



Law Firm Turns to ‘Threat Response’ to Protect Clients

Counseling—and Protecting—Financial Services Firms

STROOCK

The Challenge

- Protect bank paper—not just dollar bills, but legal documents such as contracts, affidavits and regulatory filings
- Protect documents as they come through as email attachments
- Screen attachments and links to make sure they are not malicious

The Solution

- Proofpoint Targeted Attack Protection
- Proofpoint Threat Response
- Proofpoint Security Awareness Training

The Results

- Protected 40 million Stroock documents
- Gained visibility and transparency to threats facing the firm
- Educated and empowered employees to better protect themselves

The Company

Banks have long kept security top of mind, using safes with elaborate locks, bars on windows, security guards and surveillance cameras. But today, banks—and the law firms that represent them—need to protect something more important than dollar bills.

“In our case, it’s documents,” says Director of Information Security at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, LLP, Gil Danieli. This 140-year-old New York City represents financial services and investment firm clients. “By all means, that is the treasure.”

The Challenge

Stroock is tasked with protecting roughly 40 million documents for its many financial and investment services clients. These include financial statements, contracts, affidavits and regulatory filings. Most of those files are sent back and forth as email attachments, making email systems a top security priority too.

“They’re negotiating incredibly sensitive matters and, in some cases, market-moving matters,” says Danieli of Stroock’s lawyers. “The crown jewels for any law firm are its documents.”

Financial and investment firms have to follow regulations specific to their industry and, by extension, their law firms must also follow them in their own practice, he says.

But even within law firms, IT security practices are tightening. It used to be that any lawyer within a firm had access to all sorts of docs, but now only lawyers and other associates assigned to one particular client can see that client’s files.

Stroock has to adapt to another fundamental shift. While security companies like Proofpoint have long worked to protect their clients, they must also train individual employees to be security aware.

“Today it’s much easier to just steal somebody’s credentials,” says Danieli. “People are people and they’re always going to be that last weak link in the chain.”

The Solution

Threat response

The situation at Stroock called for Proofpoint Threat Response for managing and securing the flow of information. Threat Response receives security alerts from multiple security tools, automates responses and measures the effectiveness. And it generates reports detailing key performance indicators at every stage.

Critical end user training

Also important is working to reduce operator error through security training. When Danieli joined Stroock nearly three years ago, he could see that the firm had a lot of great tools in place to protect the perimeter of the network. But he also wanted to make sure that end users learned what they’re supposed to be doing to protect themselves.

“Stroock wants to be on the cover of the Wall Street Journal,
but not because we had a breach.”

Gil Danieli, director of information security, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP

Stroock has rolled out security training on Danieli’s watch and he appreciates the positive feedback he gets from employees: “That training was great. That really taught me something,” several of them told him.

Protect the most attacked people

One more thing Stroock learned from Proofpoint was which people within the firm were identified as VAPs or Very Attacked People. Often, cyber attackers target people who by their title or other indicators may have access to money, intellectual property or other vital company information. Danieli understands that if those are the people who are being most attacked, then Stroock should be focusing on better protecting those people.

“And I love the fact that it’s very attacked people, not successfully attacked people,” he says.

The Results

Streamlined communication is critical for the success of Stroock. “If there’s a deal going on, we have to ensure immediate correspondence with our clients,” says Danieli. This is where Threat Response helps with the process. If an email is delivered with an attachment that is later determined to be malicious by Targeted Attack Protection, Threat Response receives an alert from TAP and in turn removes that email containing the malicious file from the inbox and any other inbox that received the email.

Danieli sees Threat Response as critical for Stroock now and in the future. Especially with transitions to cloud-delivered platforms such as Microsoft 365 and via mobile devices.

“It’s really a question of ensuring that we have the same types of controls available in our cloud environment that we have on-prem,” he says.

As organizations move further to the cloud, security best practices will increasingly fall on individuals as to which wireless network they can trust, what links or attachments they can click on and even such simple reminders as “don’t leave your laptop in the cab,” Danieli says.

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