

PCI Compliance Made Easy for Restaurants Accepting Credit Cards

One large Wendy's franchisee turned to BHI Advanced Internet to achieve PCI compliance and high standards of security without overwhelming the budget.

By Autumn Giusti
Contributing writer,
QSRweb.com

Sponsored by:



The players



WendCentral Corp., based in Cortland, N.Y., is the largest Wendy's franchise in the United States, with 337 restaurants in 21 states.

BHI Advanced Internet, based in Eden Prairie, Minn., specializes in providing secure, high-performance Internet and security services for clients across the United States. BHI's SecureConnect service provides retail business owners with PCI-compliance solutions to ensure companies are doing what is necessary to become PCI DSS compliant. SecureConnect's client emphasis is on fast casual and quick-service restaurants.

The problem

Many restaurant operators underestimate the high risk of credit card fraud and the consequences that follow. The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) is a set of comprehensive requirements meant to help organizations safeguard their businesses against these risks and protect the secure cardholder

data of their customers. The quick-service restaurant (QSR) industry is increasingly being targeted by criminals because of the high volume of credit card transactions at a given restaurant and the low level of security measures commonly in place. PCI compliance standards require businesses to implement security management, policies and procedures to mitigate risks.



As more restaurant operators turn to high-speed Internet to process transactions like credit card payments, they become more vulnerable to hackers.

As more merchants begin to update their services from dial-up to high-speed connections like DSL, cable and satellite, they open themselves up to a larger risk of exposure on the Internet. Without proper security measures, high-speed connections are open invitations for hackers to access POS systems and anything else connected to the network.

Wendy's franchisee WendCentral needed a security solution that would fully comply with PCI standards. The sheer logistics of securing networks for 337 locations across the country seemed daunting to Ed Perotte, field information systems manager.

"From my standpoint, I can't even begin to fathom what kind of staff I'd need to manage all the DSLs in 21 different states and all our different markets," Perotte said.

WendCentral determined that to perform security monitoring and handle network security in-house, it would need to add at least three more field information systems staffers.

"That would be a tremendous task on top of everything else we do," Perotte said.

The solution

WendCentral contacted BHI because of its comprehensive SecureConnect solution that bundles necessary security services together.

The core of the SecureConnect suite of services is the managed firewall, which is tailored to a multisite managed network environment, providing WendCentral with true segregation between public and private networks. The software offers

flexibility and includes a Virtual Private Network, Integrated Intrusion Detection and Intrusion Prevention Systems, giving additional layers of security.

As an approved scanning vendor, certified by the PCI Security Standards Council, BHI is able to perform required vulnerability scans for WendCentral's network.

WendCentral is now able to offer secure and PCI-compliant Wi-Fi at all of its locations, adding more value to the dining experience.

"As soon as we started down the whole road of PCI compliance, BHI was the clear winner in our minds," said Andy Brush, director of administrative services for WendCentral. "We knew trying to take something like that on would have been a pretty monumental task."

The SecureConnect package also includes Internet connectivity, anti-virus protection, Internet access restrictions, connection monitoring, Web filtering and content control. Implementing Web filtering and content control helps increase employee productivity and minimize the risk of exposure to dangerous viruses and inappropriate online content.

"Being able to bundle the services together became a good value," Brush said. As an added bonus, WendCentral is now able to offer secure and PCI-compliant Wi-Fi at all of its locations, adding more value to the dining experience.

Since BHI is highly focused on the QSR industry, the company is very familiar with customer needs, common payment environments and restaurant configurations. The Sales and Implementation teams work closely

with clients to make sure they have a full understanding of details that might affect network security.

Helping to minimize the expense to the client, BHI buys and maintains any hardware and software necessary for SecureConnect, and provides monitoring and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year long. With a focus on customer support, BHI's SecureConnect support team averages three outbound calls for every one inbound call in communicating with customers.

"We are incredibly proactive with our support, whereas a lot of others are reactive," said Kristyan Mjolsnes, director of marketing for BHI, adding that the company doesn't wait until something goes wrong. The BHI support team is actively monitoring the customer's systems and addressing issues before the operator is even aware there is a problem.

WendCentral has experienced BHI's streamlined support system first hand.

"The customer support team will proactively call and notify me that the system's gone down before the restaurant will tell me they're having an issue," Perrotte said. "With the addition of a back-up dial service, we are able to continue operating while BHI is fixing the problem. It's taken an incredible amount of work off my shoulders."

The results

After a year of using SecureConnect, the franchise group has not reported a single security breach.

"The goal was to have a cost-effective, PCI-compliant and secure network among our locations, and I feel we have achieved that," Brush said.

***About the sponsor:** BHI Advanced Internet, based in Eden Prairie, Minn., is a leading Managed Security Services Provider (MSSP), offering a wide range of Internet security, managed network and PCI compliance services to the multisite retail industry. Ranked the No. 18 MSSP worldwide by the magazine MSPmentor in 2009, the company has experienced double-digit revenue growth in each of the past five years. SecureConnect, BHI's innovative flagship product, provides reliable, secure and PCI-compliant networks at thousands of locations for leading retail brands across the United States and Canada.*