

Multi-factor authentication keeps data secure while working from home

Fast reaction to the coronavirus lockdown in March 2020: VermögensZentrum increased the number of employees working from home

When the number of employees working from home jumps up within a few days during times of crisis such as the coronavirus outbreak, infrastructure must be able to keep up with secure data transfer. VZ relies on multi-factor authentication, VPN and firewall, a solution by terreActive.

A firewall managed by terreActive has long been part of the security infrastructure of VZ, the expert in all things related to money. VZ offers insurance and pension checks, provides advice on returns on financial investments, and helps with real estate evaluations.

VZ had already planned to move toward more teleworking in the long term. This foresight paid off when the situation abruptly changed in March 2020 and capacity tripled.

At the very start of the coronavirus outbreak, VZ decided to protect its employees and safeguard availability to customers and the flow of operations by increasingly relying on working from home.

To expand its remote access solution to allow secure access by more employees, VZ had to overcome multiple challenges:

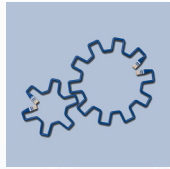
- Gateway scaling: more employees working from home means a greater load on the VPN. The encryption strained the available resources, so the hardware had to be expanded.
- Multi-factor authentication: far more users and more sensitive data required a new multi-step authentication process.
- Express hardware acquisition.
- Extensive expansion and development of the security infrastructure.

Narrow time window and difficult conditions

Less than two weeks passed from the initial contact between VermögensZentrum and terreActive to the launch of the new solution. The crisis required quick action on the part of terreActive in multiple departments: hardware that normally has a four-week delivery period had to reach Aarau quickly at a time when borders were almost closed and logistics providers were struggling to meet demand. For security reasons, terreActive's purchasing normally relies on multiple supply sources for security products. Thanks to this, it was able to use its international contacts to procure materials quickly and easily despite the lockdown.

"By expanding secure access for our home office users, we continued to offer our customers 100% availability even during the coronavirus lockdown. We moved quickly with the planned expansion and needed partners who are just as skilled and agile. Within just a few days, terreActive implemented the new multi-factor authentication for VermögensZentrum and guaranteed secure access to data and applications."

Gabriel Bamert,
 Team Leader IT Infrastructure,
 VZ Corporate Services AG



After the hardware was delivered and the software procured, the security engineers took over. Hardware, certificates and authentications were configured, observing increased precautions and hygiene measures and sometimes outside of normal business hours. The solution was integrated into the existing managed firewall environment.

Flexibility thanks to remote access

terreActive's SOC (Security Operations Center) has the experience needed to carry out complex configurations via remote access. That paid off in this unusual situation: integration into the customer infrastructure was smooth, without compromising social distancing. Future operations will also be organized and secured remotely by the terreActive SOC. This saves time for everyone involved.

Identity check for better security

Multi-factor authentication protects against unauthorized access and identity theft while being fully integrated into the security infrastructure. The chosen solution's job is to manage and authenticate users through identity and access management and to transmit identity information to the application in a suitable format. Even though VermögensZentrum has a decentralized organization with many external consultants, the central authentication platform enables secure access to data and applications via VPN.

"Because there are many heterogeneous groups of users, good authentication management is essential for us to guarantee the security of our IT infrastructure."

Gabriel Bamert, Team Leader IT Infrastructure,
VZ Corporate Services AG

About VermögensZentrum

VZ is a Swiss financial services provider. VZ Holding's shares are listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange. The VZ Group's key services include retirement and estate planning advice, asset management for private individuals, and the management of insurance and pension funds for businesses.

The Headquarters of VZ Holding AG are located in Zurich, and VZ has a presence at 34 other locations throughout Switzerland and in Germany.

www.vermoegenszentrum.ch

