KnowBe4

Case Study

First Bank & Trust Company

502

dangerous emails identified in 90 days

202,600

Graymails filtered in 90 days

187

hours saved per month from productivity benefits

From static to dynamic

First Bank and Trust adopt real-time teachable moments to combat email threats

The need for a dynamic email security platform when navigating regulatory pressures

As a high-growth US bank in a tightly regulated industry, it is imperative for First Bank and Trust (First Bank) to ensure that any communication over email is kept confidential to avoid potential data breaches, regulatory intervention, and reputational damage.

“Email continues to be our primary communication platform, and with the large volume of sensitive data exchanged, it only takes one successful phishing attack or email to an unauthorized recipient to result in serious consequences,” explains Michael Weaver, Information Security Officer at First Bank. “Such incidents can affect both our organization and our customers, who could face identity theft or fraud if their account details fall into the wrong hands.”

In an attempt to help employees identify the high volume of malicious emails with link-based payloads that were bypassing their existing platform, Michael and the team tested the use of static banners on each external

The challenge: static banners and spam filtering falling short

- **Phishing attacks:** First Bank struggled to mitigate the high volume of increasingly sophisticated phishing emails bypassing M365 and infiltrating employee inboxes.
- **Static banners:** The static banners they previously applied to every inbound external email were insufficient in enabling employees to identify phishing attacks and enhancing overall security culture.
- **Misdirected emails and attachments:** First Bank lacked a platform to effectively tackle human error-related mistakes over email.
- **Visibility:** Their security team had very limited visibility into the attacks targeting the organization.

email. However, it quickly became clear that employees were experiencing banner fatigue from repetitive warnings that lacked further context.

Michael states: "As a result, we started looking for an intelligent, dynamic platform to eliminate advanced threats and outbound data loss incidents altogether. It was essential that it provided visibility into the types of attacks targeting the organization without requiring too much manual intervention from my team."

> *"I sleep easier at night knowing that Defend is consistently blocking advanced phishing attacks ... Having experienced the benefits of Cloud Email Security first-hand, we couldn't do without it"*
>
> Michael Weaver, Information Security Officer, First Bank

Harnessing a proactive approach to email security through AI-powered alerts

In 2022, First Bank implemented KnowBe4 Defend™ and KnowBe4 Prevent™ across 450 users, to neutralize sophisticated threats bypassing Microsoft 365's (M365) native security and to stop emails from being sent to the wrong recipient. As part of the Cloud Email Security platform, both Defend and Prevent use AI models to detect threats and use real-time nudges to alert users before security incidents can occur.

"Unlike static prompts, the dynamic nature of Defend banners empowers user engagement and security awareness," states Michael. "Our employees immediately pay attention to red or amber warnings, interacting with them to understand the threat."

First Bank was also excited about Prevent's proactive approach to data loss. "Prevent gives our users a chance to critically evaluate whether they are sending the correct information to the correct recipient, stopping an incident before it happens. In turn, my team doesn't have to spend hours trying to resolve and report each data loss occurrence."

KnowBe4 introduces full threat visibility and mitigation

Following deployment, Michael's concerns about the volume of sophisticated link-based phishing attacks bypassing their native M365 security defenses were confirmed. Over a 90-day period, 502 phishing emails were identified, with 85 successfully evading M365 protection. He also correctly suspected that the majority of these attacks carried a link-based payload.

Michael explains: "I sleep easier at night knowing that Defend is consistently blocking advanced phishing attacks, and its powerful link-rewriting feature ensures employees aren't taken to suspicious URLs."

As well as identifying dangerous emails, Defend's Graymail feature is filtering unwanted mail from users' inboxes, with 202,600 Graymails filtered in just 90 days. On average, it takes each user 10 seconds to read and delete an unwanted email. Michael states: "By filtering Graymail and spam into a separate folder, Defend is helping our users automatically declutter inboxes, collectively saving 187 hours per month and allowing them to focus more on important emails."

"Before Defend, we were in the dark about the threats targeting First Bank. Now, we have full visibility of potential vulnerabilities and can effectively mitigate risk without an onerous manual workload," Michael concludes. "Having experienced the benefits of Cloud Email Security first-hand, we couldn't do without it—it ticks all the boxes."

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