

NATIONWIDE COMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER PROTECTS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CUSTOMERS EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY



Founded in 1894 as the Mattoon Telephone Company, Consolidated Communications, Inc. (CCI) is a leading broadband provider serving consumers and businesses across 24 states from California to Maine. Still headquartered in Mattoon, IL, the company has an advanced network consisting of more than 36,000 miles of fiber optic cable. CCI offers a wide range of communications solutions – including data, voice, video, managed services and cloud computing – supported by 4,000 employees dedicated to delivering first-class customer service.

As a key component of its ongoing commitment to process improvements, CCI regularly reviews the security proficiencies of its environment. Following an analysis of escalating cyber threat activities, the decision was made to further enhance protection of the extensive ISP infrastructure, including safeguarding the company’s branded email accounts.

SETTING THE BAR HIGH

Before any additions are made to the CCI infrastructure, the company undertakes a rigorous selection process, involving a market analysis of potential solutions, detailed comparisons and testing in an environment that simulates operational conditions.

PROVEN PERFORMANCE

Selection of a next-generation firewall to act as the gatekeeper for ISP-related traffic was a foundational step to elevate protection. As CCI already had experience with Fortinet FortiGates deployed in other areas of the organization, they invited the company to participate in the ISP security project’s proof of concept (POC).

The six-month long POC included firewall solutions from the industry’s top providers. “We tested each unit against a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria and FortiGate was selected,” recounted Aaron Reason, Director of Network Security at Consolidated Communications. “The ability to accommodate large volumes of data was important, and when combined with its feature-set and price-point, FortiGate aligned with our needs.”

“Fortinet is a part of CCI’s strategy to protect the hundreds of thousands of customers relying on us to keep their personal information secure.”

– Aaron Reason
Director of Network Security
Consolidated Communications



DETAILS

CUSTOMER: Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.

INDUSTRY: Telecommunications

LOCATION: Mattoon, IL

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Enhanced protection for ISP subscribers
- Seamless integration of solutions across complex environment
- Interface uniformity driving improved efficiencies, accuracy and speed of resolution

SOLUTIONS

- FortiGate
- FortiManager
- FortiAuthentication
- FortiADC

STRENGTH IN DEPTH

To supplement the newly deployed FortiGates, CCI also selected FortiManager to administer all Fortinet devices and FortiAnalyzer for its comprehensive reporting capabilities. “We were impressed by those tools,” noted Reason, “We have tens of thousands of devices online at any given point in time and I appreciate the control and visibility we get, and how well FortiAnalyzer works in providing valuable data swiftly.”

The ISP project team also determined that multi-factor authentication should be utilized for access to the company’s VPN and internal infrastructure. “One of our VARs recommended we look at offerings from Fortinet and a couple of other competitors. The POC results reinforced the merits of a Fortinet solution. There were some areas where performance and functionality were comparable but pricing and support were superior in the FortiAuthenticator.”

A member of the CCI development team approached Reason to request the investigation of a solution to provide load balancing across core applications. “Our shortlist came down to three products, including Fortinet’s application delivery controller,” he recalled. “The FortiADC did what we needed it to do and the price-point was compelling.”

OUTSTANDING SUPPORT

“The FortiADC implementation went fairly smoothly but one obscure configuration challenge created the need to call the Fortinet support team,” commented Reason. “Because of the unique nature of my call, I was given direct access to the Fortinet developers and the higher-tier engineering staff to resolve the issue. I appreciate their level of commitment and willingness to assist customers.”

PREDICTABLE, DEPENDABLE AND RELIABLE

“We’re able to seamlessly incorporate Fortinet into our environment and everything works together well. The interfaces are intuitive and the uniformity drives increased efficiencies, enabling us to offer heightened levels of service to our own stakeholders,” commented Reason.



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