KnowBe4

Case Study

How First Community Credit Union Reduced Phishing Risk by 97%

FIRST COMMUNITY

Industry	Location
Banking and Finance	Houston, TX, USA

Challenge

Building a mature security awareness training program in a high-risk, high-threat industry

The weakest part of any email communication is the human behind the exchange. Texas-based First Community Credit Union (FCCU) has flipped the narrative, making humans a critical part of enhancing email security.

"We refer to our people as our first layer of defense," says FCCU Senior VP of Information Security Bryan Perkola. "The human element is always going to be the highest natural attack vector. Training will not change humans being the highest attack vector, but you can prepare them to handle the threat."

For the past decade, FCCU has been getting the right training with KnowBe4.

At a Glance

▶ **97%** reduction in Phish-prone™ Percentage

▶ **90%+** training completion rates

▶ **270+** employees undergoing training

▶ **10 years** of success with KnowBe4

Building a Cybersecurity Culture with KnowBe4

Perkola joined FCCU in 2018 with big ideas for building a stronger security culture. With KnowBe4 already deployed, he felt confident he could optimize the platform to establish a firm foundation for his team.

"I felt very strongly about creating a security awareness program, and having KnowBe4 in place allowed me to come in, start revamping the program, and develop a very mature, very successful security program within our organization," Perkola says.

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> Bryan Perkola, Senior VP of Information Security, FCCU

Their security training program has progressed in lockstep with KnowBe4's products and services. The company uses modern training videos, robust support and security resources to address evolving threats. These assets have empowered employees to become better cyber citizens and prioritize their security.

One of the most influential KnowBe4 products is KnowBe4's Artificial Intelligence Defense Agents (AIDA), which has the ability to dynamically identify training opportunities for individual users so no one falls through the cracks. "Being able to show how AI is influencing what we're doing with defenses versus threats has been very significant for us," Perkola says.

Perkola says he uses KnowBe4 to tangibly highlight the organization's cybersecurity efforts and monitor individual members' progress. The team enters each employee into a group — first-year, second-year, and second-year plus — to track the effectiveness and reach of their training.

"By measuring those groups in KnowBe4, we're able to show how employee success rates on our simulated phishing emails improve," Perkola says. "This allows us to see their progression through the platform and training, as well as how they're adopting and adapting our cybersecurity culture."

Joining the Under 1% Club

Since implementing KnowBe4's Security Awareness Training in 2014, FCCU has made enormous progress.

Their Phish-prone™ Percentage has dropped from 30% to 1%, and Perkola is now focused on staying under that 1%.

"We're really excited about our Phish-prone™ Percentage. Our team is already at 1%, but our goal has always been to get under 1%, and we're always trying to find new ways of doing that quicker," Perkola says.

Tapping into KnowBe4's extensive feature set, Perkola has optimized the program and awakened a legion of vigilant employees. "Our current training completion rates are right in the high 90s, and I expect they'll continue to grow," Perkola says.

AI-Powered Integrations Expand Capabilities

KnowBe4's AI capabilities are especially relevant to ensure FCCU can move beyond secure email gateways (SEGs). Perkola believes SEGs still serve a purpose to reduce email attacks, but they are an older technology that may not fully identify today's threats. He's implementing KnowBe4 Defend™, which leverages AI to identify sophisticated phishing emails and helps reduce phish click rates to zero.

"SEG technologies were great for what's gone on previously, but they're just not able to adapt to AI threats," Perkola says. "That was one of our biggest pushes for getting Defend in place."

FCCU has also invested in KnowBe4 Protect™, which monitors outbound email risks. The company is currently deploying Protect with Microsoft 365 to add encryption to emails and allow the team to monitor, manage and confirm sensitive data.

"By having AI technology point out discrepancies and asking users to confirm, we can be more mindful of who's going into the 'to' line," Perkola says. "I think that will really help us reduce [data loss prevention] risk."

Attacking Phishing Threats Head-On

Perkola feels KnowBe4 is "a genuine part of the program" at FCCU, and the sky's the limit.

"I couldn't imagine switching to anything else because we've developed such a tight bond," Perkola says. "KnowBe4 is integral in what we're doing with our security awareness training: our security, phishing and emails, every part of it."

With each product that FCCU deploys, Perkola is even more confident that their assets, employees and 140,000+ members can remain protected.

"These days, we're realizing more and more how to make human beings part of our phishing attack defense, and KnowBe4 genuinely helps our employees become better."

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