



Barracuda Networks Facilitates Business Growth at Compass Communications

Leading Telecommunications Services Provider in New Zealand Expands Managed Services Business

About Compass Communications

Since its establishment in 1995, Compass Communications Ltd., has evolved from a provider of fax broadcast and toll bypass services, to become one of New Zealand's leading independent providers of complete calling and communications solutions. Now with an annual revenue in excess of \$150 million and over 180 employees nationwide, the company provides high-quality solutions across a large national network to businesses and consumers all over the country and in Australia.

In 2006, Compass Communications acquired iVASP, an Application Service Provider (ASP) business, from GDC Communications. This strategic move allowed Compass to offer a complete range of managed and hosted services and applications accessed via its national data network. From off-the-shelf accounting applications to business critical proprietary software, Compass Managed Services takes pride in offering a high quality, high-end service to New Zealand's largest and smallest businesses.

Trusted history with Barracuda Networks

Given the unrelenting rise of spam attacks, the effective management of customer mailboxes has been a core component of the Compass' service offering. For this reason, in 2005 the company installed the Barracuda Spam Firewall across its core business.

"We have tens of thousands of active mailboxes, and if left unchecked, unmanaged spam had the potential to overload our mail server, which would have severely affected both processing times and efficiency," said Mike Lancaster, general manager networks at Compass.

Compass is committed to, and its business depends on, providing reliable email service for its customers. The company looked at several commercial spam solutions that could support tens of thousands of active email users and among them was the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600. The Barracuda Spam Firewall can be installed in front of the email server in typically less than five minutes and has a simple appliance-based pricing model rather than a user-based licensing model. This made the Barracuda Spam Firewall an easy purchasing decision for Compass.

"Critically, we were looking for something that really would reduce spam volumes and provide a level of control for customers," said Lancaster. "Other important considerations were value for money, simple and cost-effective licensing structure and a solution that was easy to administer."

Spam management critical to managed services business success

The Barracuda Spam Firewall was such a success for Compass, that in the latter part of 2006 the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600 was installed across the newly acquired Managed Services environment. Up until this point the ASP had relied on the collaboration of a popular software-based virus solution, and a well known open source spam solution to protect its mail server from the harmful effects of incoming spam.

"Spam management is a moving target and we need to be nimble and diligent to keep staying one step ahead of the spammers – Barracuda Networks helps us do this"

-Mike Lancaster
General Manager Networks
Compass Communications



Barracuda Spam Firewall 600 Fast Facts:

- Services up to 10,000 active email users
- Compatible with all email servers
- Features MS Exchange/ LDAP Accelerator
- Per user settings and quarantine
- Clustering for redundancy and added capacity
- Customisable branding
- Ideal solution for ISPs and large enterprises

"Since the acquisition of the Managed Services business, Compass had been seeking to consolidate its spam management solution across our core network and managed services environments," said Lancaster. "The overall increase in spam stimulated us to act."

Leading up to the decision to consolidate, the rise in spam had placed an increasing strain on the company's available server processing capacity and storage. The ill effects of this were felt by Compass' customers, whose inboxes were rife with spam.

"We started to receive comments from some customers noticing the increased volumes of spam in their mailboxes and a few of our competitors were getting hit hard by spam attacks," said Lancaster. "If left unchecked the company would need to have considered the expensive option of installing extra servers to cope with the rise in spam."

Eradicated spam leads to increased customer satisfaction

Replacing the Managed Services' previous spam solution with the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600 resulted in a dramatic reduction in spam. The Barracuda Spam Firewall's layered approach is central to its effectiveness and accuracy for spam and virus filtering.

"Once the Barracuda Spam Firewall was installed, there was a 50 percent drop in spam within the first hour," said Lancaster, adding that unsolicited positive feedback from Compass' customers has been a nice surprise.

"Customers actually phoned up to thank us," added Lancaster.

The drop in spam has led to a significant reduction in the time spent dealing with customer support calls and network issues related to spam attacks. IT support staff are now able to devote this time to other strategic projects.

