

ACCO Brands Makes Email Security a Strategic Priority With Proofpoint Technology and Training



The Challenge

- Protect users against phishing and business email threats
- Safeguard company reputation among partners and suppliers
- Strengthen cybersecurity as a strategic priority

The Solution

- Proofpoint Closed-Loop Email Analysis and Response
- Proofpoint Email Protection
- Proofpoint Targeted Attack Protection
- Proofpoint Threat Response Auto-Pull
- Proofpoint Security Awareness

The Results

- More than 20 million email threats blocked prior to delivery in one quarter
- Fast, effective technical support accelerates issue resolution
- Regular training encourages security best practices

The Organization

ACCO Brands is a global company that designs, manufactures and markets consumer and end-user products that help people learn, work and play. The organization receives more than 120 million emails each year—and not all of them are harmless. To safeguard its 6,000 users and business processes against email threats, the ACCO Brands IT team is building a more secure company culture, and Proofpoint solutions are a key part of its plan.

The Challenge

Making cybersecurity a strategic foundation

ACCO Brands is home to some of the world's most iconic consumer products and brands. With operations extending across more than a dozen countries, the organization looks to its IT team to keep its most important communications and business processes running smoothly and securely.

"It's my job to execute on the strategic roadmap that we created about four years ago," said Sam Monasteri, vice president, global cybersecurity at ACCO Brands. "Cybersecurity is a key aspect of the roadmap. We perform a maturity assessment every 18 months, and a risk assessment every 12 months."

In a dynamic threat landscape, cybersecurity challenges are evolving every day. Shortly after Monasteri joined the organization, he realized that the company's email communications were especially vulnerable to emerging attacks.

"Just a few weeks after I started working here, we had a major phishing attack," said Monasteri. "Only one or two of our users fell for the attack, but that's all it takes. The adversary then used one of those accounts to access additional contacts and send it out to more users. Eventually, that phishing email went out to about 3,000 recipients inside and outside our organization. We knew we needed a more effective solution."

Monasteri started looking for stronger email attack protection technology. He also wanted a holistic solution that would help him and his team foster a stronger culture of cybersecurity throughout the company.

The Solution

Deploying comprehensive email protection

The ACCO Brands IT team was familiar with Proofpoint and its strong reputation, and quickly found that it offered superior email protection in real-world environments.

“I had experience working with Proofpoint in my prior position, and I knew it was a good product,” said Monasteri. “During the time we conducted a proof of concept, we encountered multiple phishing attacks and other compromises. We saw that Proofpoint was able to block threats more effectively than our existing solution alone.”

“Our culture has come a long way when it comes to being risk-aware, vigilant, and identifying and communicating when users think something is suspicious. Proofpoint solutions and training have helped us build a more secure-thinking organization.”

Sam Monasteri, vice president, global cybersecurity, ACCO Brands

Monasteri deployed a comprehensive email security solution based on Proofpoint Targeted Attack Protection (TAP). This solution detects, analyzes and blocks threats before they can reach the mailboxes of more than 6,000 ACCO Brands users. It provides the company with protection against URL-based email threats, including malware and credential phishing. And it continually adapts to detect new cyber-attack patterns and help the company stay ahead of a fast-evolving threat landscape.

As a second layer of protection, ACCO Brands also deployed Proofpoint Threat Response Auto-Pull (TRAP). This solution lets the team analyze emails and move malicious or unwanted emails to quarantine after delivery. It also includes Closed-Loop Email Analysis and Response (CLEAR), which lets users report phishing emails with one click.

“I like having an ecosystem where I can diversify a lot of my different products from a security standpoint,” said Monasteri. “Proofpoint TAP and TRAP work well together, along with CLEAR.”

Monasteri found the Proofpoint solution easy to manage and use, which is important given his limited time and staff.

“The Proofpoint solution works well and is easy to access,” he said. “I don’t go in often, but when I do, I don’t need to give myself a full tutorial again to figure out what I need to do.”

In keeping with his strategic approach to cybersecurity, Monasteri added Proofpoint Security Awareness into the mix. This solution keeps users informed about the latest threats and helps them adjust their behavior to minimize risk.

The Results

Enhancing email practices and hygiene

The investment in Proofpoint solutions has quickly paid off for ACCO Brands. In the first quarter of 2023, the solution screened 28 million inbound emails, more than half of which were identified as known threats. Approximately 19 million were blocked based on reputation, and 1.4 million were blocked based on content.

The solution also detonated thousands of targeted threats in its sandbox prior to delivery. This includes more than 4,100 threats with suspicious attachments and more than 12,000 threats with suspicious links.

“We get nearly 30 million emails a quarter, and after all the blocking, quarantining, and cleaning up, only about seven million valid emails get to everybody’s inbox,” said Monasteri. “It’s important to note that we have updated our processes as well. We see business email compromise attacks, and the Proofpoint TAP solution has really cut those down. But we have also updated our policies around requests to change the banking information—and we train around that policy.”

ACCO Brands has seen great results since it was deployed. And if an issue arises, Proofpoint representatives and technical support have demonstrated their responsiveness.

“Proofpoint delivers excellent customer service, which is key for me,” said Monasteri. “You can have a great tool, but you will always need to have assistance from support or help from your account representative or sales engineer. The response time from our account representatives has been great, and they always give us a good answer.”

With its extensive solution in place, ACCO Brands is confident that Proofpoint will continue to provide lasting protection as the business continues to grow.

“We want our solutions to grow as we grow and want our partner to support us, and we’re confident that Proofpoint is a strong partner of ACCO Brands,” said Monasteri.

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ABOUT PROOFPOINT

Proofpoint, Inc. is a leading cybersecurity company that protects organizations’ greatest assets and biggest risks: their people. With an integrated suite of cloud-based solutions, Proofpoint helps companies around the world stop targeted threats, safeguard their data, and make their users more resilient against cyber attacks. Leading organizations of all sizes, including more than half of the Fortune 1000, rely on Proofpoint for people-centric security and compliance solutions that mitigate their most critical risks across email, the cloud, social media, and the web. More information is available at www.proofpoint.com.

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