

GCI Stays Ahead of the Compliance Curve with PowerBroker Identity Services

BEYONDTRUST CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Challenge: Monitor User Access to Comply with SOX and Keep Pace with Growth

THE COMPANY

General Communications, Inc. (GCI) has a long-standing reputation of being a pioneer in technology, providing voice, video and data communication services to residential, commercial and government customers. Founded in 1979, GCI introduced long-distance competition to Alaska and has since grown to be one of the nation's premier integrated telecommunication providers.

GCI's services are connected through company-owned fiber optic, satellite and metropolitan area network facilities to the Lower 48 states. This broadband platform is the only one of its kind in Alaska and allows the company to provide customized services to the Alaska market.

THE CHALLENGE

Like many enterprises, GCI had large teams of administrators with generic user accounts, which prevented IT management from tying a specific change to an individual user. As the number of users grew from less than 500 to over 2,600, compliance and monitoring user access became a priority.

Motivated by Sarbanes-Oxley, GCI's IT team set out to improve their security posture through management of users, privileges and access to servers, applications and data. New requirements, specifically the SOX Section 404's Internal Controls Report, came with threats of \$1 million dollar fines if companies were found non-compliant.

"Controlling root access goes back to the auditability of everything. You can control your end users, but if you don't control your admins, security means nothing. You can't walk into an audit and say 'I trust my admins' — you have to demonstrate that you can also verify and control them."

— CISSP, Chief Technology Officer, GCI

Their IT Security Management team took control of root admins and established preemptive guidelines for what junior and senior admins could access. They quickly realized they needed a solution that could deliver a scalable method for managing user access while offering traceability and verification at a granular level.

Solution Summary

CUSTOMER TYPE

Telecommunications services for businesses and residences of Alaska.

CHALLENGE

Ensure compliance to SOX by monitoring access for 2,600 users.

SOLUTION

PowerBroker Identity Services allows IT to manage all users from Active Directory which significantly improves productivity and easily proves compliance to auditors.

"BeyondTrust's products helped us to prove compliance — first for SOX, but later also for PCI-DSS. When we go through audits, we don't worry about questions from the auditor — it's all there."

— CISSP, CTO, GCI

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THE SOLUTION

The top two items on GCI's requirements list were centralization of user access control and audit capabilities. Initially, they considered developing custom scripts in-house. However, the team realized that using custom scripts would be very difficult to maintain and much harder to prove to an auditor, compared to an enterprise-grade commercial product. They evaluated and chose PowerBroker for its scalability, logging, audit and policy enforcement capabilities.

"It was important that whatever product we chose could produce reports that were so detailed and complete that an auditor would accept them without question. First for SOX, but later also for PCI-DSS, BeyondTrust's products did that for us. When we go through audits, we don't worry about questions from the auditor — it's all there."

— CISSP, Chief Technology Officer, GCI

Once PowerBroker was in place, the IT team wanted to establish native Windows authentication using PowerBroker and Microsoft Active Directory (AD). By using group policy objects, GCI could easily add Linux servers to the hierarchy, maintain consistent levels of security, leverage flexible sudo policies, and centralize Linux policy enforcement through AD. With PowerBroker, IT can now easily manage user creation, deletion and temporary access from one location, Active Directory, which has significantly improved their productivity and consistency.

Additionally, GCI saw an immediate improvement in system build times. Before implementing PowerBroker, the admin team spent several hours, sometimes days, setting up servers manually to ensure the access and security rights fit the enterprise hierarchy. When a new DevOps initiative came along, targeting build requests levels of 10+ new servers a day, automation and the use of PowerBroker allowed the IT team to configure servers as needed. With the new process, the IT team can install PowerBroker Identity Services on the server, leverage Bootstrap to register the server, and use AD to grant users access and map the correct privileges based on policies.

THE BEYONDTRUST DIFFERENCE

- **Extend Active Directory:** PowerBroker Identity Services is the only solution that does not have to modify your Active Directory schema to add Linux, Unix and Mac OS X systems to your network.
- **Granular Reporting:** Effortlessly manage and view access privileges for users and groups through customizable reports. Provide audit details to audit and compliance teams via enterprise-spanning access and authorization reports.
- **Single Sign-On:** Get single sign-on for any enterprise application that supports Kerberos or LDAP, including Samba, Apache, SSH, Websphere, JBoss, Tomcat, Oracle, MySQL.
- **Empower Administrators:** Provide a single familiar tool set to manage both Windows and Unix systems. Perform account maintenance and password updates through a single directory administration tool (Active Directory Users and Computers).
- **Access Control:** Centrally control access to non-Windows systems by defining which users are permitted to log onto which systems via Active Directory.

About BeyondTrust

BeyondTrust is a global security company that believes preventing data breaches requires the right visibility to enable control over internal and external risks.

We give you the visibility to confidently reduce risks and the control to take proactive, informed action against data breach threats. And because threats can come from anywhere, we built a platform that unifies the most effective technologies for addressing both internal and external risk: Privileged Account Management and Vulnerability Management. Our solutions grow with your needs, making sure you maintain control no matter where your organization goes.

BeyondTrust's security solutions are trusted by over 4,000 customers worldwide, including half of the Fortune 100.

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