## KnowBe4



CASE STUDY

A Leading Poultry Company and KnowBe4—Prioritizing Innovation

A leading poultry company in the southern United States puts a high priority on quality and innovation. Whether it's their lineup of fresh or prepared foods, they carefully oversee every detail to ensure their customers feel confident in the food they source and serve. The company has invested in a state-of-the-art Customer Innovation Center to help name-brand customers from around the world stay more competitive in their foodservice segment.

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As part of its commitment to innovation, the poultry company has emphasized the role that technology plays on being a leading protein company. As Michael, help desk supervisor at the company, states, "People don't think of a chicken company as a technology organization, but we know that applying technology at the farm is a competitive advantage. We've staffed our teams with developers from Fortune 500 companies and people that come from technology backgrounds."

Part of being technology focused means committing to cybersecurity practices to keep intruders out. The poultry company learned the hard way that one of the best investments in cybersecurity is to train your employees.

## The Challenge

As the company grew, so, too, did the challenges it faced with regard to human-driven cybersecurity risks. The company has 8,000 employees, about 1,500 of whom work on the corporate network. "Over the last three or four years, we realized that our people were bringing risk into the organization," said Michael. "Our employees were well intentioned, but there was some complacency that was happening. People were receiving hundreds of emails a week that weren't business related and clicking on links they shouldn't have. We had best practices in place and would share recommendations for online safety, but incidents were still occurring."

In fact, about two years ago one of those incidents wound up having a financial impact on the company. From top to bottom, it was clear that it needed to investigate and identify why it continued to experience issues. "We have excellent security and password retention policies, but we found that the weak link was the fatigue of working hard. Our problem was that our employees, who are excellent, were making mistakes that were now causing a financial impact to the company. We had to formalize a program to shore up our employee education."

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In order to put a formal education process in place, Michael and his team started looking for security awareness training vendors. "We reviewed a number of vendors, but didn't want a vendor that simply offered training as a value-added piece of their business. We needed a partner that was dedicated to security awareness training, and that could educate our staff about spam, phishing, ransomware and social engineering. That's exactly what we found in KnowBe4."

## **KnowBe4 Was an Easy Sell**

After sitting on a demo of the KnowBe4 Kevin Mitnick Security Awareness Training (KMSAT), Michael knew his organization had found the right partner. Upper management was very quick to give their approval, in part because "KnowBe4 made it a very easy sell. Our management responded to how simple KnowBe4 was to use." Michael found that the interface was easy to adapt to and wasn't overly technical, yet gave a lot of flexibility.

Compared to other technology implementations that the poultry company had done, Michael found KnowBe4's implementation very smooth. "From the day we said 'let's go with KnowBe4' to the day we could pull the trigger and send test campaigns was less than two weeks. It could have been a matter of days, but our internal schedule pushed it out a bit."

Once the decision was made to work with KnowBe4, Michael and his team rolled the first formal phishing test out in April 2019. "This test showed that 17 – 18 percent of our employees were clicking on phishing links. The results were surprising and showed us that we had a lot of vulnerability – but also a lot of room for improvement."

This baseline Phish-Prone™ Percentage (PPP) made Michael eager to train staff members and see if the numbers declined. "We did see some improvement after the first round of testing, but not as much as I had hoped. We knew this wasn't going to be a quick fix – that we were going to have to hammer it home."

Michael learned that people weren't going to retain information after one training session; follow up and ongoing training were required. He also knew that it was important for the staff to know why the IT team was conducting training campaigns and phishing them. "We wanted to share that this wasn't to test them in a negative way. We wanted employees to feel empowered to make a difference for our entire company, not just their department, and that this was part of our culture and something to feel good about."

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Although KnowBe4 was implemented to train employees how to recognize and avoid phishing-related scams, Michael has seen an even more valuable result. "The biggest benefit of working with KnowBe4 is the connection with our employees. Now we have people who come to us and say they think they have received a suspicious email and ask us to review it with them. It's improved the rapport employees have with our IT department and has helped us all work as one team."

And as for the support he's received from KnowBe4, Michael actually says, "The relationship I have with KnowBe4 has influenced how I deal with other vendors trying to sell us a product. With KnowBe4, I never feel like I'm in a spot where I'm yearning for something else. They always get us where we need to be, which is what I expect of other vendors now."

That is, indeed, an innovative approach.

## **Reducing Risk and Improving Relationships**

After a year of ongoing training and monthly testing, Michael has seen the poultry company's Phish-Prone Percentage decrease dramatically. While the company's 1,500 workers on the KnowBe4 platform hovered between 17-18 percent after its first phishing test in April 2019, in October 2020 the company's PPP had dropped to a mere 2.6 percent.

The company's executive leadership team knows this data is available and regularly asks for updates and metrics. "Our leadership likes seeing how we have progressed. For instance, I was able to use KnowBe4 data to show tangible numbers about how the holidays mean an increase in spam and phishing emails. We had zero visibility into this before, but KnowBe4 has helped us adapt and know what to expect."