Trustwave®

Creating a Virtual Fort Knox

CASE STUDY

Although banks have taken cybersecurity seriously for years, their task keeps getting harder. As financial institutions increasingly embrace mobile apps and other digital tools, cyber thieves suddenly have a plethora of new targets. Ensuring resiliency and preventing an online heist can suddenly seem like plugging a leaky dike: In-house employees simply don't have enough fingers.

The Challenge

Like many financial institutions, this Trustwave customer regularly conducts penetration tests in order to determine its ability to withstand attacks and augment its small in-house security team. After turning to other firms in past years, the bank's security team needed a new expert who could bring fresh eyes and deeper knowledge to assess ever-proliferating threats.

The Solution

The bank's security officer reached out to Trustwave SpiderLabs, an elite security team, to perform what's known as a red team assessment: A comprehensive, multi-layered attack simulation that tries to gain access to sensitive data in any way imaginable. While a typical penetration test might take a week or two, a red team engagement can take up to twice as long. That's because experts aren't just furtively testing for an organization's biggest network weaknesses. Instead, they're using extensive reconnaissance to find even obscure vulnerabilities and then simultaneously attacking each chink in the armor before leaving undetected.

In this red team event, Trustwave's ethical hackers first scanned the dark web and bought sensitive bank data that its leaders were unaware was for sale among criminals. Then, using the information gathered, the team executed a high-level attack on the institution's networks. Finally, Trustwave experts undertook an in-person attack that, while seemingly "low-tech," pointed out potentially devasting consequences of lax office security. After gaining physical access to the bank's headquarters and one of its branches by covertly following employees who swiped IDs, Trustwave's experts then infiltrated the office, taking sensitive information that was lying out in the open and adding spyware to unattended laptops.

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