

Royal Cosun Cultivates Global Defenses With Mimecast

1-2 per month

Spam and phishing incidents have dropped from several tickets per week to one or two a month.

99% decrease

Royal Cosun's Shared Service Centre saw a 99% decrease in phishing and spam emails.

1% of traffic

Bulk phishing emails have been nearly eliminated, down to under 1% of traffic.

“ The Mimecast team was really good in explaining how the functionality worked.”

Niek Bruggeman, Manager, Shared Service Centre ICT of Royal Cosun

Business case

Amid heightened cybersecurity concerns, international agri-food cooperative leader Royal Cosun wanted to strengthen its defenses to maintain operational integrity. However, the email security product it had in place was outdated and offered few relevant protections, especially against a growing trend in impersonation attacks.

Results

That's when Cosun turned to Mimecast for email continuity, anti-phishing and antispam protection. By nearly eliminating all spam, bulk phishing emails and impersonation attacks aimed at the company, Mimecast's email protection tools have been “a game-changer” for Cosun's security and IT team.

“When you raise a ticket at the service desk, you are getting good, straight answers. Mimecast is picking up the phone or scheduling a Teams call. It’s not an email with a delay of 10 days.”

Niek Bruggeman, Manager, Shared Service Centre ICT of Royal Cosun



Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russian invasion of Ukraine have put a spotlight on protecting the global food supply. But even before disruptions caused by these events, maintaining business continuity was always a top priority at Royal Cosun.

Cosun is an international agri-food cooperative leader that converts the potential of plants into usable, everyday solutions, such as plant-based foods and ingredients for people and animals, and green, bio-based non-food applications and sustainable energy. The business groups Aviko, Cosun Beet Company, Duynie Group, Sensus and SVZ are part of Cosun. In 2021, around 4,000 employees worked on the development and production of plant-based solutions, resulting in a combined annual turnover of approximately 2.3 billion euros (US\$2.5 billion).

“It is our mission to get the most out of the plant,” said Niek Bruggeman, manager of Cosun’s Shared Service Center, where he works directly with a three-person security team and oversees an IT staff of 40 that serves the entire company.

Timing Is Everything

Royal Cosun’s decision to replace its previous security tools, provided by Barracuda, with Mimecast’s offerings predated the aforementioned world events that have, to date, defined the 2020s.

“We saw a lot of emails, phishing, and spam getting through to the mailboxes of our end users,” Bruggeman recalled. “Our former email filter was at the end of support but also not ready for threats on a daily basis.”



Learn more about Mimecast’s complete suite of security solutions, the role of AI in cybersecurity, and how to separate fact from fiction.

For more on Royal Cosun, visit its website [here](#).

After researching the market to identify possible cybersecurity vendors, a team of Cosun decision-makers — including Bruggeman, SSC Security Architect Raymond Poede, Cosun CIO Chris Migchelbrink and six ICT managers representing Cosun's businesses — zeroed in on Mimecast's [Secure Email Gateway](#) and [Targeted Threat Protection](#) for its antispam and anti-phishing features.

"We made a choice based on functionality and pricing," Bruggeman said. He praised Secure Email Gateway's ability to block links to known phishing portals in emails, even if the emails were delivered to users' mailboxes outside of the network firewall. Another big plus: Secure Email Gateway's ability to protect against business e-mail compromise attacks — CEO and CFO fraud, in particular, he said.

Let the Deployment Begin

Cosun worked with Mimecast to deploy Secure Email Gateway and Targeted Threat Protection in April 2020, just as the pandemic was taking hold. Within the year it added [Internal Email Protect](#) to layer additional defenses against impersonation attacks.

The following year, Cosun turned to Mimecast for additional defenses with [Impersonation Protect](#), which addressed a rising concern about BEC attacks. "We were looking for a solution to take care of our users with a minimum of visibility, and that is where the CEO filter from Mimecast was really helpful," Bruggeman said.

Indeed, the Barracuda gateway that Cosun had been depending on didn't protect against C-suite impersonators or block suspect links in delivered emails, Bruggeman pointed out. "I think that the go-to functionality of Mimecast are those specific techniques, which are really helpful to us," he said.

The fact that Mimecast works in the background was also an attractive feature. "Mimecast is, for the user, very invisible, and that's a good thing," Bruggeman said. "It blocks what needs to be blocked. It's not more visible than strictly needed. We don't want to bother our users with technical details. It just needs to work."

One Step at a Time

Deployment of Mimecast's tools took several months, but that was by design. "We have a habit of being really careful about the changes we present our users with," Bruggeman explained.

When Cosun initially deployed Mimecast, the company's mailboxes were running on Microsoft Exchange on-premises; the company has since migrated to Office 365 in the cloud. "It is important for us that Mimecast works well with online mailboxes in the cloud," Bruggeman said.

The transition meant ensuring the Mimecast tools worked with Cosun's Microsoft email gateway and a third-party automatic signature solution that tags mail as it leaves the Cosun infrastructure, Bruggeman added. "The engineers at Mimecast did a really good job working with our guys to make that work," he said. "It was a project, but there were no large issues there."

Bruggeman also praised the speed and responsiveness of Mimecast's customer care teams. Tickets are dealt with quickly, he said, and the representatives are good at explaining how to leverage the tools. "The people at Mimecast are very helpful, very skilled," he said.

Going from practically no email protection to Mimecast's solutions has resulted in a sharp drop in phishing and spam — to the tune of a 99% decrease in bulk phishing emails and security tickets.

"That was a real game-changer for us," Bruggeman said. "We used to have several spam and phishing tickets in a week, and we dropped to one or two in a month. That was a really strong sign that Mimecast is doing its work properly."