

Microsoft 365 Security & Compliance Best Practices Case Study: Convergent Computing



Company Profile:

Convergent Computing (CCO) has provided technology strategy consulting and implementation services for the past three decades. Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, CCO has a long history as an early adopter of Microsoft products and is a multi-time Microsoft Partner of the Year winner.

CCO provides services across a wide range of solutions and services including security, cloud infrastructure and tools, endpoint management, mobile computing, and data analytics.

Location:

San Francisco Bay Area, California
www.cco.com

“We start our client relationship process at the top. What are the legal requirements or regulatory compliance issues that must be addressed or else somebody goes to jail?”

— Rand Morimoto, President/CEO, Convergent Computing

Selling security solutions to today's technology buyer.

As security challenges evolve and multiply, awareness of threats has moved beyond IT departments and become an area of focus in the c-suite and boardroom. Consequently, the process of selling security solutions has changed. Today's target customers are frequently CFOs and line-of-business decision makers, not solely IT staff. And these buyers are concerned foremost with solutions, not tools.

Convergent Computing, a long-time Microsoft partner, has succeeded by understanding and adapting to the evolution of the security sales process. They're capitalizing on the intelligent security solutions offered with Microsoft 365 Enterprise to help medium-sized companies and large enterprises look at security from the top down, with a sales motion that begins not exclusively with IT but frequently with top-level decision makers.

Several years ago, CCO shifted from a focus on just selling tools to IT professionals and added engaging customers at a policy level. Today, this top-down sales motion is well suited to the integrated nature of Microsoft 365 Enterprise, providing a natural lead-in to the deployment of integrated security solutions that are available with Office 365, Windows 10 Enterprise, and Enterprise Mobility + Security.

Security policies drive customer engagement.

CCO bases its business development approach on the belief that organizations have a much easier time aligning security tools to meet their goals if they first address top-level policies. “In many cases, there is no policy, just tactics,” explained Rand Morimoto, CCO's president and CEO. “The IT department has a set of tools and they're focused on deploying those to meet specific threats, but the organization does not have an actual security or compliance policy.”

“The shift today is to work with the legal department, CFO or risk managers to determine what the organization needs and set the high-level policy to meet those requirements,” Morimoto said.

The lack of top-level security and compliance policies, along with increasing regulations, creates a business opportunity. “We start our client relationship process at the top,” Morimoto said. “What are the legal requirements or regulatory compliance issues that must be addressed or else somebody goes to jail? If you begin the sales conversation there, everything else falls into place.”

As Morimoto explained, “We demonstrate how Microsoft 365 Enterprise helps meet their top-level goals by actually thwarting a ransomware attack or blocking a phishing attack without IT even doing anything. Once that happens, the light goes on. We never have to sell the tool because they understand the value of the solution.”

CCO helps organizations develop comprehensive security policies and manage a full range of security tools. “Microsoft 365 Enterprise is the solution that allows us to start with a core policy and use that to define how and where information can be used, how cloud apps can be accessed, and make sure information is secure on any device.”



“Microsoft 365 Enterprise is the solution that allows us to start with a core policy and use that to define how and where information can be used, how cloud apps can be accessed, and make sure information is secure on any device.”

— Rand Morimoto, President/CEO, Convergent Computing

Partner opportunity space is growing.

With a shifting landscape for security products and cloud solutions, partners find that Microsoft 365 Enterprise gives them the ability to adapt. For example, Morimoto explained that while CCO has found that the length of many engagements is being reduced, Microsoft 365 Enterprise offers an opportunity to reach even more customers.

“In the past we may have worked on an engagement for a year. Now with the integration of Microsoft 365 Enterprise, the initial engagement may only last two or three weeks, but the range of solutions we can address gives us many more customers we can touch,” said Morimoto. “Instead of working with 100 customers for a year, I can work with 1,000 customers for only a month or two and my business is still 300% bigger.”

Microsoft 365 Enterprise creates a variety of opportunities for customer engagement, depending on how much or how little transition the organization has made to the cloud. “For organizations that still have everything on-premises, Office 365 might be the first entry into the cloud for them,” Morimoto said. “Then you have organizations that are heavily engaged in the cloud but haven’t really layered on security yet. Every conversation is a little different depending on what angle we’re coming from.”

Morimoto also explained that customers frequently lack the IT resources or real world deployment experiences to stay-to-date on their own, so the broad range of security solutions and updates in Office 365, Windows 10 Enterprise and Enterprise Mobility + Security presents many opportunities to revisit customer engagements. “Once we’ve completed the initial awareness, deployment and cross-training, there’s plenty of ways we can go back in after a couple of months to help a customer,” he said.

Putting it to work: Selling a 6,000-plus seat Microsoft 365 Enterprise installation

To illustrate the success of CCO’s approach to top-down security policies and sales made outside the traditional IT department, Morimoto provided a detailed explanation of an ongoing sales effort involving a 6,000-seat biotech firm.

“We’ve worked with this biotech customer for many years on various tactical projects like Exchange migrations, SharePoint customization and Windows client rollouts,” Morimoto said. “Over the past four years our work with them has added an additional dimension to help them address security in a more cloud-focused, mobile device-focused, distributed data environment.”

As is the case with most organizations, the customer’s legal departments wanted best practice guidance to set policies to help their organization use today’s security tools, so CCO employed their top-down approach and started the process by meeting with the company’s legal counsel to establish their security needs.

Once the top-level policies were in place, CCO mapped out policies for email retention, eDiscovery, data encryption, mobile device usage, and other requirements. One of the goals was to implement solutions that would solve security challenges without making IT more complex, which led to the implementation of security tools and functionality available in the customer’s Office 365 license.

Over the past year, CCO has aided the customer in establishing a secured and automated environment by implementing Microsoft 365 Enterprise for all 6,000-plus users. “With most of the tools now housed in Microsoft 365 Enterprise, we’re able to reduce costs by eliminating up to 11 other products, and we’re able to achieve an enterprise-wide rollout 70% faster,” Morimoto stated.

Advice for partners

Morimoto shares the guidance to other Microsoft partners that it’s no longer selling technology for the sake of technology. To succeed, partners not only need to understand the technology, they have to understand how to apply the technology to business solutions.

Morimoto went on to explain that it’s critical to leverage solutions as the key to the sales process. “The selling motion is different today. The buyer is no longer IT, IT decisions are being made by the line of business, risk managers, and even legal counsel” Morimoto said. “From our perspective, while we still work with IT on a daily basis, it’s critical for partners to establish relationships outside of IT to identify business opportunities.”

“Security technology changes so fast, many internal IT departments are looking for real world guidance and support to apply technology leveraging today’s best practices” Morimoto explained. “Partners have a real opportunity to show them how solutions included in Microsoft 365 Enterprise can advance their security posture without the need for IT to spend a lot of time worrying about new threats. That’s a big step for any organization, because it reduces their exposure to today’s threats and frees up their in-house IT staff to focus on adding value in other areas.”