



Connections & Compliance: Retailer Finds Perfect Fit

A case study in network security

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Bob Mayer, President, Essential Apparel



BACKGROUND

Famous-name brands, huge selection, responsive service, and great prices is the formula for success in the retail business, and Essential Apparel is applying it online in a big way. Their site at www.EssentialApparel.com is one of the top one-stop sites for clothing on the Internet, and their order processing and pick-pack-and-ship operation executes some of the fastest turnaround times in the industry. Founded more than 30 years ago as a brick-and-mortar store, the firm made the move to top Internet retailer with the help of eMazzanti Technologies. WatchGuard's Partner of the Year, eMazzanti Technologies, has a keen sense for applying technology to improve customers' businesses.

CHALLENGE

While the e-commerce servers and some back-office functions are in hosting centers, site updates and management runs out of EssentialApparel.com headquarters. Secure, reliable Internet connections are absolutely critical. "We're constantly adding and removing products, updating colors, uploading new images, and changing prices based on vendor promotions and what our competitors are doing," says Bob Mayer, company president. "It's an all-day job."

"If our Internet connection goes down, it's a problem. With our old firewall, from time to time, our Internet connection would go down. It was usually a several-hour disruption and we'd have 50 people in the building with nothing to do. Without an Internet connection, we really can't work."

WATCHGUARD® SOLUTION

Carl Mazzanti of eMazzanti Technologies recommended redundant Internet connections. “You can get large amounts of bandwidth for very little money from cable providers, FIOS, or some of the other vendors,” he explains, “but the service-level agreement isn’t high enough. With a WatchGuard appliance, we’re able to take multiple vendors that individually don’t have a high service-level agreement and manufacture a high SLA.”

A WatchGuard Firebox® X Core™ 750e protects the 100 desktop PCs and servers at Essential Apparel headquarters, connects to multiple ISPs and handles automatic failover for the connections. In addition, two retail locations are secured by Firebox X Edge 10e units that protect the registers, and send transaction data to headquarters via branch-office VPNs. Now says Mayer, “With our WatchGuard device, when the connection goes down — which inevitably happens — we don’t even know the difference. The Internet stays up, the box switches over to the other connection, and we stay in business. That’s priceless.”

BENEFITS

“Keeping that connection up on a day-to-day basis is how we run our business, improve our business, and keep people busy,” declares Mayer. But, beyond maintaining the connections, WatchGuard also plays a vital role in securing those connections, using them efficiently, and protecting what lies behind them.

Comprehensive, PCI-Compliant Protection

“We have a big mail-order business as well as our online business, and that means handling credit card and other sensitive information,” says Mayer. “The WatchGuard appliance protects all the data we keep in-house that’s necessary to complete the sale.” The device implements PCI-compliant protection and safeguards the order processing, fulfillment, and warehouse-management systems. For the desktops, the WatchGuard UTM Bundle guards against spyware infections, and also implements the WebBlocker service for protection against employees visiting malicious sites that could expose the PCs to security breaches.

Optimal Use of Every Connection: Small, Medium & Large

With the WatchGuard units in place, eMazzanti Technologies is not only able to configure failover via multiple ISP connections, but also to make efficient, simultaneous use of them. By writing inbound and outbound rules based on port numbers that direct each type of traffic to the appropriate interface, eMazzanti is able to distribute the load for optimum overall performance. FTP, Web, or SSL download traffic goes over low-cost asynchronous cable or DSL connections, while the upload traffic goes over synchronous fiber links. The interface also specifies the fail order, preserving the best possible performance if a link should fail.

Remote Access Made Simple & Secure

The SSL VPN capabilities of the WatchGuard devices have also been a boon, according to Mayer. “We have some people, including myself, who work remotely. No matter where we are, as long as we have our laptops, with the WatchGuard appliance we can VPN right in. It’s very easy for us all to connect securely and have access to the company. Plus, it’s more secure than using GoToMyPC. I’m comfortable with it because I can see who’s using it, allow some people, not allow others, and manage who has access to certain parts of the network.”

Partnering to Grow the Business

“Security is a big issue for us,” declares Mayer. “With eMazzanti Technologies and WatchGuard, I know it will be very hard for someone on the inside or the outside to get to our customers’ sensitive information. We run a complex operation, and they’ve helped us become more secure and more efficient.”

That is because, as Carl Mazzanti says, “We’ve applied WatchGuard technologies and what we know about Essential Apparel to not only secure their data, but improve productivity and keep their minds on their storefront so they can focus on what they do best.”

“Yes,” concludes Mayer. “Grow our business.”

[essentialapparel](http://essentialapparel.com) www.EssentialApparel.com

More than 30 years ago, Essential Apparel opened its retail store with one simple philosophy: To provide the highest quality service and apparel at exceptional values. That philosophy has never changed. The product selection has grown from fine hosiery and underwear to top quality outerwear and everything in-between – all from leading brands. EssentialApparel.com brings their core philosophy to the Internet with the same renowned service, delivered by knowledgeable employees who share their personal experience with the products and offer exceptional values.

 www.emazzanti.net 866.EMAZZANTI

eMazzanti Technologies provides computer network solutions for growing businesses, from initial setup to ongoing support and management. The firm's services include network design, security, disaster recovery, remote connectivity and beyond. In addition to network consulting services, eMazzanti offers a portfolio of managed services and an online store showcasing more than 500,000 hardware and software products from leading technology manufacturers. An innovative and comprehensive approach to network services has earned eMazzanti the trust of a rapidly growing client base and recognition by many of the industry's foremost publications.

ADDRESS:

505 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104

WEB:

www.watchguard.com

U.S. SALES:

1.800.734.9905

INTERNATIONAL SALES:

+1.206.613.0895

ABOUT WATCHGUARD

Since 1996 WatchGuard has been building award-winning unified threat management (UTM) security solutions that combine firewall, VPN and security services to protect networks and the businesses they power. We recently launched the next generation: extensible threat management (XTM) solutions featuring reliable, all-in-one security, scaled and priced to meet the unique security needs of every enterprise. Our products are backed by 15000 partners representing WatchGuard in 120 countries. More than a half million signature red WatchGuard security appliances have already been deployed worldwide in industries including retail, education, and healthcare. WatchGuard is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, with offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, and Latin America.

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