

Keeping sensitive customer data secure while supporting remote and hybrid work

Case Study



PeopleStrong provides a comprehensive SaaS platform for HR teams, serving employees from hire to retire. Its customer base includes more than 500 of APAC's top companies, powering a seamless experience across more than 4 million devices. The solution is powerful because of the vast quantities of data it contains. So, as PeopleStrong pursues its mission to power the talent economy with HR tech 4.0, strong cybersecurity is key to success.

How should a company secure customer data when employees move to working from home?

Based in Gurugram, India, PeopleStrong employs around 2,700 staff members across 10 countries. When all those employees regularly came into corporate offices, security management was fairly straightforward. However, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the complexity of keeping customer data secure.

"With the inception of COVID-19, people started working from home," says Saurabh Gugnani, Head Information Technology & Security for PeopleStrong. "We did not have much time to do the roadmap planning. We stabilized operations, then we started changing products." The IT team worked to understand operations in the new normal and choose solutions that would best meet the business's new needs.

Not surprisingly, given its importance to the organization, the security infrastructure came under close scrutiny. "Our prior solution was fairly primitive," Gugnani says. "It was working fine in our [legacy] environment but not ready for the new environment where people are sitting at various locations."

Gugnani says his only option for limiting employees' web activities was "a manual host entry in their system to [control] what they can open and what they cannot." This one-off approach was untenable. Gugnani considered, "Am I ready to deal with any kind of zero-day attack?" The answer led him to look for an efficient, cloud-based security solution.

"PeopleStrong chose Netskope to give security a whole new dimension."

– Saurabh Gugnani, Head Information Technology & Security, PeopleStrong

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Profile

Industry

Technology



Region

Asia-Pacific



Employees

~2,700



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Challenges

- Secure customer data, even as many users work remotely
- Efficiently apply security policies across thousands of employees in 10 countries
- React quickly in case of a security event or unacceptable user behavior

Solutions

- Netskope SSE acts as a cloud-based firewall
- ZTNA restricts users' access to only the resources they need

Results

- Security management streamlined via centralized policy-setting
- Better visibility enables security team to quickly mitigate any issues
- Shadow IT concerns eliminated
- Flexibility ensures data stays secure as work environment evolves

Netskope provides visibility and remote security management

After considering several options, Gugnani and his team selected Netskope Security Service Edge and Netskope Private Access for ZTNA. "PeopleStrong chose Netskope to give security a whole new dimension," he says.

The zero trust network access (ZTNA) capabilities in the Netskope solution were a key differentiator in PeopleStrong's selection process. "You can't stop everything," Gugnani says. "My marketing [team] has to operate in a different fashion from my [development group], and they're both different compared with IT. Zero trust is about providing people with limited access," with permissions depending on which corporate function the individual belongs to.

Visibility into user activities, and the ability to block risky behaviors through policy rather than one-off manual remediation, also played into PeopleStrong's selection of Netskope. "Before, if someone got a virus on his machine, I would have to physically take that machine out of the network," Gugnani says. "I wanted to have a proxy solution where I could have proper [configurations] in place to do that."

Finally, Gugnani reports, "Netskope was cost-effective to my environment. It came out to be the best solution for [PeopleStrong], as per my assessments. That is why I chose it compared with other prospective partners."

The right security for whatever the future may hold

The Netskope platform has provided a number of benefits for PeopleStrong's day-to-day security management.

Previously, Gugnani could not centrally manage security policies for remote workers. "They could download any software, which could lead to an attack," he says. By contrast, "now the policy management is very neat. I can sit at one console and define different policies for my tech, for my marketing. Having a single dashboard meets my needs because of our cybersecurity resources."

It also dramatically improves visibility. "I have a complete understanding of what [employees are] doing," rather than security events being opaque, Gugnani says. "I see who is doing what, and what is happening in my environment. It is nice to know that I do not have a shadow IT problem. And in case I find something happening that should not be happening, I can catch it in time to mitigate it."

Although the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic seems to be past, PeopleStrong staff are not going back to the fully on-premises environment of 2019. "We are going to play in a hybrid fashion," Gugnani says. "We are not asking people to be in the offices; they are free to work from anywhere. Understanding those environments, the kinds of controls we have in place are going to help a lot."

From here forward, Saurabh Gugnani will work closely with Netskope to ensure PeopleStrong's cloud security needs are fully met. "I am trying to move my SSE framework to the next level," he says, "but there is still a way to go. With Netskope's pioneering solutions, PeopleStrong is able to provide strong security for customers' data while also complying with the strongest norms."

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Netskope, a global cybersecurity leader, is redefining cloud, data, and network security to help organizations apply Zero Trust principles to protect data. The Netskope Intelligent Security Service Edge (SSE) platform is fast, easy to use, and secures people, devices, and data anywhere they go. Learn how Netskope helps customers be ready for anything on their SASE journey, visit [netkope.com](https://www.netskope.com).