Credit Where Credit is Due

BAXTER CREDIT UNION PRIORITIZES CLOUD SECURITY FOR THEIR MEMBERS' DATA

BCU | **ARMOR**

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BCU

Headquarters	Vernon Hills, Illinios
Market Profile:	Private
Industry:	Credit Union
Website:	BCU.org

Credit unions face many challenges when operating online. Unlike banks and other financial institutions, they are not-for-profit entities that provide services for members, as opposed to customers and businesses. Because of this unique relationship, special care must be taken to ensure their members can access financial data easily and securely. Balancing these customer expectations and operational objectives, while maintaining robust security, can be a challenge for even the most security-savvy credit union.

This was the challenge Illinois-based Baxter Credit Union (BCU) faced when seeking a convergence of member satisfaction and cyber security while also supporting their hybrid cloud strategy.

Embracing the cloud

As an organization, BCU prides itself on offering members more innovative services than can be found at many other financial institutions. Online services are just part of the puzzle when it comes to benefitting from the operational efficiencies generated by web-based services powered by a hybrid cloud infrastructure – a mix of public, private and on-premise hosting resources.

For Jeff Johnson, Chief Information Officer at BCU, the potential benefits of fully embracing cloud hosting were obvious. "The cloud in general, is a fantastic opportunity to put our time and resources towards non-commodity IT practices," he said. "Having vendors that can support both physical and cloud data centers allows for more consistencies in BCU's processes, fewer vendors and contracts to manage, and the ability to form long-term relationships that can meet our strategic security needs. The more automated tools that we have, the less manual activities that need to be performed, allowing us to free up our professional resources to add great value."

Unfortunately, their existing security provider was not capable of supporting their move to a hybrid cloud infrastructure, so they began searching for a provider who could.

About BCU:

BCU is a $2.6 billion full-service financial institution providing SEG and community banking to approximately 200,000 members in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. The fastest growing credit union in the last 30 years, BCU is regarded as having set new standards for bringing together technology and member service in the fast-changing world of financial services delivery. As an organization, BCU is committed to improving members' financial well-being through the brand promise We've Got Your Back. Membership is open to several prestigious employers around the country and those living or working in Chicago-area communities. For more information about BCU, please visit BCU.org.

Finding the right fit

Similar to the situation they encountered with their own MSSP, BCU soon discovered that finding the right security partner would not be an easy task. "We found a lot of resistance and hesitation from managed security providers when it came to the cloud. Even though the systems run the same they wanted to diminish the services offered just because it was on the cloud as opposed to being on-premises."

There was the additional complication of BCU meeting their PCI compliance requirements. Any solution they integrated into their cloud strategy would have to be both agile and secure; flexible enough to adapt to any cloud infrastructure while also capable of meeting the standards set by the PCI Council.

Through a recommendation from one of their vendors, their search led them to Armor. They found that Armor's approach quickly distinguished them from their peers. With Armor Anywhere, a PCI 3.1-compliant managed security solution designed for hybrid cloud environments, BCU gained the flexibility and level of control needed to secure their cloud-based aspirations.

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Jeff Johnson | Chief Information Officer

A better cloud

Armor Anywhere secures BCU's Microsoft Azure-hosted instances from persistent cyber threats – providing 24/7/365 incident detection and response along with advanced threat intelligence capabilities for their members' sensitive data.

"One thing that intrigued us with Armor versus our other managed security provider was Armor's cloud aptitude and competency," Jeff said. "Working with the SOC has provided great resource-saving value. The team members are knowledgeable about their clients, as well as security, so there aren't unnecessary escalation events sent to our team to deal with."

Armor's proactive approach to cloud security services contrasted with the other managed security providers the credit union encountered – including their previous cloud security provider. For an organization moving its infrastructure to the cloud such as BCU, Armor's focus on expanding its product services for assets in the cloud was a welcome approach.

BCU also benefited from Armor's expertise in mitigating online threats. A value that Jeff says is essential to maintaining a secure cloud environment.
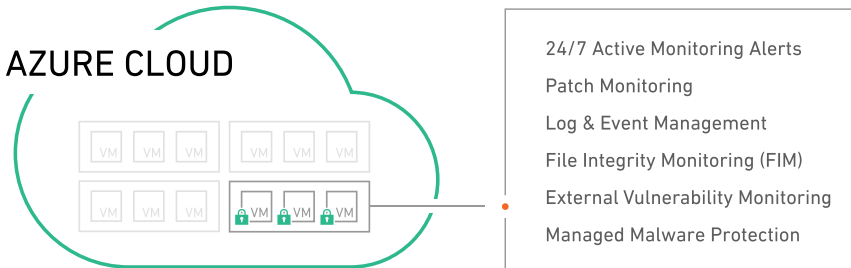
"The first step to overcoming the risks of hosting in the cloud is having the capabilities to identify abnormal behavior as it's happening and then responding instantly to minimize or prevent any damage," he said. "With Armor Anywhere, we have the detection and prevention tools we need to feel secure in our environment."

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Jeff Johnson | Chief Information Officer

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Sharing responsibility on Azure

Armor Anywhere also helps BCU manage the shared responsibility model of securing workloads on Azure – ensuring they maximize the value of their public cloud investment. This is a core benefit for Jeff and BCU, as they are keenly aware that accountability for the security of their Azure instances falls to them.

"You can't lose focus that, at the end of the day, managing security on Azure is still our responsibility," he said. "You need to make sure that when you move your assets into Azure - just like when you move your assets into a new datacenter - that you're maintaining the security and you're bringing the appropriate security with you as you go to the cloud."

What's next for BCU

BCU has seen Armor Anywhere evolve more rapidly than services offered by Armor's more traditional hosting-focused peers. These enhancements include greater vulnerability and patch management, along with enhanced monitoring features such as host-based intrusion protection.

Characterizing Armor as "more of a value-added partner," Jeff is optimistic about the relationship going forward: "The responsiveness has been great and so has the evolution of the product. We're looking forward to expanding its usage across our services."

Armor protects the most demanding businesses

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