

The Desjardins Group Saves Time and Money

McAfee provides onsite security expertise and quick access to resources



The Desjardins Group

Customer profile

Largest cooperative financial group in Canada

Industry

Financial

IT environment

70,000 endpoints, including more than 8,000 servers mostly in Canada

For this large financial organization, a McAfee® Resident Support Account Manager (RSAM) proves to be an extremely wise investment.

CASE STUDY

As the largest financial cooperative in Canada, The Desjardins Group offers an extensive range of services for consumers and businesses, from credit cards and equity trading to point-of-sale equipment and wealth management. The company serves more than seven million clients and members, employs 47,600 people, and has an extended network of approximately 70,000 endpoints, including more than 8,000 servers.

To reduce costs and simplify security administration, The Desjardins Group decided about six years ago to consolidate its more than 30 security suppliers to five or six main vendors and to centralize IT operations across the enterprise. The Desjardins Group chose McAfee as one of its key vendors because of the breadth and quality of its solutions. “We decided that solid integration trumped a best-of-breed approach, though, of course, many McAfee products are considered best of breed,” notes Christian Gauthier, director of surveillance and security at The Desjardins Group. Consequently, the company signed an enterprise license agreement (ELA) for a wide range of McAfee products for endpoint, web, and network protection.

Stable Environment that Keeps Bad Guys Out

According to Gauthier, the ultimate goal—to “keep bad guys out”—comes down to three primary activities: keeping abreast of relevant security and threat information, having the appropriate security tools, and maintaining a stable, optimized environment in which those tools work well on their own and with each other to proactively protect data and operations. To accomplish the first objective, he established a cybertechnology intelligence group within the security operations center (SOC). The Desjardins Group works closely with organizations like the Canadian Bankers Association, sharing security best practices and information weekly, and the Canada Cyber Incident Response Center (CCIRC).

For the second objective—to supply a robust security infrastructure—he turns to key vendors such as McAfee. And for the third, stability, Gauthier relies on having the right support resources at all times.

Onsite Resource Invaluable Despite Extremely Competent Staff

Gauthier oversees a very adept and capable IT security organization of approximately 50 people. Even though he has competent staff, he has come to see McAfee Enterprise Support with a McAfee Resident Support Account Manager (RSAM), Yves Melançon, as invaluable for maintaining a stable, up-to-date infrastructure and strong security posture.

“Initially, paying for an RSAM was quite a tough sell and required a leap of faith,” admits Gauthier, who engaged Melançon as the company’s McAfee RSAM two years ago. “However, we have found Yves to be worth much more than the additional staff we might have hired instead of him. He is extremely knowledgeable and can figure out what’s wrong or else escalate to the right people and get us quickly to resolution, usually without me having to say a word. By saving us time and helping us avoid downtime, he has saved us a lot of money.”

Time Savings and Downtime Avoidance Justify Paying for an RSAM

With the McAfee ELA and RSAM contracts recently up for renewal, Gauthier proactively gathered “hard numbers” and specific examples to demonstrate the value of the RSAM to The Desjardins Group’s new IT Operations VP. “Using very conservative figures, I easily justified our RSAM,” says Gauthier. “If we have a serious incident—for instance, if online banking goes down—the longer it affects business, the greater the cost impact. A few hours of downtime could cost our business an enormous

Challenges

- Maintain a stable, optimized security environment.
- Accelerate time-to-value of new security solutions.
- Shrink time-to-resolution and remediation.

McAfee solution

McAfee Enterprise License Agreement includes:

- McAfee® Advanced Threat Defense
- McAfee Complete Endpoint Threat Protection
- McAfee® ePolicy Orchestrator® (McAfee ePO™)
- McAfee Endpoint Encryption
- McAfee File & Removable Media Protection
- McAfee Host Data Loss Prevention
- McAfee Host Intrusion Prevention
- McAfee Network Security Platform
- McAfee Policy Auditor
- McAfee Web Gateway

CASE STUDY

amount. Our RSAM's ability to accelerate resolution—to get answers in minutes rather than having to open a ticket, or to go directly to the best resource within McAfee—minimizes costly downtime and disruption and saves us a ton of time.”

