



OPPORTUNITY FINANCE NETWORK



SIX DEGREES CONSULTING



A Lean IT Team. A Growing Threat Landscape. How OFN Closed the Cyber Security Gap

INDUSTRY:
Nonprofit

HEADQUARTERS:
Washington DC

OVERVIEW

Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) is the nation's leading network and intermediary focused on community development investment, managing more than \$1 billion in total assets and a membership of nearly 500 community development financial institutions (CDFIs), which includes community development loan funds, credit unions, green banks, banks, minority depository institutions, and venture capital funds. Our network of CDFIs works to ensure communities left behind by mainstream finance have access to affordable, responsible financial products and services, with a deep focus on serving rural, urban, and Native communities across the United States. OFN is a trusted investment partner to the public, private, and philanthropic sectors — foundations, corporations, banks, government agencies, and others — and, for more than 40 years, has helped partners invest in communities to catalyze change and create economic opportunities for all.

OUR SOLUTION

Workspace Security



Check Point Email Security has helped us to respond tremendously faster, reduce our manual efforts, and strengthen our email security posture without needing to expand the team. Check Point Email Security does everything it's supposed to do without getting in the way, and that's exactly what we looked for in our security stack.

Abhilash Rajan, SVP of IT and facilities administration



CHALLENGE

When Abhilash Rajan joined Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) as senior vice president of IT and facilities administration in September 2024, one of his first actions would be to enhance their email security. Threats, such as phishing emails and business email compromise fraud were rising and targeting OFN, Rajan explained.

OFN operates at the intersection of finance, trade, and community advocacy. As a membership organization, OFN guides approximately 500 Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), nonprofits and financial institutions that provide capital to underserved communities where traditional bank lending is unavailable. As a trade organization, OFN advocates directly to members of Congress on policies that enable CDFIs to serve low-income communities. And as a financial institution itself, OFN provides B2B loans to its CDFI members. The sensitivity of the data involved — financial records, policy work, member information — made the establishment of robust email security most urgent.

The threats Rajan cited were not theoretical. Modern attackers impersonating executives send urgent requests to staff members to make gift card purchases, conduct wire transfers, and other classic business email compromise (BEC) tactics. “Anyone can create an email address and send a very compelling email to staff requesting they do anything,” said Rajan. That anything can also include enticing the staff to transfer funds, click on a malicious link, or open an attachment. While security awareness training does help minimize such risks, staff slip-ups must be anticipated.

Additionally, OFN recently won a significant federal grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that required the organization to strengthen its security posture and align with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) cyber security frameworks. Compliance documentation, audit records, and formal cyber security policies would all be expected. Establishing the necessary security baseline would be challenging without the right processes and technology in place. “At first, it kept me up at night,” Rajan said.

To help meet its goals, Rajan and the OFN team engaged Six Degrees Consulting, a National Check Point Premier Partner with over two decades of experience, to support product selection, implementation, and to optimize the security deployment.

Together they sought an email security platform that would prove effective at threat detection, easily deployed and managed, provide hybrid/remote worker capability, and be competitively priced.

SOLUTION

Rajan didn’t have to look far. At a previous role of his, leading IT at a prominent Washington, DC think tank, Rajan oversaw a rigorous competitive evaluation of the leading email security platforms. The evaluation found the incumbents wanting: they were expensive, deployment-heavy, and architecturally misaligned with the needs of a distributed, lean organization. What stood out? Check Point Email Security.

The differentiators that drove the earlier Check Point Email Security selection held just as true at OFN. Check Point Email Security integrates via API inline with Microsoft Exchange, requiring no MX record changes and causing no disruption to email flow. It activates in an observed, passive mode, cataloguing threats without interfering with operations, so that organizations can evaluate its effectiveness before committing to enforcement. Deployment complexity and ongoing operational burden — the factors that most distinguish security solutions for small and mid-sized IT teams — were dramatically lower than competing options. And Check Point’s nonprofit pricing made the value proposition straightforward.

“Selecting Check Point was a no-brainer,” Rajan said. “It’s proven to stop threats with low overhead.”

