

Williams Leverages CASB to Maintain Compliance, Reduce Risk, and Rein in Shadow IT



Williams

Customer Profile

Fortune 500 large-scale energy infrastructure company based in Tulsa, Oklahoma that gathers, processes, and delivers natural gas to thousands of customers nationwide

Industry

Oil and gas

IT Environment

More than 5,800 employees across five major offices and more than 150 field offices in the United States and Canada

Williams is a Fortune 500 large-scale energy infrastructure company that gathers, processes, and delivers natural gas to thousands of customers nationwide. Based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Williams was recognized by *Fortune Magazine* as the Number One Most Admired US Energy Company in 2015.

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CASE STUDY

With more than 5,800 employees across five major offices and more than 150 field offices across the United States and Canada, Williams has taken an open approach to cloud use and adoption, allowing their employees to utilize the cloud services needed to help them get their jobs done as efficiently as possible.

Reining in Shadow IT

According to Lee White, security risk manager for Williams, the company began ramping up its cloud strategy only over the last couple of years. "Five-plus years ago, we allowed employees to use the cloud services they needed to be productive without giving our security stamp of approval," he says.

As a result, White and his team wanted to have more visibility into what was going on from a security and risk perspective and decided they needed to leverage a cloud access security broker (CASB) to fully understand the risk to their organization.

White knew Williams was using many cloud technologies but didn't know the full extent. Upon deploying McAfee® Skyhigh Security Cloud into their environment, White and his team discovered that they were using more than 2,000 cloud services. "Clearly, that was more than we anticipated, but McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud allowed us to begin establishing and managing the risk that came along with them," he says.

At the same time, White found it very costly to assess and on-board cloud services requested by employees. The average enterprise spends 17.7 days to vet the security capabilities of a cloud service. Today, White and his team regularly use the McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud comprehensive Cloud Registry to leverage the McAfee Skyhigh Cloud Trust Ratings, which provide a 1-to-10 risk rating based on 50 attributes, to implement a cloud governance framework, providing White and his team an 80% reduction in labor hours used to evaluate services.

"Historically, risk assessments have been a research project that includes interviews and talking with attorneys, department heads, and security teams to determine the risk of a service. This can take days, weeks, or months, depending on how easy the organizations are to work with," notes White. "What McAfee has done is provide us with a consistent and expedited way to get risk assessments. They are literally at our fingertips."

In leveraging McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud, the Williams team is now able to see and capture the data they need to be able to group the riskiest cloud services and block access to them, while accelerating adoption of permitted services. "We are now able to identify and coach users to safer, sanctioned services, allowing us to reduce risk and consolidate services. This enables us to save the organization money while being able to generate metrics around our risk," observes White. "My whole team loves it, as does management and our CIO."

Challenges

- Lack of visibility into the number of cloud services in use across the enterprise and a need to understand the risk associated with each service
- Too many labor hours spent assessing the security of cloud services when employees request a new service
- Inability to enforce policies and ensure compliance without impacting the user experience

Solutions

- McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud for Shadow IT

Results

- Minimized use of unsanctioned high-risk services, coached users on safer, sanctioned services like OneDrive, consolidated services, and reduced cost, and overall corporate risk
- Reduced labor hours to evaluate new services and speed procurement by 80% to, enabling users to meet strategic business initiatives
- Additional security controls ensure compliance with internal policies and industry regulations

CASE STUDY

Meeting Compliance Through Threat Protection

In addition to having the visibility needed to manage risk across the enterprise, the Williams team can also detect anomalous behavior that may be indicative of insider threats, compromised accounts, and malicious or negligent behavior through the McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud machine-learning analytics, which is based on user behavior.

“We have detected quite a few anomalies and have been able to leverage the McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud machine learning to better understand our risk,” explains White. “McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud is another tool in our arsenal that helps us ensure that our data is not being accessed by non-privileged users.”

As an energy company, Williams is required to comply with the laws set forth by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which regulates the transmission, sale, and transportation of electricity, natural gas, and oil by pipeline in interstate commerce and oversees the industry’s cybersecurity and systems assurance programs. “McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud is a way that we can ensure compliance in the cloud from an enterprise level,” reports White. “Now we are in the process of establishing policies and standards and reducing costs and risk, while also developing some structure with our cloud services.”

Enabling Users to Drive Business Forward

White’s main goal is to enable his employees with productivity-driving cloud services, while managing the security and controlling the risks involved with cloud usage.

“We are not in the business of limiting the access of cloud services,” says White. “Thanks to the visibility McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud provides, we are a lot more comfortable bringing in new services and saying ‘yes’ to our employees because we can assess risk at our fingertips to determine whether they are high or low risk.”

As the Williams team moves forward on their cloud journey, they plan to implement additional security controls to help launch business-critical initiatives, which have the potential to reduce costs, increase consistency across business units, and minimize enterprise-wide risk.

“Moving forward, we will continue to leverage everything the cloud has to offer,” notes White. “McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud has enabled us to do it in a more secure, structured way.”

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— Lee White, Security Risk Manager, Williams



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