends on our network or unintentional accesses to malicious sites. Now we could quickly observe things we couldn't in the past. Being able to understand these threat conditions is a real benefit of Secure Internet Access Enterprise."

When asked about future plans, Maeda says: "Now that we have better visibility about the threats on our network, we want to start doing more detailed incident analysis using Secure Internet Access Enterprise. The Akamai product team says it is investigating expanding this capability."