CASE STUDY

iTech Partners with Client to Tackle Security Vulnerability Remediation

Project at a Glance

> An IT service provider for several credit associations turned to iTech to remediate a large backlog of vulnerabilities stemming from prior Leadership oversight.

> iTech was selected as a partner to rapidly build a capable remediation SWAT team. The team was comprised of iTech resources and client full time staff.

> After just 3.5 months, the total vulnerability backlog dropped by over 70%. Many iTech SWAT team members continued with the client

"iTech's consultants bring excellent industry experience - they are go-getters, team players with excellent people skills, good all-around Business Analysts who get the job done. They demonstrated leadership qualities by taking on tasks and completing them, and facilitating others to get the answers needed."

-Client, A Fortune 500 Health Care Insurance Company

THE CLIENT

This client is the IT service provider for several credit associations. The client's business revolves around a self- developed set of lending applications specific to the agricultural businesses. These self-developed applications have allowed their customer-owners to grow their businesses and provide better value and services to the end consumer. The client also provides all infrastructure architecture and support for their customer-owners. The client maintains 2 major and 1 smaller data center and its customer base is around 2800 at 143 locations around the US.

THE CHALLENGE

After a Leadership change it was uncovered that the client had not established any documented, repeatable process or procedures for vulnerability remediation in the environment. The customers were quite unhappy with this discovery. The auditors denied certifications and documented findings. The client worked to establish a documented, repeatable process for frequent patching and vulnerability remediation. While the new processes and procedures tackled the latest vulnerabilities and patches, the client still had a large backlog of vulnerabilities which needed to be remediated without impacting the customers business or negatively affecting the self-developed and purchased applications some of which were out of vendor support.

THE SOLUTION

The client decided a SWAT team approach was needed to focus on the backlog of vulnerabilities. Based on vulnerability scan results the client focused the SWAT Team on the desktops with the on-site server, network and application staff handling the other areas. iTech was selected as a partner to rapidly build a highly capable remediation SWAT team. This SWAT team would be comprised of a combination of iTech resources and client full time staff with some iTech resources backfilling in day to day operational areas. iTech quickly found resources with the following skillsets: Desktop support admins(s) skilled in Microsoft SCCM, WSUS and scripting in general along with a Vulnerability Management Analyst.
The team was structured for maximum efficiency. The Vulnerability Management Analyst ran weekly system scans.

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Leveraging that output the analyst prioritized the remediation efforts at vulnerabilities that would remove the largest number of line items in the scans. A "clear the forest to see the trees" effort. The Analyst would present his suggestions to the admins. The admins would test out the remediation actions (patches, scripts, settings etc.) in the lab and then, leveraging ITIL change control processes, implement those same actions in pilot then production. This was an iterative process with the analyst providing reporting on progress to various levels of leadership. Some of the vulnerabilities if remediated would cause issues or outages with specific business applications. This client did not have a documented exception process or a Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) system so the analyst created a vulnerability exception and approval process. Once the low hanging items were remediated or exceptions documented the more difficult items remained. The analyst collaborated with the admins to focus on the vulnerabilities categorized as critical and high.

THE RESULTS

This vulnerability remediation SWAT team completed their effort in just 3.5 months! The total vulnerability backlog dropped by over 70 % during that timeframe. Vulnerability remediation never stops so the SWAT team members helped to create process and procedures which not only were repeatable but were the start to the formal adoption by the client of a true vulnerability management program
Many of the iTech SWAT team members continued with the client to focus on a Windows 10 rollout effort which would further assist in minimizing vulnerabilities on the desktop platform.

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- National supplier of IT talent
- Services include: IT staffing, direct hire, contract-to-hire, consulting
- Database of more than 250,000 pre-qualified candidates and growing
- Access to outstanding talent for high-demand and hard-to-find positions
- iTech clients range from small to Fortune 100 companies
- iTech recruiters are technology professionals with 15 to 20 years of experience in Fortune 500 IT departments
- A woman-owned enterprise and valued partner to corporations meeting diversity requirements

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hire smarter people, *fast*

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