CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Netgear® ProSafe™ SSL312 provides service technicians with easy and secure remote access to client account information.

Tek-CAD LLC delivers an effortless, efficient remote access solution for Vaughan Heating and Air Conditioning.

Randy Carbone (Network Technician)
Ronald Oppermann (Owner)
Rob Vaughan (Vice-President)
Mike Sherlin (Service Manager)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Challenge

- Vaughan needed a simple and secure way in which to access current client account information located on the company headquarters server.

Solution

- The NETGEAR ProSafe™ SSL VPN Concentrator (SSL312) provides an easy-to-manage, but very cost effective remote access solution using SSL and establishing a VPN over a public domain.

Results

- The NETGEAR solution provided quick, easy, and secure remote access to Vaughan's corporate networks, saving time and improving overall productivity for their service technicians.

- The ability to access up-to-date account information reduced many of the errors based on inaccurate information and allowed Vaughan to realize significant cost savings.

Key Applications and Resources Accessed

NETGEAR ProSafe SSL VPN Concentrator, Model Number SSL312

- NETGEAR ProSafe VPN Firewall, Model Number FVS318

Profile

Vaughan Heating and Air Conditioning has been serving homes and businesses in the southern New Jersey region for 70 years. A family-owned business with 25 employees operating out of Magnolia, New Jersey, Vaughan's mission is to provide its customers with competitively priced, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems and top-grade heating oil. The company offers installation, maintenance, heating, and repair services.

Background

Vaughan's service technicians are equipped with special service trucks and visit most clients during regular business hours. However, Vaughan makes sure technicians are on call to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. In the winter months when it's below freezing outside, customers with no heat appreciate service in a timely manner. In order to meet customer expectations, Vaughan service technicians need information on their clients' accounts, such as equipment service records, payment status, and when they received their last delivery.

Problem

During business hours, Vaughan office personnel verify client account information before sending their service technicians out on calls. For after-hours service calls, however, technicians must look up client account information themselves. Typically, they used a thick paper copy stored in their service vehicles that contained thousands of client logs. These logs are costly and time-consuming to print, which meant they were usually out of date. Technicians spent considerable time searching through these paper records. Once they found the information, they had no way of knowing if a client's account or service status had recently changed. For Rob Vaughan, Vice President of Vaughan Heating and Air Conditioning, this system was inefficient and costly. "Errors were being made in the field that were increasing our administrative and accounts receivable costs."

Vaughan needed a simple yet secure way for its service technicians to get up-to-date client account information. Vaughan turned to Tek-CAD LLC, a technology value added reseller (VAR) located in Barrington, New Jersey. Tek-CAD specializes in servicing small and home office markets with affordable computer and networking services. Tek-CAD began working on a solution that would give Vaughan service technicians remote access to corporate account information located on a server in company headquarters. They decided to deploy a secure Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Although Tek-CAD considered several products, none were as easy to use or implement as NETGEAR's ProSafe™ SSL VPN Concentrator 25 (SSL312). Says Tek-CAD owner Ron Oppermann: "Vaughan needed an affordable solution that not only met its business and security needs, but was also user-friendly and required minimal training. The NETGEAR SSL312 satisfied those needs, and more."

The Solution

Tailored for small businesses, the SSL312 is a completely secure, cost-effective, and easy-to-use remote access solution. It uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to establish a VPN over the Internet. Using the strongest, standard-based encryption available, the SSL312 protects data during transmission and eliminates the need for special remote access client applications. Only users with approved usernames and passwords can remotely access the corporate network.

After quickly configuring and testing the SSL312 in their own lab through a standard web browser, Tek-CAD installed the concentrator in Vaughan headquarters and the company began using it immediately. Two of Vaughan's service vehicles were equipped with mobile desk mounts on the steering wheels, laptops containing a standard web browser, and wireless Internet service from Verizon Broadband. When technicians required client information for a service call, they opened the desk, put the laptop on it, and they were ready to access the information they needed.

