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Prairie Flower Casino enhances vendor management

See how SecureLink Enterprise Access improved efficiency, security, and compliance with secure remote access

CHALLENGE

Prairie Flower Casino needed a secure and automated remote access tool that offered more than a traditional VPN.

As Prairie Flower Casino's Director of IT, Hilary Farley, was tasked with building and maintaining the casino's complex IT network, including moving it from manual to automated systems.

"Class II gaming is more of a sense of bingo," Farley said. "All of the machines connect back to the servers that reach out to bingo controllers, that bring back the information to the slot systems. There's a lot of technology servers and switches involved."

While gathering the necessary information and new contacts from slot vendors and consultants, Farley soon realized the casino's need for automated secure remote access.

"The only means we used in the past was VPNs, which is a lot of work, and a lot of documentation, and takes a lot of staff. And being the only full-time staff IT person here at the casino, my time is pretty critical in ensuring if systems go down that vendors have the access they need," said Farley.

Farley consulted with Michael Mecseji, the Director of Technology and Managing Partner for Infinite Technologies, the casino's tech vendor. Mecseji was responsible for making sure the network and gaming systems ran smoothly, including heavy lifting and servicing backups. He was also familiar with how the casino handled its external vendors.

Before using SecureLink Enterprise Access Mecseji noted many processes were carried out manually, by email or in some cases, pen and paper, which posed potential risks to security, as well as hindered efficiency.

"It was all VPN, from the office, usernames, passwords—very old tech, one-off scenarios. We never thought about using a vendor management solution," Mecseji said.

> "SecureLink solves the headache of ease of access... There's a big return on investment in just time and ease of use."
>
> **— Michael Mecseji**, Director of Technology and managing Partner for Infinite Technologies

SOLUTION

Prairie Flower Casino needed a remote access platform to create audit trails and included built-in tools to ensure compliance.

Prairie Flower didn't have to go far to find Enterprise Access, which came recommended by several colleagues as a leading vendor management platform that provided vendor remote access and used built-in tools to track user activity for compliance.

"As I made more phone calls to other slot vendors, SecureLink kept coming up. We got curious. It obviously had to be a standard casino software that was used everywhere," said Farley. "So we started looking into it, and it was kind of a no-brainer after that."

Working with Infinite Technologies, Prairie Flower Casino chose to implement SecureLink Enterprise Access, based on several factors such as ease of access and audit trail logging for compliance.

"The whole thing with casino security is audit trail logging. We have to know when somebody does something, when a vendor logged in, and when they logged out," said Mecseji.

"Scaling really helped us with the audit trail of knowing exactly what the vendor was doing, keylogging, and videoing all the steps they took when they were logged into our system," said Mecseji.

Not having a proper audit trail also left the network vulnerable to data breaches and other security threats.

"You can't have the slot vendors, or player tracking systems, or even just your day-to-day vendors accessing your systems without it being recorded, logged, and monitored. They can't just get into the systems whenever they need to," Farley added. "SecureLink helps manage all of that."

IMPLEMENTATION

The SecureLink team supervised the implementation process to ensure it went smoothly and provided customer support both online and over the phone during the transition.

Prairie Flower Casino eliminated all other processes except for SecureLink, which helped streamline both vendor approval and vendor access.

"Any remote access for any type of vendor that we have, whether it's gaming, finance, or our POS systems, are all required to go through the Enterprise Access system," said Farley. "We've standardized our policies and our remote access management and said, 'compliance-wise and policy-wise, this is what you're using.' It's simplified things."

SecureLink's ability to integrate with other products also helped ease implementation. "Whatever the vendor uses to remote into the equipment, we can accommodate their access needs," said Mecseji.

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>
> — **Hilary Farley**, Director of IT for Prairie Flower Casino

Getting all of Prairie Flower Casino's vendors up and running on the new system was challenging at times, but SecureLink's team made sure to always be available.

"The help from SecureLink was, and still is, top-notch. You call them and somebody calls you back. They stop what they're doing to help you," said Mecseji.

SOLUTION

SecureLink's attentive customer support didn't end at installation, the platform proved to be user-friendly with little need for oversight or troubleshooting.

"A lot of our casino is a 24/7 operation, and I can't expect a contractor to be there 24/7 all the time. I'm now able to set up new vendors in SecureLink Enterprise Access fairly quickly. If I get remote access requests, I can approve them from my phone," Farley said. "It's a very simple solution to use."

Mecseji adds that expediting vendor approval by moving away from manual processes has opened up more time to focus on managing other important network issues.

SecureLink's benefits also extend to compliance, which had been time-consuming before. Farley is more than satisfied with how SecureLink Enterprise Access helps to uphold gaming's strict regulations, particularly regarding remote access.

"SecureLink actually goes beyond the compliance of what the casino has. What SecureLink has done is it's allowed us to enhance what we have to do on a daily basis, internal compliance audits, and minimum security requirements," said Mecseji said.

Furthermore, Enterprise Access makes it simple to generate reports that are necessary for compliance, and provide a clear paper trail for successful audits.

"We can pull reports for compliance when we get audited by the NIGC or the Gaming Commission to show them, 'Yes, all of this information is being tracked, monitored, here's the records.' No questions," said Farley, "I can sleep at night!"

This security and peace of mind has ripple effects throughout the entire organization.

"SecureLink solves the headache of ease of access. Now, if something's going on, they get a request from SecureLink that they can do from the phone. There's a big return on investment in just time and ease-of-use," said Mecseji.

About Prairie Flower Casino

Based in Carter Lake, Iowa, Prairie Flower Casino is owned and operated by the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. The small Class II gaming facility is governed by both the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Ponca Gaming Commission, and manages a robust IT network for its gaming and slots system, while maintaining strict regulatory compliance.

About Imprivata

Imprivata, the digital identity company for healthcare, provides identity, authentication, and access management solutions that are purpose-built to solve healthcare's unique workflow, security, and compliance challenges.

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