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THE VGM GROUP
MEMBER SERVICE ORGANIZATION

Real-Life Cybersecurity Stories from VGM Members

Three VGM members share their stories about when, why, and how they decided to invest in cybersecurity

How do you know when it's time to improve your organization's cybersecurity? What changes should you make to better secure your data? For home medical equipment providers, there are many factors that can prompt action — and many different ways you can improve your security posture.

Here, three VGM members share their stories with you about when, why, and how they decided to invest in cybersecurity — and the changes they've seen as a result.

URS Medical Takes a Proactive Approach to Security

After seeing cybersecurity in the news more often, it hit home for Waco, Texas-based URS Medical that protecting patient data was becoming more important. "With an understanding of how much patient information we have, we didn't want to risk it — for the sake of the patients and for the sake of our company," says Colton Glaser, director of operations at URS Medical. "We want to be proactive instead of reactive."

When staff members started thinking about the number of times patient information passes back and forth between URS Medical, doctor's offices and hospitals, insurance partners, and the patients themselves, the company wanted to make sure that each step in the information-transfer process was secure. With a team of 40, URS Medical could be considered a small business — but it still believes that no risk is too big or too small.

After discussing internally, the company decided to take action – but wasn't sure where or how to start. At around the same time, URS Medical's president and vice president attended a VGM conference in Las Vegas where they happened upon a ProCircular seminar about cybersecurity.

After talking openly with ProCircular about current cybersecurity measures — and what the company wanted to improve upon — URS Medical was ready to move forward. "We had a few basics in place, but it was very eye-opening once we started the process," says Glaser. "We weren't aware of all the potential hazards we faced. We've learned so much that we didn't know before."

For example, the company quickly learned that there are specific steps to take in order to ensure that patches are handled promptly and effectively. They also discovered that following specific steps can ensure efficient business continuity and disaster recovery during and after an incident.

According to Glaser, one of the most impactful things URS Medical now has in place after working with ProCircular is an incident response plan. "We never had that before. We've even experienced incidents in the past and wondered, 'What do we need to do now?' We were trying to resolve issues on the fly, which is very stressful."

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Today, the company sits down together and has conversations about potential circumstances that may occur – and how they would handle those events. From there, the plans are documented in writing. A dedicated information security officer has been assigned to ensure confidentiality, integrity, and availability of company information.

The team has also made it a priority to update patches for servers, computers, switches, and other hardware. "With ProCircular's advice and assistance, we have honed in on our backups within the last few months as well. If any event were to happen, we're backed up to a point where we can get up and running quickly and efficiently right away."

Access control has become another point of focus for URS Medical. After discovering that some employees had access to sensitive information they didn't need, the company eliminated those access rights and made sure that only the individuals who need access actually have it.

"The time to be proactive is now, if not yesterday," says Glaser. "Being reactive can turn out to be devastating. We now recognize that, especially with what we've learned from ProCircular. We're excited to continue to learn about the hazards that are in front of us, and how to be prepared for them."

Travis Medical Tackles High-Priority Cybersecurity Initiatives

In business for more than 30 years, the word "cybersecurity" and the acronym "HIPAA" didn't even exist when Austin, Texas-based Travis Medical Sales Corp. was formed.

Regardless, the company felt confident that it met the requirements associated with protecting patient information. "Being early adopters of modern technologies, we have always been diligent about making sure stop gaps and protections were in place," says Jamy Conrad, human resources and payroll manager at Travis Medical.

Travis Medical's mission has always been to provide the highest level of service and expertise possible to its customers – and the company viewed cybersecurity as one more way to fulfill that mission.

"As our business continued to grow, and as we opened more branch locations with more employees, we wanted to ensure that our current security practices would stand the test of the latest technology trends and insurance requirements," says Conrad.

Learning about ProCircular through VGM, Travis Medical figured it was worth a call to understand potential options. The first order of business: To make sure the switch to a new technology platform backed by Azure was secure. "We wanted to follow recommended cybersecurity best practices with the new technology," says Conrad, "and we wanted to understand where our vulnerabilities could be as we moved through the transition."

To start, ProCircular conducted a risk assessment focused on detecting different security-risk levels based on Travis Medical's current practices. "We were proud to see the results confirm we were doing things right," says Conrad.

The assessment helped employees learn new lessons about cybersecurity. For example: "Not everyone realized that a printer is a vulnerability point," says Conrad. "Also, some of our non-IT people just were not aware of all the different ways people are attacking businesses today to try and gain access to employee and patient information."

The company is now in the process of its new technology transition and knows that, by partnering with ProCircular, it has ensured due diligence to guarantee that data will stay safe.

"We have a good foundation of knowledge and resources to turn to as we implement new technologies and remain contentious of cybersecurity," says Conrad. "Having a partner we know we can call on is comforting, and, as technology improves and progresses, we will continue to upgrade our security measures as well."

CarePro Closes Security Gaps

After joining the CarePro team in 2017, one of the first things Brent Bormann, CFO at Cedar Rapids, IA-based CarePro Health Services, did was attend the Corridor Business Journal's Cyber Security Breakfast to learn about new cybersecurity trends and threats.

After listening to ProCircular discuss cybersecurity risks at this event, Bormann and his team began to think about their own cybersecurity challenges. They wanted to make sure CarePro's IT team was ready to face these risks, and that they had the information they needed to improve security posture.

To do this, Bormann and CarePro's CEO decided to get an objective opinion on the company's current cybersecurity efforts, potential skills gaps within the IT team, and how CarePro could improve its security posture. "We knew cybersecurity was a real concern for organizations our size. We kind of thought we had a plan for it. But was it robust enough? I don't think we had a good feel for whether it was or not," says Bormann.

Although CarePro had basic cybersecurity procedures in place, like firewalls and antivirus software, the company hadn't re-examined its security structure for a few years.

So, as Bormann explains it: "We opened our doors and said, 'Come on in and tell us where we're good, where we're not good, and where we can be better.' I wasn't an expert. ProCircular helped us develop a plan and start to close our security gaps."

First, vulnerability assessments and penetration tests were completed. This helped identify hardware and network weaknesses that CarePro could address right away. From there, the focus shifted to improving risk management: the ability to identify, assess, and control potential cybersecurity risks.

"Now we have some help looking at our security structure and taking a broad look at the organization," says Bormann. "After discovering where we were, now we can decide where we want to be instead — and then execute that plan."

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Taking the Next Step

As a VGM partner, ProCircular educates organizations and their people about security to help them prepare for future challenges and protect information and privacy.

Your data is likely living in a variety of places and being shared in many different ways. Our team of experts works side by side with you to consider cybersecurity from all angles – and then design a plan that's just right for you.

"Compliance and protecting patient information are things we take seriously at VGM," says Carol Albaugh, technical solutions consultant and Secure Tech program coordinator for VGM. "We trust ProCircular enough to use them ourselves. We feel strongly that they are a great fit and partner for all of our members' cybersecurity needs!"

To learn more, or get answers to your cybersecurity questions, visit www.procircular.com or login to the VGM website.

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