

“With offices across four time zones, any time we are offline we lose sales. With Check Point High Availability, we can upgrade without disrupting business.”

*Rob Herman
Technical Infrastructure Supervisor
Geiger Brothers*



CUSTOMER NAME

Geiger Brothers

INDUSTRY

Promotional products

CHECK POINT PRODUCTS

- VPN-1® Pro™
- Check Point Express™
- SSL Network Extender™
- SmartDefense™ Services

CUSTOMER NEEDS MET

- Simplify remote access for executives and sales associates
- Create cost-effective, secure networks and connectivity in SOHO
- Speed up deployment of new branch offices
- Enable High Availability and performance for data and voice

Geiger Grows With Akibia and Check Point Security

ABOUT GEIGER BROTHERS

Need the perfect giveaway for a memorable product launch or themed event? If it can be imprinted with a logo or message, Geiger Brothers probably supplies it. A family-owned business since 1878, Geiger Brothers offers more than a half million products that can be personalized from a wide range of manufacturing partners. Customers can choose from the online Star Performers catalog of its most popular items, search the GeigerMall, or work with a promotional counselor to select the right promotional or motivational items.

THE CHALLENGE

Five hundred Geiger employees in 20 offices across the United States rely on the company’s centralized order management system in Lewiston, Maine, and on its document image system containing 3 million documents, including all orders, sales receipts, and expense reports. “We run a nearly entirely paperless operation,” says Rob Herman, technical infrastructure supervisor who oversees the company data and voice networks.

In 2005, as Geiger Brothers acquired four companies and established four new offices, it also faced increasing demands from employees for remote access so that they could work more easily from home or other locations. Some of the demand came from executives who were traveling frequently to bring about the acquisitions, as well as to attend six annual industry tradeshows, but sales associates also no longer wanted to be tied to their desks.

“Security is the hardest thing we deal with,” Herman says. “It’s important for Geiger to stay up with the industry.” That is why Geiger relies on the partnership of Check Point and Akibia, its long-time consultant for network and security solutions. Akibia keeps Geiger abreast of new technologies, educated on market and industry changes, and provided with on-site technical support, helping the company assess its needs and recommending best-of-breed solutions for critical security issues.

THE CHECK POINT SOLUTION

Geiger securely connects all its branch offices to the Lewiston headquarters by site-to-site virtual private networks (VPNs) for both data and voice communications, using the Check Point VPN-1® Pro™ NGX release to provide the most fault-tolerant and secure links. With Akibia's consultation and support, Geiger switched from frame relay to VPNs using Check Point solutions, the company saw total payback on its investment in less than one year.

The security and availability of business-critical network services is ensured through a layered defense strategy that includes a pair of clustered VPN-1 Pro NGX gateways in the data center. "With offices across four time zones, any time we are offline we lose sales. If the firewalls are down, the Web sites go down," Herman says. "With the Check Point High Availability solution, we can upgrade without disrupting business." In addition, bandwidth is managed to give the highest priority to VPN traffic, providing the quality of service required for voice.

Branch offices, varying from five to 30 employees, have a Check Point Express™ security gateway, which provides firewall, VPN, and intrusion prevention technologies in one solution that can be monitored, managed, and upgraded remotely from Lewiston.

To meet the growing employee demand for remote access, Akibia suggested SSL Network Extender™ was the easiest solution for users because there is no software to install on their computers. "They just log in, and they are securely connected," Herman says. SSL Network Extender is a browser-based applet that gives users access to Web and non-Web applications with all the security features provided by VPN-1 Pro.

THE BENEFITS OF CHECK POINT SECURITY AND AKIBIA SUPPORT

Herman sums up the overall advantage of Check Point security and his relationship with Akibia in one word: "Stability." To him stability means a security infrastructure that is "always available and does not give us problems." Stability is so important because the branch offices have no IT personnel and just two people in Lewiston share responsibility for managing all network operations, including security.

Stability also comes from a trusted partner and adviser in helping Geiger create the secure infrastructure. A consistent and long-term partnership with Akibia has helped Geiger build up its security infrastructure. Herman's security group is supported by Akibia's helpdesk and consulting team. The Akibia helpdesk provides a fast and accurate response to help troubleshoot issues, while Akibia's consulting practice helps identify new opportunities and solutions. Herman cites that Akibia often goes above and beyond the call of duty by working with Geiger to make critical firewall and protection updates overnight, limiting the downtime and effect felt by the company's end users.

Quick network connection for new offices

Check Point Express security gateways fill Geiger's need for secure networks in small office locations and secure connectivity back to the corporate office. "When we set up or move an office, it's easy to get any Internet service provider there and deploy Check Point Express. We install Check Point Express on a server and ship it to the office. Someone with no particular technical knowledge can plug in the preconfigured box, and they are ready to go—with phone and network service. It comes online quickly and is very reliable." Reliability," Herman says, "is a huge advantage."

Trouble-free secure remote access

The users clamoring for easy remote access are delighted with SSL Network Extender. Without having to install or maintain any client software on their laptops, they are able to connect from anywhere. "With SSL Network Extender, helpdesk calls about remote access have stopped," Herman says.

Heading off new threats

Geiger subscribes to Check Point SmartDefense™ Services to get the latest defense updates against constantly evolving threats. SmartDefense intrusion prevention technologies also let Geiger restrict instant messaging and file-sharing programs that are common routes for attacks. "SmartDefense is working quite well for us," Herman says. "We are able to head off threats before we know they exist."

THE FUTURE OF GEIGER BROTHERS

In addition to 500 employees, Geiger contracts with hundreds of independent sales representatives who do business with Geiger over the Web, without access to the company network. Geiger has no control over the computers that they use but does provide some helpdesk support. The company is considering providing these contractors with SSL Network Extender.

Security from inside out is another challenge on Geiger's agenda. "Check Point secures us from the outside, but unprotected computers inside our network are still a point of vulnerability," Herman says. For this reason, Geiger is considering protecting all the laptops and desktops the company owns with Check Point Integrity™ endpoint security. Integrity would require that computers comply with established security policies before being allowed to connect to the network. Locking out dangerous endpoints is only half the solution. Integrity would also enable quick, simple remediation of out-of-compliance endpoints. "I'm impressed by Check Point Integrity as a solution to the problem," he says.

"We count on Check Point and Akibia for a security infrastructure that enables us to accomplish our business goals," said Jim Smith, vice president of IT for Geiger.

CONTACT CHECK POINT

Worldwide Headquarters

5 Ha'Solelim Street, Tel Aviv 67897, Israel | Tel: 972-3-753-4555 | Fax: 972-3-624-1100 | Email: info@checkpoint.com

U.S. Headquarters

800 Bridge Parkway, Redwood City, CA 94065 | Tel: 800-429-4391; 650-628-2000 | Fax: 650-654-4233 | www.checkpoint.com