

CASE STUDY

Mayflower Theatre sees password security improvement with KnowBe4

Brief Summary

Mayflower Theatre wanted to take on a proactive stance on cybersecurity and therefore adopted the KnowBe4 platform to educate employees, improve cybersecurity practise and raise awareness.

About Mayflower Theatre

Mayflower Theatre is a 2,300 seated theatre based in Southampton, UK, making it the third largest by seating capacity outside of London and the largest in the South of England. Having first opened in 1928, it was originally called the Empire Theatre and recently celebrated its 90th birthday. The Theatre has consistently entertained an audience of half a million every year. The theatre estimates to have 80 full-time staff as well as an additional 240 employees who are hired on a voluntary, annualised and contracted basis.

Business and Technical Challenges

With sensitive information stored and passed through the systems at the Mayflower Theatre, getting security right is a top priority for all; and despite having a robust and resilient infrastructure in place, Paul Thompson, IT Manager at Mayflower Theatre, knew that more needed to be done. He said, ***“we wanted to train and educate users about the various aspects of cybersecurity, from how to structure passwords, to spotting phishing emails.”***

Many are still unaware of the different cyberattacks that are currently out in the world, so Paul and his team wanted to take a proactive approach to mitigating these threats by raising awareness about common risks like phishing emails and scams involving fraudulent websites.

A few challenges for Paul and the Theatre are the high number of employees that each have their own unique access to the network and ensuring they are all following best security practises.

Paul understands that employees are the most vulnerable link in the security chain and wanted to educate them about efficient password security, stating, ***“you can have all the firewalls you want, but if somebody doesn't use their password properly, then you're in trouble.”***

The Resolution

The prime objective for Paul was to build the general cybersecurity awareness of the employees at Mayflower Theatre.

“We're very conscious of cybersecurity as an issue,” said Paul. He continues, “in general, we are looking to improve the way that we educate and train our users in lots of different things about cybersecurity, from how to structure passwords to how to spot phishing emails.”

While some IT managers may want to review and test various security platforms before deciding on the right fit, Paul took a more direct approach when he came across the KnowBe4 platform, saying, ***“for the offering and the price, it was sufficiently unique to anything else I had seen in the market.”***

“Once I had demoed the KnowBe4 platform, I quickly realised this was the exact tool we needed as a company. It was nicely packaged and grouped a number of cybersecurity training courses into one product that could be easily accessed via an online portal,” explained Paul. However, it was the phishing simulation that was the real selling point for him. “It [phishing training] is something we really wanted to try out and were initially very interested in this additional bolt-on. We started with the basic subscription level but in the latest renewal, we have added this and a few other extras because we are increasing our spending to go onto the platinum level.”

CASE STUDY

Mayflower Theatre sees password security improvement with KnowBe4

Implementation and Recommendations

After initial demos were conducted in September 2017, Mayflower Theatre implemented the KnowBe4 platform in October 2017. Paul and the rest of the IT team were quick to establish a baseline of security for the company with the first round of phishing tests being conducted secretly to gain truer insight into the employees' ability to defend the network against such attacks. Once the results were analysed, the training was then distributed, and more tests followed. Paul explains that having KnowBe4 has led to **"a decrease in successful phishing emails being clicked by members of staff, indicating an improved security understanding."**

Another feature Paul was pleased with was the number of 'free of charge' tests that could be conducted, namely the Password Exposure Test. This tool identifies the at-risk users in an organisation by querying business social media information and hundreds of breach databases. It also checks to see if users are currently using weak passwords or passwords that have been exposed publicly in data breaches associated with the company's domain. This tool and its reporting functionality proved to be beneficial when the Theatre had an internal cybersecurity audit. Paul said, **"the evidence from the tests and the reports were handed over to the auditors who were very pleased to see the data and proof of the security and strength of the passwords being used within the company."**

Further to this, there is also a KnowBe4 home course training portal that is being rolled out to all members of staff at the Theatre. This enables employees to carry on training from the comfort of their own homes while also introducing other family members to help them develop their cybersecurity awareness in a secure setting.

Results and Benefits

It's a matter of when, not if, when an organisation will suffer a cyberattack and Paul is more than aware of this fact. However, it's more about the reduction of risk for him.

"The benefits from using the KnowBe4 platform are clear in the tests and reports we receive. We didn't go into this off the back of an attack, but instead we were in front of it, being proactive. It's great to have this evidence that there has been an improvement in security training levels and password security."

Whether employees come across real phishing emails or ones manufactured to test their skills, Paul explained how the staff were excited when they did come across one before flagging to the IT department. It's this sort of reaction KnowBe4 was designed for, to get users motivated about security and for Paul, this is where the ROI has been most evident. Having KnowBe4 is an insurance policy in his eyes, saying, ***"I can absolutely say that we have received generic as well as targeted phishing emails aimed at people in the organisation and, because of the training, we have avoided an incident to date. Having a wide range of cybersecurity training deployed to the number of users that we have to cover a number of issues has been largely beneficial and very cost efficient."***

Future Plans

Currently, Mayflower Theatre has 110 members using the KnowBe4 platform, but the expectation for Paul is to upgrade to the platinum subscription to give all staff members access due to the positive results he's seen since 2017.

He concluded:

"There is nothing I would want to change about this exercise or the working relationship. I'm even glad there is now a KnowBe4 office in the UK, which makes it a lot easier to talk to people in our time zone. I would strongly recommend this platform to other companies, as it's more than just a learning management system or phishing simulator. It's a platform that's given us great confidence and the responses and feedback from our users has been positive."