

CUSTOMER PROFILE

CUNA Mutual Group

The Big Picture

Customer

CUNA Mutual Group

Challenge

Streamlining configuration change management while ensuring security and ITIL compliance

Solution

VoyenceControl

Benefits

- Provides ability to ensure and demonstrate compliance with TruSecure and internal security requirements
- Increases efficiency and reduces costs by streamlining the configuration change process
- Eliminates configuration errors and ensures quality with single data entry across devices
- Ensures effective resource management —staff can focus on mission-critical tasks because routine jobs can be accomplished automatically
- Integration with a range of network management tools, including the CMDB, expands visibility

EMC VoyenceControl helps financial services company increase infrastructure security, meet ITIL best practices, streamline configuration change processes

Headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, the CUNA Mutual Group is the leading provider of financial services to credit unions and their members worldwide, offering lending, protection, financial, employee, and member solutions through strategic partnerships, technological innovations, and multiple service channels. The CUNA Mutual Group is a subsidiary of the CUNA Mutual Insurance Society, which was established in 1935.

Streamlining configuration change management while ensuring security and ITIL compliance

For financial services companies like CUNA Mutual, ensuring infrastructure security and protecting customer data are critical concerns, and the increasing threat from worms, viruses, and other potential network attacks led the company to evaluate its security posture. “CUNA Mutual launched a project company-wide to look at security in all areas of the business,” explains Michael Waisbrot, senior network analyst of the Information Technology Services Group at CUNA Mutual. “One of the objectives of the project was to identify a way to audit the security of our network configurations. While we had some configuration management capability in place, we didn’t actually have a comprehensive solution that could check the configurations of all network devices and ensure that each device met defined security parameters. Finding such a solution became a priority.”

According to Waisbrot, the solution CUNA Mutual chose would have to help them make configuration and change management more standardized. “When a team of people is responsible for managing more than 500 network devices, it is likely that configuration changes will be made in a number of different ways,” he says. “We were looking for a way to ensure that the audit and update of our network devices was a repeatable process that everyone could follow easily.”

Finally, because CUNA Mutual is committed to meeting ITIL best practices throughout the organization, choosing a configuration change management solution that met ITIL best practices was also very important. “Change and configuration management are a significant part of our effort to meet ITIL best practices,” Waisbrot says, “and we were tasked with ensuring compliance with internal ITIL processes. This meant finding a change and configuration management solution that could meet those requirements as well.”

Focus on compliance and security sets VoyenceControl apart

As part of their process to choose a configuration change management solution, CUNA Mutual evaluated offerings from a number of vendors. In the end, the answer was clear: EMC® VoyenceControl.

“On the surface, it appeared that the core functionality of the solutions we looked at was very similar,” Waisbrot notes. “After a proof of concept, though, we saw that in addition to offering some features that the others did not—such as configuration templates, AutoDiscovery, and out-of-band management, for example—VoyenceControl was the most user-friendly solution. Also, Voyence really demonstrated that they were focused on our needs and on ensuring our success, which further set them apart from other vendors.”

“We see an obvious return on investment simply because of the time savings we’re able to realize with VoyenceControl. A task that might have taken a week or more to do manually can be accomplished in five minutes in VoyenceControl.”

Michael Waisbrot
Senior Network Analyst, CUNA Mutual

Because CUNA Mutual is a mutual company, they’re not impacted by many of the new government regulations, like Sarbanes Oxley or Gramm-Leach-Bliley. This doesn’t mean, however, that ensuring compliance and the security of data on the network isn’t a concern. “Because of the nature of our business, we have to be focused on security, and we have to let our customers know that security is a top concern,” says Waisbrot. “We’ve developed our own internal security standards, which we call ‘Network Security Gold Standards,’ that are for our own use but actually meet the requirements of Sarbanes Oxley and other government regulations. We have ‘Gold Standard’ configurations for routers, switches, firewalls, etc. and we audit all of our network devices through those standards.”

Waisbrot explains that to do this, CUNA Mutual’s Network Security Gold Standard has been created within VoyenceControl, allowing the company to audit devices proactively. “We know at any given time whether or not we are compliant with the standards we’ve created,” he adds. “In fact, if CUNA Mutual were to be audited by a third party for some reason, having these standards established in VoyenceControl would make it easy to show what our standards represent and then to demonstrate our compliance against those standards.”

Importantly, CUNA Mutual has earned a TruSecure certification, which lets customers, partners, and others know that their organizations have met strict security requirements and have a sound information security posture. “This certification is very important, particularly for our mission-critical applications like loanliner.com, and VoyenceControl helps us to provide the information needed to demonstrate compliance on a regular basis,” Waisbrot says.

VoyenceControl integrates with existing network management tools, enhancing value

According to Waisbrot, CUNA Mutual is so committed to VoyenceControl that any new network equipment the company purchases must work with the solution. At the same time, the company relies on VoyenceControl's integrations with other management tools. Because of these integrations, CUNA Mutual can instantly notify a wide range of mission-critical network applications, including the CMDB, when configuration changes are made. With a network that includes CA Unicenter and CiscoWorks, as well as a number of home-grown management tools, VoyenceControl's ability to integrate with other solutions is very important. "One of the first things we do if there is a problem in the network is look at VoyenceControl and compare configurations to see what has changed," Waisbrot says. "Often, some change in the network is causing the problem."

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Michael Waisbrot
Senior Network Analyst, CUNA Mutual

VoyenceControl's integration with the CMDB also provides benefit when it comes to the company's efforts to ensure compliance with ITIL best practices. "CUNA Mutual will be working over the next few years to align business processes with ITIL best practices," Waisbrot says, "and this year we are tackling enterprise configuration management, including developing an enterprise CMDB that collects information from network servers, applications, and other business-critical systems. Our strategy is for VoyenceControl to integrate with the CMDB to share and update data."

A measurable return on investment

For CUNA Mutual, VoyenceControl delivers a real return on investment, especially when it comes to the additional time the IT staff can spend on mission-critical tasks because routine jobs can be accomplished automatically. "We see an obvious return on investment simply because of the time savings we're able to realize with VoyenceControl," says Waisbrot. "For example, if we have to make a single configuration change on multiple devices, we can do it once with VoyenceControl as opposed to logging on to each device and then making the same change multiple times. A task that might have taken a week or more to do manually can be accomplished in five minutes in VoyenceControl.

"In addition, because we can create reusable configuration elements—like password changes—within VoyenceControl, we don't have to worry about the inconsistencies that can come from a number of different people making changes a number of different ways," explains Waisbrot. "This helps ensure accuracy, and it also means that we don't have to invest additional time upfront creating changes."

Finally, Waisbrot points to the time saved creating new configurations with VoyenceControl. "When we put a change into VoyenceControl to create a new configuration, we can incorporate our security standards and ensure compliance even before we deploy the change. With VoyenceControl, we're essentially auditing our changes before and after implementation; we can make sure changes are compliant before they're deployed and after we can audit devices to make sure they're compliant. Plus, if I get a call asking, 'Are all managed devices in compliance with our router standards?' with VoyenceControl, I can run that report easily within five minutes."



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