

One QSR Ensures PCI Compliance and Enhances Security

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Taco John's needed a PCI compliant security solution that wouldn't require managers to have technical expertise but would ensure credit and debit cards could continue to be processed, even when the Internet went down. BHI, provider of SecureConnect, was able to help.

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The players

Taco John's operates and franchises over 425 quick-service restaurants in 25 states. Independently owned and operated, the business opened its first restaurant in 1969. Taco John's prides itself on serving generous portions, menu items prepared fresh to order, high-quality ingredients, and special West-Mex recipes, seasonings and sauces. Through the end of 2008, Taco John's achieved 13 consecutive years of same-store sales increases.

BHI Advanced Internet Inc., 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 challenge

In need of a PCI-compliant security solution for its existing Internet connectivity, Taco John's sought a solution that would

perform in both the corporate-owned and franchise restaurants. Over a period of 18 months, Pete Kaufmann, IT Manager at Taco John's sorted through the service offerings of more than 200 vendors.

Many franchisees are overwhelmed by the thought of complying with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), under which merchants must meet guidelines to ensure security of cardholder data.

With this in mind, Kaufmann wanted a turnkey solution that would allow general managers to concentrate on the business of selling tacos.

"[Managers] told me, 'If I wanted to know how technology works, I'd be in the IT field,'" Kaufmann said. "They just want



Taco John's selected BHI SecureConnect to provide a PCI-compliant security solution that would allow general managers to concentrate on the business of selling tacos.

it to work and know who to call when it doesn't" he added.

In addition, Kaufmann was looking for a fully scalable solution that could be piloted in the corporate-owned stores. Franchise-owned stores could then adopt the solution at their discretion. The ability to administer through a VPN was necessary for those franchisees that own multiple stores.

"We didn't want a dead-end product," Kaufmann said.

Finally, Kaufmann wanted a system that had the capability for backup connectivity in case of a failure with the primary Internet connection. "About 30 to 40 percent of a store's business is credit and debit cards," Kaufmann said. "We have to make sure that's up and running at all times."

The Solution

Kaufmann selected BHI SecureConnect as its solution, which provides a turnkey approach through customizable easyPCI packages. Geared specifically toward the QSR and Fast Casual environments, SecureConnect meets both value and performance needs of restaurant operators.

"This is particularly important as it applies key areas of network security such as firewalls, network segmentation, and intrusion detection for our customers," said Joel Fusco, national account executive for BHI. "In addition, the SecureConnect solution completes the process of PCI compliance by providing validation tools such as quarterly vulnerability scanning and Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) assistance, meeting the requirements of the merchant's acquiring bank."



SecureConnect provides a fully featured firewall that protects and secures networks from the uncontrollable variables of the Internet.

Utilizing the pilot program, Kaufmann installed SecureConnect in nine corporate-owned stores to assess ease of installation and to test its effectiveness against a competitor that was integrated in three other stores located in the greater Cheyenne, Wyo., area. In order to evaluate the flexibility of the SecureConnect platform, one of the nine pilot locations integrated cellular backup connectivity.

The Result

Kaufmann's store managers appreciated the easy installation of the hardware firewalls. "The store managers took the firewall out of the box, plugged it in, went through a few simple steps and they were up and running," he said.

From the very beginning, BHI establishes a single point of contact for the stores. If a store experiences a problem with an Internet connection or other issue, BHI will solve it.

"Our general managers don't have to be on the phone for two hours trying to figure out what's going on," Kaufmann said.

During the initial test, all stores within the area lost wired connectivity and the ability

to process credit cards due to a problem with their Internet provider. The SecureConnect location with cellular backup automatically switched over to maintain seamless connectivity and continue accepting credit cards.

“The backup connectivity offered a full redundancy to store operations and credit card authorization. Network security was maintained without manual intervention,” said BHI’s Fusco.

Unfortunately this wasn’t the case for the other stores without the backup system. “They had to turn away customers using credit cards for the entire weekend until connectivity was restored,” Fusco said. It was an expensive weekend for those stores.

“If you add that up it’s a lot of money we were losing,” Kaufmann said.

The results caused Taco John’s to approve BHI SecureConnect as its vendor of choice.

Kaufmann appreciates BHI’s customer service as well. On the day the power went out, BHI contacted Kaufmann before he knew there was a problem. “That was appealing to me. Usually the first I hear about it is when the general manager calls and asks me what to do,” he said.



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Taco John’s franchisees are free to choose their own solution, but Kaufmann has thoroughly researched the marketplace and recommends the SecureConnect solution.

“We worked on it for quite a few months, and we’re not only getting a good deal but it’s everything we need to be compliant, and it’s fully scalable,” he 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 multi-site 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.*