Case study

Level up your cybersecurity portfolio

Read how Avantage upgraded their cybersecurity offering to meet customer needs and how WithSecure[™] supported this evolution.

Company Avantage

Country Netherlands **Industry** IT managed services Solutions





Avantage is a full-service IT service provider headquartered in Rotterdam. It was founded in 1990 and has been providing Dutch mid-market companies with a range of IT services over the years, from out of the box collaboration software packages to bespoke project-based solutions. The company now employs around 200 people and serves more than 800 customers in a range of industry sectors. It is a long-standing partner of WithSecure[™] and has been using WithSecure[™] technology to power the standard Endpoint Protection solution that it offers to its clients for more than a decade. Read about how they responded to client demand for a more comprehensive cyber security solution and upgraded their offering.

Scoping the market

Martijn Scheffel has worked at Avantage for over 10 years, starting out as a senior network engineer and now heading up the Security Advisor Center. He explains that the impetus for stepping up their cyber security game came from what they were seeing in their daily work. "We changed the company to focus more on cybersecurity because quite simply we were seeing more and more cases where traditional antivirus software was just not sufficient," says Scheffel.

Around 18 months ago they decided to take action and set up the Security Advisor Center, a new department focusing solely on cyber security and cyber risk. "We started to educate ourselves and learn more about the products and started looking into broad context detection," Scheffel explains, "We used to sell WithSecure™ Elements Endpoint Detection and Response as an optional extra to our customers but it's not the way to go anymore, Endpoint Detection and Response is a necessity now." Avantage believes in the approach of building different layers into their offering, and not just selling the product but the whole solution around it. This philosophy matched well with WithSecure™'s and given the already established relationship between the two companies the decision was taken to embark on this journey together.

Building the offering

In the cases Avantage had been investigating, they noticed that a lot of the actions performed by threat actors take advantage of the built-in features of Microsoft Windows, so they needed something that looks at holistic behavioral analysis and threat modelling. Level up your cybersecurity portfolio

We changed the company to focus more on cybersecurity because quite simply we were seeing more and more cases where traditional antivirus software was just not sufficient"

Martijn Scheffel, Head of Security Advisor Center

"Endpoint Protection is like the burglar alarm and Endpoint Detection and Response is like the security camera that gives you the footage of what's happened."

Martijn Scheffel, Head of Security Advisor Center



\mathcal{N}

These requirements necessitated building WithSecure™ Elements Endpoint Detection and Response into the offering, but they also needed to find a way of explaining this to customers. "Quite often we use the analogy of a house being burgled, where Endpoint Protection is like the burglar alarm and Endpoint Detection and Response is like the security camera that gives you the footage of what's happened," Scheffel says.

Avantage protects around 50,000 endpoints with WithSecure[™] Elements Endpoint Protection solution, and they are still in the process of upgrading these customers to add WithSecure[™] Elements Endpoint Detection and Response. "If they are hit, that's unfortunately sometimes the first time they see the value," says Scheffel, "Because in the heat of the moment this tool gives you the additional insight that you need."

Taking advantage of Elevate

Recently Avantage had a case where a customer was hit by a well-known ransomware group (the Conti group). It was a really serious incident because essentially the entire company was locked, and it's a large international business that had to almost entirely cease operations. "It was a really harsh incident and a big learning for us," says Scheffel.

The first thing they did was install WithSecure[™] Elements Endpoint Detection and Response to benefit from the additional visibility and insight, and in this particular case, due to the complexity and urgency, the decision was taken to use the Elevate to WithSecure[™] service. Elevate is a service where the most difficult cases can be escalated directly to leading threat hunters within WithSecure[™], who take over the response to ensure the threat is neutralized as quickly as possible.

In addition to this, the WithSecure[™] analyst will help to educate the in-house security teams about the actions they are taking to improve their partner's capabilities in future. "It was the first time we pushed the button but we were really impressed. We got an analyst on the phone straight away and they talked us through it and spent time thoroughly addressing every aspect of the response," says Scheffel.

Commercial synergy

It gives Avantage comfort to know WithSecure[™] is there to support them in the most serious cases. However, the day-today collaboration is less intense, if equally important. A big part of building the service initially is estimating the resources needed. "Initially we didn't really know how many alerts to expect so we build our service around the estimates provided by WithSecure[™]. This made it very easy to calculate and make the solution more suitable for the market," Scheffel explains.

As well as this technical support, the Avantage team works together with WithSecure[™] to ensure the marketing approach is aligned and effective. WithSecure™'s Partner Development Manager in the Netherlands has been working closely with Avantage to ensure they have the tools they need to market and sell the solutions. "Our Partner Development Manager helps us to keep our customers informed, and topics like ransomware are really important for them," says Scheffel.

> "We got an analyst on the phone straight away and they talked us through it and spent time thoroughly addressing every aspect of the response." "

Martijn Scheffel, Head of Security Advisor Center

"Our Partner Development Manager helps us to keep our customers informed,"

Martijn Scheffel, Head of Security Advisor Center





Future developments

Avantage always aims to keep an open dialogue with its customers and continues to talk to them about cyber security as it lays out its development roadmap. "We want to keep them at the table and improve their awareness around certain issues to keep the communication flowing," says Scheffel.

These discussions have generated ideas around developing solutions to problems that many of their customers face, such as justifying hiring a full-time CISO. "We are looking at ways to provide CISOs to our customers on a time-share basis," says Scheffel. Additionally, they want to provide more resources like ransomware playbooks to ensure their customers are prepared when they get breached.

Scheffel also predicts that demand for mobile device protection will continue to increase. "I think a lot of people will start to work more in a hybrid way, because it's not expected that people return to office 40 hours a week. Therefore, having more solutions around mobile device management, and more protection for smartphones will be a focus for this year," he says. "Having more solutions around mobile device management, and more protection for smartphones will be a focus for this year."

Martijn Scheffel, Head of Security Advisor Center

Grow your business with cyber security services.

Learn more



Who We Are

WithSecure[™] is cyber security's reliable partner. IT service providers, MSSPs and businesses along with the largest financial institutions, manufacturers, and thousands of the world's most advanced communications and technology providers trust us for outcome-based cyber security that protects and enables their operations. Our Aldriven protection secures endpoints and cloud collaboration, and our intelligent detection & response is powered by experts who identify business risks by proactively hunting for threats and confronting live attacks. Our consultants partner with enterprises and tech challengers to build resilience through evidence-based security advice. With more than 30 years of experience in building technology that meets business objectives, we've built our portfolio to grow with our partners through flexible commercial models.

WithSecure[™] is part of F-Secure Corporation, founded in 1988, and listed on the NASDAQ OMX Helsinki Ltd.

