As one of the most successful and fastest-growing managed service providers in North America, ARRC Technology relies on Sophos UTM to provide its clients and partners with rock-solid network security. Sophos has enabled ARRC Technology to realize significant time savings and develop new revenue opportunities for both its core business and its sister company, CharTec.
ARRC Technology is a highly successful and award-winning managed service provider (MSP) with a proven track record of providing leading-edge IT solutions to small and medium businesses for over 21 years. The company offers a full line of customized services including network design, installation, maintenance and support; telecommunications; and structured cabling for voice and data. ARRC Technology's sister company, CharTec, provides hardware-as-a-service and training for resellers and MSPs. Through North America’s largest MSP training facility, CharTec enables MSPs and resellers to provide their own clients with optimal IT solutions that draw from ARRC Technology’s own extensive knowledge base and experience.

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SHANE SWANSON
Chief Operating Officer
ARRC Technology

Business Challenge

Because security is a critical part of a network’s infrastructure, ARRC Technology has made implementing a security solution a requirement in each of its managed service agreements. Previously, ARRC Technology had partnered with SonicWALL to provide firewall security for its own clients as well as the CharTec resellers. “When we first chose SonicWALL, it was a top firewall solution,” recalls Shane Swanson, Chief Operating Officer of ARRC Technology. “Initially, we did plenty of business with them and built an installed base of several SonicWALL appliances. We had a fine working relationship.”

But as SonicWALL grew, the company began to shift its focus to larger deployments. This resulted in a new pricing structure for ARRC Technology — a change that did not make sense for ARRC Technology or for its clients. Unfortunately, a major licensing server failure, with little support from SonicWALL, created a loss of ARRC Technology revenue from trying to remedy the problem and resulted in a loss of trust from ARRC Technology clients. The time had come to migrate to a new network solution and a partner that cared about the ARRC Technology business.
Technology Solutions
ARRC Technology conducted an extensive evaluation of available solutions. On the recommendation of two ARRC Technology technicians, the company tested Sophos Unified Threat Management (UTM) and then installed it as the internal ARRC Technology firewall. After finding the firewall to be stable and reliable in the ARRC Technology environment, Swanson asked his technicians to install the home edition on their home computers and report back. “That’s how we came to be both a Sophos customer and a partner,” Swanson notes. “After they saw its value and potential, our techs were practically begging for us to switch our MSP practice to Sophos.”

In three years, ARRC Technology had migrated all of its MSP client’s firewalls to Sophos UTMs. Sophos is now the exclusive security solutions provider for ARRC Technology and is a key component in CharTec partners’ own managed service offerings. “Whatever ARRC Technology decides is the best for its MSP, CharTec makes available to its partners so that their own clients can benefit from best-of-breed solutions,” Swanson adds.

Business Results
In the managed services business, “no news is good news” when it comes to customer feedback. Swanson reports that client experiences with the Sophos UTM have been positive, as indicated by a much smaller number of incident reports. This peace of mind has carried over to ARRC Technology itself. Swanson and his team are now free to think about broader business opportunities and issues knowing that client networks are safe and secure. “Companies contract with us to provide a turnkey solution that removes the security burden and worry from their own IT teams,” Swanson says. “With Sophos, we’ve been able to build that level of trust and confidence in our clients.”

One feature that clients have is the Sophos UTM reporting mechanism, which has given them an expanded ability to drill down to a greater level of detail and produce meaningful reports based on the data that impacts their business. With Sophos’ comprehensive reporting, customers are provided with real-time data without an extra expense to the customer’s bottom line. Clients with very small or single-person IT departments immediately see the value of such features and ARRC Technology has been able to use the security capability to drive new business. Likewise, CharTec has been able to use Sophos as a differentiator to recruit new resellers, who in turn are able to attract more business based on the enhanced
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security model. “Sophos is synonymous with great security. Our clients realize the value Sophos’ products add to any managed service offering by providing complete security from a trusted vendor,” Swanson affirms.

Swanson also adds that Sophos UTM has saved ARRC Technology up to 50 hours a month in time spent managing client’s firewalls, compared to previous solutions. Overall, ARRC Technology has found the Sophos UTM simple and effortless to administer. “Because Sophos works so well and is extremely easy to manage, we’re able to deliver maximum security with maximum ROI to our clients.”

But the relationship is not just about the technology — it is about working together seamlessly. “Any vendor relationship we enter into must be a true partnership, and it was clear from day one that Sophos shares this sentiment. Sophos has taken the time to understand our business model and to continually evolve its products so they will always suit our client’s and partner’s needs. We have consistently received wonderful support from the Sophos team. In fact, Sophos ranks among the top five vendors I’ve dealt with over my 20-year career — and that’s a lot of vendors,” concludes Swanson.