Sophos Managed Detection and Response drives cybersecurity performance for **Harwoods Group**

Harwoods is a leading automotive retailer group with dealerships located in the south-east of England, as well as an international digital presence, representing a wide range of premium manufacturers including Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, Jaguar Land Rover, McLaren and Volvo. Family-owned for over 90 years, the expanding group currently operates over 25 sites, with dealerships alongside accident repair centres and service centres also providing authorised manufacturer servicing for BMW, MINI and MAN Truck commercial vehicles. The group has invested significantly in digitally expanding its renowned customer service: a core group value to be protected.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE

HARWOODS group

Harwoods Group

Industry
Automotive Retail

Number of Users
800 endpoints
1,060 employees

Sophos Solutions
Managed Services- Sophos Managed Detection and Response
Network Product- Sophos Firewall

Sophos Customer
Since 2010

"Sophos have more than proved their worth over the years. Faced with the constant threat of cyber-attack, turning to them to provide 24/7/365 proactive monitoring, detection and resolution was a no-brainer."

Paul Smith, Business Support Director, Harwoods Group

Harwoods Group has recently embarked on a digital transformation project, with Paul Smith, Harwoods Business Support Director, playing a key role.

The two main components have been the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system across all sites, delivered in tandem with a bespoke eCommerce website providing a leading online customer experience.

This investment meant it has been critical for Harwoods to secure its expanding IT infrastructure effectively. As part of the digital transformation project, two years ago Harwoods insourced its IT support function, which included taking responsibility for their own cybersecurity.

Business challenges

It soon became clear that the way Harwoods managed its IT security needed to change. The in-house IT support function, in conjunction with its IT security partner, was only able to provide vulnerability assessments and monitoring during business hours. This created clear vulnerabilities for the group, as cyberthreats are a 24/7/365 concern.

Harwoods first started using Sophos products around 10 years ago to provide antivirus protection for its endpoint estate. Having briefly worked with another provider during this period, they soon returned to Sophos for, according to Paul: "their best-of-breed product, ease of use and excellent customer service."

The endpoint protection from Sophos was then bolstered with firewall protection, firstly with Sophos SG firewalls, and then recently upgraded to Sophos XG firewalls. Subsequently, buying into the Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service from Sophos had clear IT security advantages, from a vendor the company already knew and trusted.

The solution

By investing in Sophos MDR, Harwoods Group has been able to secure its networks almost overnight. Paul was impressed from the get-go, saying: "I was amazed at how simple the Sophos MDR implementation process was. Everything worked right out of the box as such, and within 24 hours the team were already working on the first identified threat. We had expected to customise the solution, but in

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Paul Smith, Business Support Director, Harwoods Group

the end this wasn't necessary. The entire process and immediate impact reassured us that we had chosen the right solution for our dynamic business."

Sophos MDR services combine machine learning technology and expert analysis for improved threat hunting and detection, deeper investigation of alerts, and targeted actions to eliminate sophisticated and complex threats. The service provides incredibly fast assistance, identifying and neutralising active threats against an organisation, delivered by an expert team of incident responders.

Business benefits

Harwoods is confident in its decision to implement the Sophos MDR service, listing the benefits as being:

Peace of mind
One of the crucial benefits of Sophos MDR is total peace of mind. According to Paul: "As soon as Sophos started managing our IT security, I started sleeping much better. I know that we are protected by the best in the industry."

Minimising vulnerabilities
One of the biggest limitations from Harwoods' existing security provision was 24/7/365 cybersecurity coverage. Security monitoring restricted to business hours left the entire group vulnerable to attack outside of these times. Sophos MDR has eradicated this weakness with continual monitoring, night and day, all year round. Additionally, the proactive nature of Sophos MDR means that it finds a swift resolution to any vulnerabilities.

Preserving customer care excellence
Harwoods' renowned reputation for excellent customer service has driven brand loyalty and business success for over 90 years. Therefore, a significant concern and business focus is to ensure the protection of customer data, as any breach would negatively impact the brand. With Sophos MDR, the Group is secure in the knowledge that it is doing everything it can to protect customer information.

Threat visibility
Another crucial benefit for Harwoods is the visibility it now has over network security. Regular Sophos MDR reporting delivers immediate clarity for the Board by illustrating activity that provides

assurance that they are taking their responsibilities to IT security seriously; doing everything they can to protect the business and its customers. Sophos MDR also provides stakeholders with information to support any cybersecurity decisions they need to make. Data breeds confidence, and Sophos MDR is invaluable for delivering data and security insights from a trusted team of experts.

Protecting digital investment

With so much time, money and effort spent on the digital transformation project, it was important that this investment was not undermined by low-level IT security. Sophos MDR is a key component in the success of Harwoods' digital transformation project and protection of business ROI.

Cost savings

Paul initially explored how the Group could manage its own 24/7/365 IT security. He believed it would have entailed recruiting at least two highly specialised cybersecurity experts, who would be difficult to find and expensive to take on. In fact, the Sophos estimations to manage your own IT security in a similar way to MDR are an investment of circa £1.4 million.

Paul 100% believes Harwoods made the right decision selecting Sophos MDR as the chosen cybersecurity solution. He concludes: "Working with Sophos hasn't just met my expectations; it has exceeded them. I would have no hesitation in recommending them to others."

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Learn More about Sophos Managed Detection and Response today.
www.sophos.com/mdr

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