



case study

Mission-Critical Systems Manufacturer Chooses Secret Server for “Best in Breed” Password Solution

BACKGROUND

In 2012, the I.T. team of a U.S.-based manufacturing company realized that they needed to be proactive in their password management practices. The company, with 10,000 employees and an annual revenue over \$2 billion per year, focuses on sensitive industries, including nuclear, defense, aerospace and power generation. Specializing in mission-critical technologies, they know first hand that internal and external threats exist. For the protection of their company and their clients, they take a proactive approach to security.

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CHALLENGES

The I.T. infrastructure team led the initiative for a password management tool. The infrastructure team alone had hundreds of passwords for applications, portals and network equipment. They were using Excel spreadsheets to keep track of credentials, performing password changes manually, and knew that they were losing the password battle.

As a global organization, they needed a tool that could meet the needs of their enterprise: strong security and monitoring features, full auditing for compliance, and the ability to perform automatic password changes.

SOLUTION

“We arrived at the Microsoft TechEd conference ready to start looking for vendors. We contacted two vendors separately and said, ‘let’s do a bake off,’” said the leader of I.T. Infrastructure. When purchasing tools for internal use, he explained that the company tries to purchase ‘best in breed’ applications to ensure their internal practices have the best safeguards for their customers.

“ We’re well aware of the world out there, a world where you’re always going to get attacked and people are looking to get your information.

The team chose two solutions to compare: Thycotic’s Secret Server tool and a top competitor in the enterprise privileged password management space.

“[Thycotic’s competitor] came into the office first. And I’ll be honest, they were quite impressive. They came into the office and did the install. They were very hands-on and approachable, very convincing,” said the I.T. infrastructure leader. He explained that Thycotic’s hands-off approach was a little surprising at first, given that they were used to a heavier hands-on approach from enterprise software vendors.

But it was soon apparent to the entire team that Secret Server was by far easier to manage, get up and running and understand from an IT standpoint. “We also found the ease of use to be much better with Secret Server, in almost every category – the install, the upkeep, the upgrades, the interface itself, the way the tool works,” he explained, “Secret Server was an easier product for us to use [and] people just adapted to it much better.”

The manufacturing company also found several happy surprises with Secret Server, including the Remote Desktop Manager integration, which they cannot imagine living without.

In the end, product evaluation lasted less than three months. Installation for both products took the team about two days each, with the Secret Server installation being performed completely by their internal team.

Following install, Secret Server review/maintenance took the team about one hour each day over the course of a month. This was a hard time commitment to estimate, the I.T. Infrastructure lead explained, because Secret Server integrated into their general day-to-day work.

BUSINESS IMPACT

The I.T. Infrastructure lead raved, “When changing passwords manually, six people were each spending one hour a day for admin accounts, and the effort for system accounts is immeasurable.” Now, they have local admin accounts set up to change weekly, and sometimes even daily. At least half of the service accounts are also on automatic password changes.

Another impact of implementing Secret Server has also been more peace of mind. If there is ever a concern at the company, for example from the results of their SIEM tool, they have Secret Server automatically change all the passwords immediately, which is something they would have had to do manually in the past.

Today, Secret Server maintenance takes the team about one hour per month and they are working on a second installation for another team. For the second installation, they will have one person do the install and setup, which should take about three days. Then, they expect new users to spend one hour per day getting used to the software during the first few weeks. After a couple of weeks, they expect to enter a standard maintenance phase of one hour per month.

The I.T. Infrastructure lead confirmed that the project was a huge success, with fast adoption by staff and strong commendations from their auditor.

He explained that at first, using a new tool can feel like a burden because it’s something his team wasn’t used to, but “once they get used to [using Secret Server], most find that they like it better.”

Additionally, after the installation they discovered Secret Server’s integration with a Remote Desktop Manager, which has now become one of the team’s favorite features of Secret Server. “We would never use a password management tool [that didn’t integrate with our remote desktop manager] again.”

WRAP-UP

Secret Server is used by IT departments worldwide to secure privileged passwords and other sensitive data. Secret Server is the flagship product of **Thycotic Software**, a global provider of IT security solutions.

Organizations can strengthen their IT security, reduce FTE password management time and better meet password compliance requirements by easily deploying Secret Server. Secure access to admin and service accounts, improve productivity and reduce the potential for human error.

SECRET SERVER BUSINESS CASE

- ✓ Better usability which drives adoption.
- ✓ Low cost and time commitment to support.
- ✓ Easy deployment.
- ✓ IT Admin “peace of mind.”
- ✓ Automated password changing to save time.
- ✓ Flexible options for future growth.