Reduced licensing costs and increased scalability

In addition to its proven performance, what appealed most to Compass about the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600 was its affordable price and the absence of per user fees. The total cost of ownership is considerably less than many competing solutions and is considerably more cost effective than scaling mail servers to constantly meet the demands of rising amounts of illegitimate email.

Prior to installing the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600, Compass used a combination of solutions to manage spam and to protect the network.

"We were unhappy as the licensing and administration capabilities of these platforms were not scalable," said Lancaster. "Given we're a growing business, the scalability and the absence of escalating licensing fees was a major deciding factor, which we couldn't overlook."

Flexible user controls with minimal administrative needs

Also beneficial to Lancaster and his team was the ease of set up with the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600. The appliance has a very intuitive user interface for maintenance and monitoring, providing administrative capabilities that were not previously possible.

"The API interface is useful as it allows us to import user information captured in our own CRM systems into the Barracuda Spam Firewall and avoid double-handling provisioning requests," said Lancaster.

In addition to its ease of use and deployment, the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600 offers a full set of features that allow IT administrators to determine how stringently email will be blocked.

"The previous solution could not be tweaked to the extent we needed, nor did we have very much in-house knowledge about the (spam solution) we inherited when we purchased the Managed Services business," said Lancaster.



About the Barracuda Spam Firewall

The Barracuda Spam Firewall is available in seven models and supports from 50 to 30,000 active users with no per user licensing fees.

Its architecture leverages 12 defence layers: denial of service and security protection, rate control, IP analysis, sender authentication, recipient verification, virus protection, policy (user-specified rules), Fingerprint Analysis, Intent Analysis, Image Analysis, Bayesian Analysis, and a Spam Rules Scoring engine.

In addition, the entire Barracuda Spam Firewall line features simultaneous inbound and outbound email filtering with the inclusion of sophisticated outbound email filtering techniques, such as rate controls, domain restrictions, user authentication (SASL), keyword and attachment blocking, dual layer virus blocking, and remote user support for outbound email filtering.

The Barracuda Spam Firewall's layered approach minimises the processing of each email, which yields the performance required to process millions of messages per day.

Compass continues to pre-process inbound email via their open source email gateway, allowing them to shape traffic and avoid bottlenecks, which can result in an individual mailbox or group of mailboxes being inundated with high volumes of spam.

“(The Barracuda Spam Firewall 600) has worked well as a network solution, and has been easily integrated with our approach of using our Linux boxes to pre-process inbound emails,” said Lancaster. “Spam management is a moving target and we need to be nimble and diligent to keep staying one step ahead of the spammers – Barracuda Networks helps us do this.”

Less spam brings unexpected benefits

With the Barracuda Spam Firewall 600, Compass achieved their ultimate goal of reducing spam and enhancing email protection, which also lead to a few unexpected benefits.

Firstly the large drop in spam reduced the strain on the company’s mail servers, in turn reducing Compass’ storage and processing overhead.

“The consolidation effectively freed up two servers, which we were able to redeploy elsewhere in the business,” said Lancaster adding that this resulted in a considerable cost saving, and was an option that was never available to Compass before.

Secondly, by having one platform deployed across the business, the project had the additional benefit of reducing the overhead for support, and mitigated some of the risk around the loss of human capital as the engineering resources across the Networks and Managed Services teams are now familiar with the same product and can share their knowledge.

Conclusion

The project comprised of two key actions: implementing an improved level of email management, and consolidating two disparate environments across the business. Compass succeeded in reducing spam as well as time and support spent reacting to it. This has had a dramatic effect on business, and the installation brought about several unexpected business benefits, including the reduction of support costs. The overall affect has been an increase in customer satisfaction.

“Our decision to go with the Barracuda Spam Firewall as a pan-Compass spam management solution has been well received by our customers, evidenced by a number of unsolicited compliments we have received via our helpdesk,” said Lancaster adding that with its powerful technology, ease of use, and affordable price, implementing the Barracuda Spam Firewall has been one of the best decisions the company has made.



Barracuda Networks, Inc.

www.barracuda.com

info@barracuda.com