

Case Study

Mitre 10 and KnowBe4 Drop Phishing Likelihood By 80 Percent

Mitre 10

Industry

Retail and Building Supplies

Location

Auckland, New Zealand

Challenge

Build a security programme from scratch and reduce likelihood of successful phishing emails

Mitre 10 is one of New Zealand’s most recognised home improvement brands, with 85 stores and a workforce of more than 7,400 team members. While many know it for hardware and home improvement solutions, behind the scenes, Mitre 10 has built a highly creative, forward-thinking and engaging security awareness programme, through their partnership with KnowBe4. When Brad Ward Able joined Mitre 10 as Head of Security and Assurance, the company had no formal cybersecurity team.

“There was no real security practice, no structured training, and no dedicated role. When I came on board, building security awareness was massively important to me.”

Ward Able knew from experience that traditional top-down approaches to training weren’t enough. In true Kiwi style, he wanted something that would get people talking, laughing and competing. By weaving creativity, humor and competition into a robust security awareness training program driven by the KnowBe4 platform, he and his team have built a culture where employees genuinely want to be part of securing the organisation.

At a Glance

- ▶ Phish-prone™ Percentage reduced with tiered testing
- ▶ Two weeks of time saved annually thanks to PhishER's automated workflows
- ▶ High employee engagement, creative campaigns, visible executive support



Starting From Scratch

Prior to Ward Able's appointment, Mitre 10 had hired a consultant to audit the company's security posture. "There was a lot of opportunity to improve," Ward Able says.

"Training people and building security awareness was a major focus for me. I started looking for how to train our employees and KnowBe4 came up as an industry leader."

"KnowBe4 was much more affordable than other offerings that simply could not compete on the quality side."

Brad Ward Able
Head of Security & Assurance, Mitre 10

He found that KnowBe4 Security Awareness Training was deep and diverse, but also included powerful testing and reporting tools. Compared to other vendors he evaluated, KnowBe4 was his top choice.

"The content was excellent, the platform was intuitive, and the price point made it a very easy sell internally," Ward Able says. "KnowBe4's breadth and depth of training, as well as the simulated phishing tests, were very attractive. KnowBe4 was much more affordable than other offerings that simply could not compete on the quality side."

"Comparing the cost of a breach to the cost of KnowBe4 licensing made it a no-brainer," Ward Able says.

Beyond financial buy-in, Mitre 10's leadership, including the Board of Directors, was supportive of rolling out KnowBe4 across the organisation. This set the tone for the rest of the organisation.

Driving Down Phishing Click Rates

Before KnowBe4, Mitre 10 had worked with a third-party consulting firm to run phishing simulations every quarter. Not only was the cost astronomical, but the results were startling: the first test showed a high number of users clicked on the bait.

This likely didn't tell the whole story since the simulated test went out to every employee at the same time. "We had very high click rates in the first hour, but as people talked and word spread, we had a sharp decline because everyone knew what was happening," Ward Able says.

"Once we implemented KnowBe4, we cut the clicking rate to more reasonable levels within six months."

Seeing how KnowBe4 was able to impact security awareness, the security team got creative. Rather than settle for quarterly phishing tests that had been in place with the consulting firm, Mitre 10 introduced a dynamic, tiered testing model that adjusts to previous outcomes and difficulties.

“KnowBe4’s results speak for themselves. We’ve brought our overall Phish-prone™ Percentage down to just single digits, with the flexibility to increase difficulty and reset the cycle as users improve.” The Phish-prone Percentage measures the percentage of employees who would likely click on a phishing email.

Turning Training Into a Security Culture

Formal training at Mitre 10 takes place annually, but that’s just the beginning. Every month, the security team curates topical scams for that month, pulling content from weekly KnowBe4 emails and pairs them with relevant training modules. This ensures that training remains topical and actionable.

Even Mitre 10’s coffee machines play a role, featuring a “Security Special” triple-shot espresso meant to “wake people up” to cyber threats. The team also runs regular security briefings with memorable theatrics, like smashing old computers to demonstrate hardware-level malware risk.

“We try to make security part of everyday life in a way that sticks,” Ward Able says. “It’s a bit unconventional, but it works.”

“KnowBe4 has been a critical element of standing up a security practice and culture that provides real value to our organisation.”

Brad Ward Able
Head of Security & Assurance, Mitre 10

PhishER: Automating Threat Response at Scale

KnowBe4’s PhishER further complements Mitre 10’s layered approach to security awareness. Employees across the business can report suspicious emails in one click using the Phish Alert Button (PAB), a small icon inside Mitre 10’s email client that lets users automatically route suspicious emails to the security team.

When a user clicks the PAB, it triggers an automated evaluation and response workflow within PhishER. Before implementing PhishER, identifying if a phishing email was malicious and removing it from across all inboxes could take upwards of two hours using manual scripts and cross-functional support. Now, that process happens automatically.

“We used to have to pull in teams outside of security to help us remove malicious emails,” Ward Able says. “Now, PhishER handles that entire process behind the scenes. It saves us time, it saves us stress, and it frees up my team to focus on higher-value work.”

The impact is measurable. Ward Able estimates Mitre 10 saves two weeks of security work every year thanks to the automation and efficiency provided by PhishER. It’s not just about time saved; it’s about faster containment, reduced risk and giving analysts room to breathe.

Human Risk Management in Action

With KnowBe4 licenses deployed across the group, Mitre 10 has built a security culture rooted in ownership, curiosity, competition and pride. Employees now routinely submit suspicious emails via the PAB and are internally recognised when they spot threats.

“People want to be part of the solution. They know security is everyone’s responsibility and we make sure they feel valued for playing their part,” Ward Able says. “KnowBe4 has been a critical element of standing up a security practice and culture that provides real value to our organisation.”



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