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Coop-Aspire relies on Kaspersky solutions to support its growth

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Coop-Aspire

Based in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, Cooperativa de Ahorro, Crédito y Servicios Múltiples Aspire was founded to be a reference in providing financial services that fully enrich the lives of its members.

The organization caters to sectors that are marginalized by the traditional financial system, such as micro and small businesses who need working capital, home remodeling, home appliance financing and so on; and also, employees who get their salaries through agreements with companies. Small, and medium-sized businesses, Schools, and Churches are also an important part of its Partners.

It currently has more than 500 employees, 28 subsidiaries, 8 service stations and more than 200,000 members, with proven financial soundness of more than 3 billion pesos in assets.

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Wilkys Rodriguez, Director of Information Technology and Digital Strategy

Coop-Aspire's goals are ambitious. Founded in 2013 in the Dominican Republic, Cooperativa de Ahorro, Crédito y Servicios Múltiples Aspire focuses on microcredit to serve micro and small businesses who need working capital as well as people who do not have bank accounts to their name. The institution's development program consists of strengthening the relationship with its more than 200,000 members as well as contributing to the integral development of their families through plans and training and prepare the cooperative for possible changes in legislation, which could include coming under the supervision of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic.

To support its growth while increasing the level of protection at the same time, Coop-Aspire decided to implement Kaspersky's solutions to prevent any potential attacks. Cybersecurity is a fundamental pillar for the institution's strategy. "We always like to be one step ahead in auditing, risk, and compliance. We are working in accordance with the best practices as to ensure our operational efficiency while offering a safe environment to all our partners and related parties, and continue to be a benchmark for transparency throughout the country's cooperative system... In this sense, we must always consider the use of cutting-edge tools that ensure protection and, above all, continuity" says Wilkys Rodriguez, Director of Information Technology and Digital Strategy at Coop-Aspire.

Challenge

Preparing the institution for sustainable growth by anticipating future legislation was one of the motivators that led the co-op to implement the solutions provided by Kaspersky. "The company's business and strategy areas are technology-oriented, with security at their core. The impact of where we are going involves many financial instruments that require greater security. We need to be at the forefront," emphasizes Rodriguez.

The entire security department of the co-op focuses on technology management. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the cybersecurity division was empowered to protect the institution from potential attacks, which increased worldwide during the period, as emphasized by Luis Eduardo Rosario, General Manager.

Both employees state that the co-op did not suffer any attack attempts, but many cases were reported in the country. Therefore, there was a clear urgency to hire more solid, reliable solutions that were better aligned with the institution's new status and its plans for growth. Coop-Aspire acted on the principle that it should count on a world-class system with the guarantee of having security specialists who would provide full support at their disposal.

Solutions

- Kaspersky Anti Targeted Attack Platform

- Kaspersky Total Security for Business

- Kaspersky Endpoint Detection and Response Expert (EDR Expert)

- Kaspersky Managed Detection and Response (MDR)

- Enhanced Support with Technical Account Manager (TAM)

- Kaspersky Professional Services (KPS)

Kaspersky's solution

Faced with this scenario, Coop-Aspire chose prevention and invested in complementary Kaspersky tools. The co-op hired a robust solution for its protection. "We didn't have a state-of-the-art tool that contemplated the current size of the company. We have to look toward the future, and for that reason we searched for effective tools in the face of the great wave of attacks in the Dominican Republic as well as the increase in cybercrime worldwide," says Wilkys Rodriguez.

Preventing and ensuring the continuity of services led Coop-Aspire to purchase Kaspersky's native XDR provided by Kaspersky Anti-Targeted Attack Platform (KATA) with Kaspersky Endpoint Detection and Response Expert (EDR Expert), Kaspersky Total Security for Business, Kaspersky Managed Detection and Response (MDR), Enhanced Support with TAM and Professional Services. "For us, it was very clear that Kaspersky met our needs and went beyond the requirements," he points out.

In doing so, Coop-Aspire has evolved from simple antivirus, firewall, endpoint security, and email tools to a holistic solution with built-in security systems and 24/7 monitoring. "The company now has maximum protection against all manner of sophisticated hacker attacks" said Dwayne Porr Leslie, Enterprise Account Manager at Kaspersky.

The project gives Coop-Aspire telemetry-level detection and visibility by analyzing network data. This is important because potential attacks are likely to take place while a hacker is inside the network, but with EDR the hacker is detected before the attack takes place. Coop-Aspire also hired Kaspersky Extended Detection and Response (XDR), which ensures extended detection and response, meaning that threats are detected and corrected beyond the endpoint level (by providing new sensors and technologies – an email sensor, a sandbox, threat intelligence, etc).

Foundation for the future

Wilkys Rodriguez explains that all of the modules and their components were analyzed. Professionals in the technical divisions also evaluated the tools. "We saw what we needed and were fascinated with the convergence of tools working together," said Wilkys, adding that he was satisfied with the advanced security service that deals with the increasing complexity of cyber-attacks in real time, 24/7.

Implementing the solutions took about three months and involved three professionals from the co-op, in addition to Kaspersky specialists and its local partner, HarPer. Coop-Aspire was careful to include users in the process, both at headquarters and in subsidiaries. "The more impactful part is the telemetry at the computer and server levels. Knowing the hacker's cycle led us to purchase the MDR module. All products have been purchased. We also hired the Kaspersky Anti Targeted Attack platform (KATA) and we feel safer with this tool. Every potential entry point is centralized under our control, with full visibility —network, web, email, PCs, laptops, servers and virtual machines" says the co-op's director of information technology and digital strategy.

With these upgrades to their security department, Coop-Aspire now has the support of applicable, modern tools to take the leap in its offers and continue as a reference in the provision of financial services. "We evaluated several tools in detail and chose Kaspersky because it is complete and goes beyond protection, as it also includes monitoring. For that reason, it was the winner. It caught my attention that the implementation was not at all complicated," he adds.

The co-op's business and strategy are technology-oriented, with security as a key pillar. Both have a direct impact on the co-op's plans, including the improvement of financial instruments, which requires being ahead of their competitors. "Our intention is to move on to a second stage, which would be external protection. We are completely satisfied with Kaspersky, with the tools, the monitoring area, and the security of the solutions," evaluates Wilkys Rodriguez.

Outcome

Coop-Aspire has evolved to high quality protection tools against advanced threats, anticipating for the future to ensure a continuous growth and excellence in their businesses.

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