From the start, Six Degrees Consulting brought exactly the expertise the engagement called for. The Six Degrees Consulting engagement proved to be an excellent choice. Erez Levanon, email security specialist and director of sales at Six Degrees Consulting and his team brought deep familiarity with Check Point Email Security’s advanced capabilities. For instance, Check Point Email Security’s ability to override Microsoft’s email security suggestions meant emails deemed legitimate by Check Point Email Security would be properly delivered, and in those cases when Microsoft missed a potential malicious email, Check Point Email Security would quarantine that message.

Six Degrees also configured AI-driven automation for restore requests and phishing simulations, which further reduced the manual workload on OFN’s lean IT team. When a quarantined email is disputed by an end user, Check Point Email Security re-analyzes the message and, if it clears additional checks, restores it automatically — notifying IT without requiring their direct involvement. “It is very rare for an email security product to deliver that level of implementation flow and remain very competitively priced,” Levanon said.

OUTCOME

“Check Point Email Security has helped us to respond tremendously faster, reduce our manual efforts, and strengthen our email security posture without needing to expand the team. Check Point Email Security does everything it’s supposed to do without getting in the way, and that’s exactly what we looked for in our security stack,” Rajan said.

That positive impact became clear within months. One of OFN’s CDFI member institutions — a small, West Coast organization with no dedicated IT staff or dedicated email security — suffered a business email compromise. Attackers took over the member’s email system and began broadcasting malicious links to everyone in their address book. On a Tuesday afternoon, 48 such emails arrived in OFN staff inboxes, appearing to come from a known and trusted sender.

Check Point Email Security identified and removed all 48 instances of the malicious email from every OFN inbox for each of those staffers. Rajan learned of the incident through Check Point Email Security’s automated reporting. He then directly reached the member institution to alert them to the breach they had yet to detect.

The cumulative operational benefit of the Check Point deployment has been substantial. As a tight IT team, each of OFN’s team members must wear multiple hats — cyber security, infrastructure, strategic planning, and compliance — and every hour spent on reactive email support is an hour unavailable for higher-value work. Check Point Email Security’s automation has shifted that balance significantly, allowing Rajan and his colleagues to focus on the NIST alignment and EPA grant compliance work that the organization needs.



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It is very rare for an email security product to deliver the level of implementation flow and remain very competitively priced as Check Point does.

Erez Levanon, email security specialist and a director of sales at Six Degrees Consulting

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Check Point Email Security has also shown itself to be highly reliable. In an industry where post-implementation support engagement is routine, OFN has needed very little. “That is the hallmark of a strong product. Things always work as expected,” Rajan said.

The lessons are straightforward: email security does not have to be complex, expensive, or burdensome. Done right, it simply works.

About Check Point Software Technologies Ltd.

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. is a global cyber security leader protecting more than 100,000 organizations worldwide. Its mission is to secure enterprises’ AI transformation. With a prevention-first approach and an open ecosystem architecture, Check Point helps organizations block advanced threats, prioritize exposures, and automate security operations across complex digital environments. The unified architecture simplifies protection across hybrid networks, multi-cloud environments, digital workspaces, and AI systems. Structured around four strategic pillars, Hybrid Mesh Network Security, Workspace Security, Exposure Management, and AI Security, Check Point delivers consistent protection and visibility across multivendor environments, enabling organizations to reduce risk, improve efficiency, and accelerate innovation without increasing complexity.

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About Six Degrees Consulting

Six Degrees Consulting is a data security company that helps businesses of all sizes protect their networks, data, and teams. We focus on staying ahead of threats rather than just reacting to them. Our goal is to take the burden off your IT team and give your business the freedom to operate and grow with confidence.

Our strength lies in our people. We take the time to assemble the right technology and the right teams for each situation, making sure every solution is tailored to your specific needs and every request is aligned with your budget and goals. We enhance data protection by combining in-house expertise with our SDC community — an extension of security professionals and chosen partners — bringing a customized, prevention-first approach to your security portfolio.

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