CASE STUDY

Delivering resilience and rapid response for schools group CVO Rotterdam e.o.

Barracuda Managed XDR and partner Tredion combine to contain threats and build stronger defenses for the future

Customer

- CVO Rotterdam e.o. runs a number of secondary schools in the Rotterdam area
- With a history dating back to 1898, it looks after around 21,000 students and over 2,600 employees

Challenges

- Local education sector cybersecurity compliance mandate
- Limited visibility and resources to handle inbound threats

Solutions

Barracuda Managed XDR™

Benefits

- Rapid discovery and containment of serious threats
- Round-the-clock protection
- Intelligence to enhance long-term cyber resilience
- Improved regulatory compliance
- 26 high-risk alerts out of a total of 2,789 alerts in the first month of operation

When threat actors strike their targets today, they increasingly do so on weekends, after hours or during public holidays. They know that IT teams will be understaffed, response times will be longer than usual, and more damage can therefore be done. For schools like those in Dutch education group CVO Rotterdam e.o., this is a problem.

"Because we are an educational organization, we have lots of vacations, and we can't put a sign on the door, saying 'we are on holiday, so please don't attack us,'" explains CVO Rotterdam e.o. ICT Manager Pieter Klijs. "We knew we needed managed XDR, and the right partner to monitor and help us defend ourselves."

The good news for CVO Rotterdam e.o. is that Barracuda Managed XDR and partner Tredion caught a high-risk account takeover attempt just days after deploying the solution.

More visibility, more coverage

CVO Rotterdam e.o. is a major secondary (senior high) schools group operating in the Rotterdam region of the Netherlands, serving around 20,000 students and employing around 2,500 staff. Its size alone makes it an attractive target for business email compromise (BEC), phishing, ransomware and other threats. It's part of the reason why Pieter originally invested in Barracuda Email Protection, including Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup.

Even so the organization was less satisfied with its threat detection and response provider, and knew it needed to improve its visibility to comply with an industry-specific best practice security framework known as Normenkader Funderende Onderwijs.

"We were looking for more integration and correlation [with other solutions], because we could only see what was logging in from our firewalls. We weren't able to see where the user was coming from, and what kind of device," Pieter explains. "Then Barracuda told us 'it's very easy for us to migrate over from this other partner to a managed XDR environment.' So we went looking for the right partner."

After shortlisting three such local IT partners, CVO Rotterdam e.o. chose Tredion, which boasts several years' experience and scores of customers using the Barracuda Managed XDR solution.

Round-the-clock protection

Barracuda Managed XDR is a fully managed extended detection and response solution designed to help customers with limited resources to mitigate cyber risk across multiple attack surfaces. Ingesting trillions of events across endpoints, servers, cloud environments, networks and email and powered by a 24/7 global security operations center (SOC) a Barracuda Managed XDR detects, responds to, and eliminates cyber threats in real time across the attack lifecycle.

Complemented by Barracuda AI analytics, SIEM, SOAR, and enterprise-grade threat intelligence, a seasoned team of security analysts and engineers always have "eyes-on", detecting and triaging incidents early and providing enriched alerts and remediation recommendations. It means customers can contain threats early on. As a result, Barracuda Managed XDR reduces the time to respond (TTR) by up to 99%.

In CVO Rotterdam e.o.'s case, Tredion was brought on board to help manage these alerts.

"They have three categories: high risk, medium risk and low risk. CVO Rotterdam e.o. doesn't have enough resources to do the follow-up all by themselves, so that's where we come in," explains Roy de Bruijn, Commercial Director at Tredion. "For each high-risk alert, we do the follow up—such as blocking an account or making a new firewall rule. If needed, we call CVO Rotterdam e.o.. If it's not urgent, they will look at it the next working day."

> "Barracuda gives us more insight and makes us just feel safer."
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> **Pieter Klijs, ICT Manager**
> CVO Rotterdam e.o.

From detection to resilience

CVO Rotterdam e.o.'s Pieter is particularly impressed by the expansive visibility Barracuda Managed XDR offers into the organization's broad attack surface—especially its cloud environment. This has resulted in 2,789 alerts, including 26 rated "high risk," in the first month of operation.

"We have received more alerts in just a short time from Barracuda/Tredion than with our former partner. It gives us more insight and makes us just feel safer," he explains.

In fact, time to value for the product couldn't have been faster, says Tredion's de Bruijn. Barracuda Managed XDR caught a compromised cloud account just four days after being installed.

"On April 4 we had a true positive on the cloud monitoring part of the solution, which showed us we had a successful account takeover, (ATO)" he explains. "The Barracuda XDR team called us because they saw the ATO, we did the checks, and within an hour the hacker was thrown out."

After being notified by Tredion, Pieter and his team disabled the account in question, identified and notified the user, and took their laptop to check for malware.

"I don't think we would have been able to do this if we weren't using Barracuda Managed XDR. It was great news for us," says Pieter.

Tredion and CVO Rotterdam e.o. teams also work together closely—using intelligence from the service to optimize the organization's cyber defenses.

"What we like to do is learn from all the alerts we are seeing and ask ourselves if there's a solution we can use to prevent them from happening next time," he says. "We're trying to make CVO Rotterdam e.o. safer each quarter."

For example, after the ATO incident, Tredion suggested its partner implemented conditional access policies, multifactor-authentication (MFA) and user awareness programs.

> "It's another piece of the puzzle, but a very important one."
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> **Pieter Klijs, ICT Manager**
> CVO Rotterdam e.o.

Another piece of the puzzle

CVO Rotterdam e.o. has plans to switch on more capabilities in Barracuda Managed XDR, and also to train up its own staff on the product.

"The dashboard is very intuitive and easy to use. So we may look at the possibility of looking ourselves at alerts, and not just Tredion," says Pieter.

The two teams are also looking to streamline incident response workflows by integrating their service management systems.

"In the future, when an alert comes into Tredion, it will also come in our service management system, and if we put some comments in it, it will synchronize with their system to improve communication," he explains.

"It will also make information available to our superiors, to let them know what's happening, and how many high-risk alerts we've received. It's another piece of the puzzle, but a very important one."

Learn more:

Barracuda Managed XDR™

Barracuda Managed XDR is a fully managed next-gen cybersecurity solution powered by Barracuda's 24/7/365 global SOC. It leverages advanced AI analytics and threat intelligence to detect and eliminate cyberthreats in real time across the attack lifecycle. This open XDR solution integrates seamlessly with the organization's existing technologies, enhancing operational efficiency and delivering true defense-in-depth.

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Your business, secured.

About Barracuda

Barracuda is a leading global cybersecurity company providing complete protection against complex threats for all sized businesses. Our AI-powered 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. For more information, visit barracuda.com.

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