



CASE STUDY

# BNBuilders strengthens defenses and stops AI-powered phishing attacks with Barracuda Email Protection

Growing construction leader eliminates thousands of sophisticated phishing emails, improves visibility and gains peace of mind

## Company profile

- Established in 2000
- General contractor specializing in large, complex construction projects
- Headquarters in Seattle, WA, with additional offices in Denver, Irvine, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Tacoma
- Approximately 1,000 employees

## Challenges

- Increasing volume and sophistication of phishing attacks
- Legacy on-prem email filtering and archiving tools causing downtime and administrative burden
- Need for modern visibility and reporting, and for automated remediation
- AI-generated phishing campaign evading traditional subject line-based detection
- Direct-send Microsoft vulnerability allowing attackers to bypass existing security layers

## Solutions

BarracudaONE™



Barracuda

**Email Protection™**



Barracuda

**Cloud-to-Cloud Backup™**

## Results

- Removed more than 5,000 malicious messages during an active attack
- Stopped an ongoing impersonation scheme targeting a BNBuilders director for over a year
- Blocked direct-send bypass attacks through Barracuda guided remediation
- Reduced inbox clutter across the company by 50%
- Eliminated tedious manual email cleanup during active incidents
- Simpler, more effective security thanks to advanced AI-powered defenses



## A growing company with growing security needs

BNBuilders' long relationship with Barracuda began well before the company formalized its dedicated security function. "When we were smaller, we used various open source on-prem tools for spam filtering and archiving," recalls IT Director Anthony Albano. "But those systems constantly broke, and I was getting paged in the middle of the night. I finally said, 'We need a real solution,' and that's when we moved to Barracuda."

Switching to Barracuda's cloud-based email protection relieved immediate operational pain. "I finally wasn't babysitting those unreliable old systems," Anthony says. "Instead, we had a cloud-hosted solution that didn't need much in the way of ongoing maintenance. It was simple and intuitive to use, and completely reliable. And we just never encountered any reason to move to another vendor. Over the years, as threats evolved, so did our Barracuda Email Protection capabilities."

## A new era of threats: AI-generated phishing attacks

The real test came in summer 2025, shortly after BNBuilders upgraded their BarracudaONE cybersecurity platform to include all of the Barracuda Email Protection Premium Plus capabilities.

"We'd never seen anything like this," says Morgan Tickner, the company's information security specialist. "We started getting hundreds, and eventually thousands of AI-generated phishing emails every day. And they were incredibly hard to respond to efficiently. Every subject line was different, so our older tools couldn't mass-pull them. Sender names were spoofed as the recipient, so we couldn't use that info. Each message's malicious link was unique too."

## Turning the tide with Barracuda Email Protection

As they dug into Barracuda Email Protection's incident response capabilities, Anthony and Morgan understood that they did have the tools they needed to fight back.

"I realized I could take just a portion of the subject line, without all the random characters that made it unique, and use that to continuously remediate," says Morgan. "We turned on continuous removal and watched as the system automatically pulled more and more emails every hour."

"Over the summer, using the incident-response and impersonation-protection capabilities that Barracuda provided, we were able to detect and remove more than 12,000 of these malicious emails," Morgan continues. "Without Barracuda, we absolutely would have had a breach. There's no doubt in my mind. The attacks were too sophisticated and too persistent."

Anthony agrees: "Barracuda provided the missing piece we didn't even realize we were missing."

## Finding and closing a pernicious loophole

"What we couldn't figure out was how so many emails were getting past our gateway defenses in the first place," says Morgan. "We spoke to our Barracuda rep about it and he pulled in an engineer who immediately identified the root cause. It turned out that Microsoft 365 has a feature called 'Direct Send' and it was enabled by default on release. I'm sure it serves a useful purpose, but in our case it meant that attackers impersonating internal users were able to bypass our email gateway entirely."

*"The support we got was phenomenal, and since then we haven't seen any attacks that were anywhere near the scale of what we had been experiencing. Barracuda didn't just help us fight the attack — they helped us solve it."*

**Morgan Tickner, Information Security Specialist**  
BNBuilders



“With Barracuda’s help, we were able to close that loophole and turn off the feature,” Morgan continues. “The support we got was phenomenal, and since then we haven’t seen any attacks that were anywhere near the scale of what we had been experiencing. Barracuda didn’t just help us fight the attack — they helped us solve it.”

### Quiet wins: less clutter, more clarity

Beyond stopping high-severity attacks, BarracudaONE delivered quality-of-life improvements BNBuilders hadn’t even expected.

“When we enabled bulk email filtering, the president of our company told me his inbox was literally half the size it used to be,” says Morgan. “He didn’t even realize how much time he was wasting on junk email.”

“Cleaning up inboxes is a real security improvement, especially for executives who are heavily targeted by impersonation and spear-phishing attacks,” Anthony adds. “When users are buried in junk emails, their guard goes down and they become more vulnerable.”

### A centralized platform that saves time daily

Anthony and Morgan also have found that the centralized, integrated dashboard for the BarracudaONE platform makes daily tasks faster and more efficient.

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**Morgan Tickner, Information Security Specialist**  
BNBuilders

### Learn more

## BarracudaONE™

BarracudaONE is an AI-powered cybersecurity platform that delivers integrated products accessible from a centralized dashboard to maximize protection and cyber resilience, while being easy to buy, deploy and use. Our platform protects email, data, applications, and networks, and is strengthened by a 24/7 managed XDR service.



“I used to have to open six different tabs,” says Morgan. “Now I go to BarracudaONE, click into incident response, impersonation protection, data inspector — it’s all right there. Those little timesavers don’t mean much individually, but they compound every single day. We end up saving a significant amount of time, and that’s important for a small team like ours.”

“I can’t get over how simple and straightforward everything is,” adds Anthony. “The first time I saw how easy it was to pull an email back out of the environment, I just said, ‘This is magic.’”

## A trusted security partner

Another thing that stands out to both Anthony and Morgan is Barracuda’s willingness to engage, listen, and improve.

“We’ve barely had to contact formal support because our rep and the engineers stay so connected with us,” Anthony says. “That’s what a real partnership looks like.”

“Every time I bring up suggestions, like ideas to make email warning banners better, they take it seriously and bring it to the product teams,” adds Morgan.

## Learn more



For organizations that want powerful email security without the complexity [Barracuda Email Protection](#) offers a comprehensive, easy-to-use solution. It uses AI to detect all email threat types including phishing, BEC, and impersonation, while also providing malware protection through sandboxing and global threat intelligence. Automated incident response and built-in user training help reduce risk with minimal overhead, making it ideal for resource-constrained teams.



[Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup](#) is an easy-to-use, cloud-first SaaS product that protects your Microsoft 365 data, making deployment fast and daily management simple. It safeguards your business with encrypted, cloud-native backups, role-based access, and an intuitive interface that gets you up and running in minutes, it delivers secure, dependable protection that’s simple to manage day-to-day.

# About Barracuda

Barracuda is a leading global cybersecurity company providing complete protection against complex threats for all sized businesses. Our AI-powered BarracudaONE platform secures email, data, applications, and networks with innovative solutions, managed XDR and a centralized dashboard to maximize protection and strengthen cyber resilience. Trusted by hundreds of thousands of IT professionals and managed service providers worldwide, Barracuda delivers powerful defenses that are easy to buy, deploy and use.