For example, a very large retail chain wanted to use The Desjardins Group's payment system, but intrusion prevention system (IPS) latency hindered the transaction. Melançon immediately contacted the McAfee Network Security Platform (NPS) developers who quickly ascertained the problem: the existing IPS appliances were not built to handle the exponential growth in traffic. The developers suggested that newer IPS appliances would completely fix the problem. The new appliances were installed within 48 hours and The Desjardins Group was able to substantially increase its revenue from a significant customer. Another time when a network glitch corrupted the McAfee ePO database, Melançon worked 38 hours straight to rebuild the McAfee ePO database and server from scratch.

Insider Knowledge and Access to Key Resources Accelerates Time to Value

Not factored into the figures Gauthier presented to upper management showed time saved from faster deployment and installations done right the first time. The Desjardins Group's deployment of McAfee Advanced Threat Defense solution is a perfect example. “With help from Yves, McAfee Advanced Threat Defense worked well from the start, immediately catching ransomware, greyware, and banking-specific malware,” explains Gauthier. “The kind of knowledge and insider access to resources that Yves has, you just can't hire that off the street.”

As The Desjardins Group's RSAM, Melançon has access not only to the right technical experts within McAfee but to local McAfee resources as well. Gauthier says that Montreal-based McAfee system engineers and others have

shown up on site when needed to help define strategies or fix performance issues—all because Melançon called them and asked for their help. All this was done at no added cost.

Gauthier also recalls an interaction at the annual McAfee FOCUS (now MPOWER) user conference two years ago. “We were having trouble with a now obsolete McAfee product,” he recollects. “Yves walked me over to the top technical person for that product, introduced me, and basically insisted that our issues be addressed immediately. I knew without a doubt he was working for me and it made a real difference.”

Flexibility and Lower TCO with an Enterprise License Agreement

At the beginning, an ELA proved extremely beneficial for The Desjardins Group because it allowed the company to decide over time which specific security solutions it needed. “When we first consolidated vendors, we were not yet familiar with the entire McAfee portfolio and were still defining our information security strategy,” says Gauthier. “With the McAfee ELA, we could test various products, conduct proof of concepts, and then run with the products that made the most sense. It gave us a lot of flexibility.”

According to Gauthier, that flexibility still exists today, but lower total cost of support has become an even bigger value of the ELA: “Compared to the cost of buying support for each individual product, we save millions of dollars. Plus, we know in advance what support will cost for the next six years. A fixed support rate has been a big selling point internally.”

Furthermore, on the technical side, the ELA keeps The Desjardins Group current with the latest product versions and enables the company to easily add products as needed. It also gives the company access to

Results

- Avoidance of downtime and minimization of system interruptions.
- Powerful advocate with connections and immediate access to the right people for fast resolution.
- Improved ROI through faster time to value.
- Daily hands-on involvement, troubleshooting, and knowledge transfer.

CASE STUDY

new technologies—such as recently deployed McAfee Advanced Threat Defense and soon-to-be-deployed McAfee Threat Intelligence Exchange and McAfee Endpoint Threat Detection and Response. These products enhance the effectiveness of the entire McAfee ecosystem and strengthen the company's security posture even more.

“One of Ours” and More

“Yves is as much a part of our team as those receiving a paycheck from The Desjardins Group,” claims Gauthier. “There is no ‘theirs’ and ‘ours.’ We are one team, and he’s one of ours. Yves knows our business, fully comprehends the impact of downtime or a sluggish network, and is as proactive as anyone on the team.”

When asked when to hire a McAfee RSAM, Gauthier replies that it depends on complexity. “As the complexity of your McAfee security environment increases, the value of a McAfee RSAM grows exponentially,” he states. “Having the right person with access to the right resources makes an enormous difference.”

Plus, adds Gauthier, you get more than just the RSAM. “Yves is obviously well supported by the McAfee community at large,” he notes. “I get a call from his boss every month just to check in and make sure I’m happy. Others from McAfee stop in periodically as well. I feel as if we have a whole McAfee team supporting us, not just one person.”

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—Christian Gauthier, Director of Surveillance and Security, The Desjardins Group



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