

# Charter Business™

## Charter Communications Division Selects Fortinet to Power Managed Security Services

### Case Study

#### Situation

Charter Business™, a division of Charter Communications, Inc. (Nasdaq: CHTR), provides scalable, tailored and cost-effective broadband communications solutions to organizations of all sizes through business-to-business Internet, data networking, and telephone, video and music services.

The bread and butter of Charter Business is provisioning broadband services for small businesses and connecting home-based workers to remote branch offices. To some, this market may lack the cache of “Fortune 500” but it usually has similar, just-as-important requirements for access and security. The key challenge in serving small businesses is transforming the complexity of access and security into practical services that are affordable by lower-budget operations. Small business customers needed more than just reliable broadband services; they also needed rock-solid security for their data.



Historically, only the biggest organizations have had resources to address the complexity of integrating, deploying and managing multiple point products required for the usual array of security issues. To enable its role as a Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP), Charter evaluated options and selected Fortinet as its foundational provider of high-performance multi-threat security systems.

#### Solution

Charter Business' evaluation initially focused on antivirus and VPN technologies. As it examined available options, the evaluation team quickly expanded its requirements to other security-related components of an integrated solution, such as intrusion detection and content filtering.

“It is apparent that small businesses have the same needs for security as large enterprises, but they don't have the same IT resources,” says Pete Hicks, director of product development for Charter Business. “Lack of IT resources makes it more difficult for small businesses to acquire and maintain security solutions.”

Charter Business shifted its priority to finding a security solution that integrates multiple functions from across the security product spectrum. “We saw that offering protection from multiple security threats was important for a competitive, integrated solution for small business,” Hicks says. Fortinet was chosen because it offered a comprehensive solution that met Charter's requirements. The top three parameters were functionality, performance, and manageability. None of the other vendors under evaluation matched Fortinet's integrated capabilities as measured by these parameters.

Charter Business decided to implement MSSP services via several models of Fortinet's FortiGate™ series of ASIC-accelerated unified threat management security systems at individual client sites. These centrally configured and deployed security appliances are managed with a FortiManager-3000 and a FortiAnalyzer-2000 at Charter's HSI Data Contact Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

“Fortinet's integration is key to our strategy for providing an effective, scalable solution,” says Hicks. “The fewer moving parts it contains, the better because it's much easier to deploy and manage.”

#### Deployment:

FortiGate systems deployed in 200+ customer networks

#### Industry:

Telecommunications

## Success

Since choosing Fortinet, Charter Business has deployed more than 200 FortiGate devices to its MSSP customers. Models deployed include the FortiGate-50A, FortiGate-60 and FortiGate-100 – depending on each customer's size and security requirements.

Each FortiGate is delivered by Fortinet using Charter's preconfigured system image. The only installation requirement of the Charter MSSP customer is to attach the FortiGate appliance to its network. Once the cable is plugged in, the device automatically broadcasts its Charter IP address and connects to Charter's FortiManager system. Subsequent management of the customer-based appliances is provided centrally from Charter's Louisville support center.

"We believe the management of the security solution is as important as the functions provided by the platform," notes Hicks. He says customers like outsourcing the security function, which is managed by Charter Business.

Hicks also reports that Charter customers are satisfied with performance of the Fortinet-powered solution. "Performance was our big initial selection parameter, and since deployment, we have had no customer issues with performance of our Fortinet appliances." Customers say the solution has provided tangible, immediate results for stronger network security (see sidebar).

In addition to using Fortinet with its "bread and butter" base of small commercial customers, Charter Business has experienced noted success deploying security services for education and healthcare organizations. The education sector, in particular, has leveraged Fortinet's rate-shaping capabilities for restricting unauthorized or inappropriate peer-to-peer network traffic. "Being a cable company, one of our advantages is we've built our physical plant in residential areas so we're in a good position to service local school systems and healthcare providers," Hicks says.

With Fortinet, Charter Business's MSSP offering has provided economical strong security for its customers. "Our small business customers reap enormous cost benefits by using the Fortinet-powered solution," says Hicks. With few IT resources, the other option for small businesses is a security-management consulting agreement with an integrator, which results in expensive fees for perpetual management of security.

The centralized management capability of Fortinet's solution also allows Charter Business to rapidly scale security services as it expands in new markets. "We're comfortable with both the technical capabilities of Fortinet and its manageability," Hicks says. "Both are equally critical – but we've not had to 'settle' for security features to get excellent manageability."

And it's the integrated management capability that allows Charter Business to pursue a profitable business model. "We must be able to efficiently serve this market," says Hicks. "It's our business imperative – otherwise it's too expensive for us to scale a solution. Using Fortinet has allowed us to simplify the solution for all key security services, so it's been the right place to go."

## About Fortinet

Fortinet is the pioneer and market leading provider of ASIC-accelerated unified threat management (UTM) systems, which are used by enterprises and service providers to increase their security while reducing total operating costs. Fortinet solutions were built from the ground up to integrate multiple levels of security protection—including firewall, antivirus, intrusion prevention, Web content filtering, VPN, spyware prevention and antispyware—providing customers a way to protect multiple threats as well as blended threats. Leveraging a custom ASIC and unified interface, Fortinet solutions offer advanced security functionality that scales from remote office to chassis-based solutions with integrated management and reporting. Fortinet solutions have won multiple awards around the world and are the only security products that are certified eight times over by the ICSA (firewall, antivirus, IPSec, SSL, IDS, client antivirus detection, cleaning and antispyware). Fortinet is privately held and based in Sunnyvale, California.

### During one month, Charter Business Security:

- Prevented 3,880 virus attacks, disallowed 4,971 intrusion attempts, and kept bandwidth hogs at bay with traffic shaping for a Michigan apartment complex
- Averted 63 viruses, and disallowed 591 incoming threats, 264 outgoing threats and 78 internal threats – 933 total at one school – for a school district in Virginia
- Prevented students from accessing inappropriate web sites 3,297 times for a school district in Virginia
- Prevented 135 virus infiltrations and 149,377 intrusions to a large health maintenance organization in California

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