"The NETGEAR SSL312 was so user-friendly that we didn't need to train the technicians. Everything happens automatically," says Mr. Oppermann. Technicians turn on the laptops and the browser and wireless Internet applications launch automatically. When technicians correctly enter their username and password, a VPN is established and they can immediately access up-to-date client account information through their application on the corporate network. To date, 10 users are authorized to access the corporate network using this technology.

The SSL312 provides simple yet secure remote access to Vaughan's corporate network, saving time for Vaughan's service technicians and improving their productivity. Technicians can access accounts faster, so they are able to respond more quickly to after-hours emergency service calls. With immediate access to up-to-date account history, errors are dramatically reduced. Adds Mr. Vaughan, "Using the NETGEAR SSL312 to securely access client account records has significantly reduced the costs we incurred due to unavailable or outdated information."
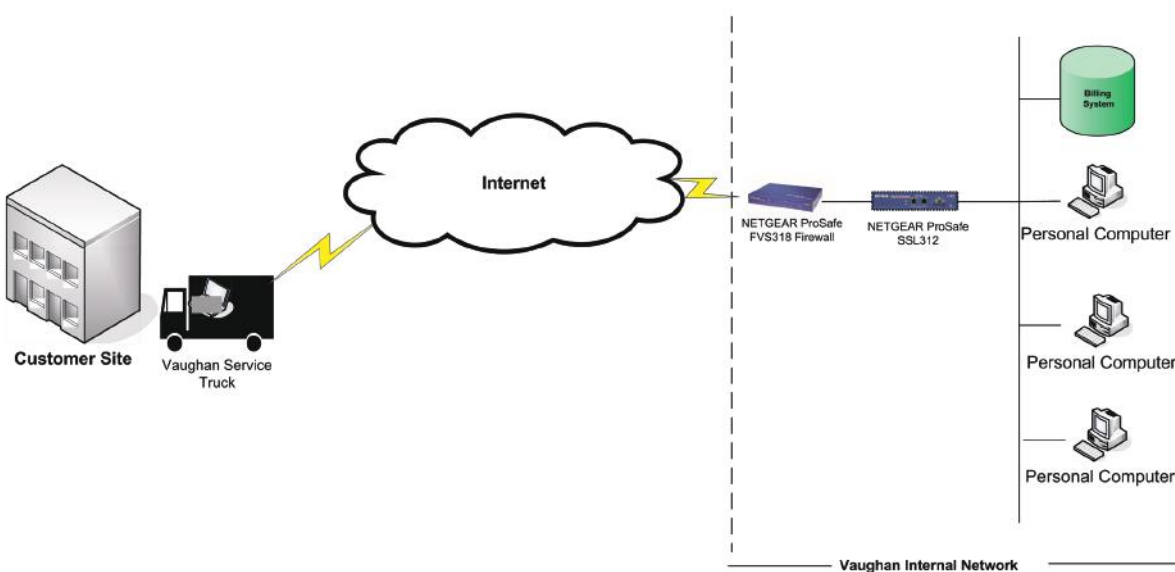
Impact

After three months, the remote access system using the SSL312 has already reduced Vaughan's administrative overhead and accounts receivable. Plans to deploy two more laptops in service vehicles are in the works. Service technicians are using the new technology with ease, and as an added bonus, service managers can securely access the corporate network over the Internet when they are at home.

The NETGEAR SSL312 is a cost-effective, easy-to-use, and efficient VPN concentrator that addresses Vaughan Heating and Air Conditioning's needs for today. More importantly, it is helping the company to anticipate future needs and plan for growth. Capable of supporting up to 25 concurrent VPNs, Vaughan is already seeing ways in which the SSL312 can further improve its internal processes and bottom line. "Long term, we can see our service technicians generating work orders and receiving dispatch remotely through the VPN," says Mr. Vaughan. "Using the NETGEAR SSL312 could prove so efficient that we may soon extend it to all service calls, not just after-hours ones."

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