

## Palo Alto Networks™ Helps Security Management of Market Leading Credit Company To Be More Effective

### BACKGROUND

With almost two thirds of its activity managed abroad, and a presence in 22 countries, Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance is the European consumer credit leader. The Dutch branch office Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance Nederland B.V. is the largest credit lender of the Netherlands. Through its renowned brands and labels this financing company provides 40% of all private crediting in the country.

### UNCOMPLICATED SECURITY CRITICAL FOR AGILE FINANCIAL PROCESSING

Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance acts as a Business Process Outsource provider. Their expertise is managing the consumer credit process on behalf of third parties. This entails Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance taking care of the administrations, the authorization and actual granting of money, and also the collection of interest and repayments. Since the entire credit process is managed the client can focus on managing business with marketing and sales. Fulfilling this role requires a flexible, robust, safe and uncomplicated ICT infrastructure. Reducing the complexity of IT is one of the principal topics on the agenda of the board, to ensure that IT management can fully concentrate itself on what's strategic for the organization.

A streamlined organization needs a smooth running ICT infrastructure. That is why Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance never stops investigating where efficiency can be increased.

Sander Blankendaal leads the ICT Exploitation Department, which is tasked with the management and development of the ICT infrastructure. Under Blankendaal's leadership giant leaps are made to modernize the ICT infrastructure and the ICT department of Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance. "I am hired to make the ICT infrastructure more flexible and less complex, in order to become more agile as an organization and to reduce costs. One of every five employees is ICT staff. I'd rather see those people working on innovation projects than managing existing systems."

Blankendaal also looked into the security infrastructure. The firewall being used seemed fairly complex, and as a consequence generated high managing costs. Reporting was very time consuming and it had to be done by an external supplier. Furthermore, Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance had a strong need for functionality regarding Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS).

### FUTURE PROOF

Looking for a solution that could decrease the complexity and increase the level of security, Blankendaal's attention was drawn to the Palo Alto Networks next-generation firewall platform. Managed Security Service Provider and Palo Alto Networks Business Partner Kahuna advised to hold Proof-of-Concept (PoC) for demonstrating that the claims of analysts and the supplier would be truly realized. The PoC was performed effortlessly, and Kahuna was contracted to supply and install two redundant systems; one system acts as a back-up. Also the management of the firewall is outsourced to Kahuna.



#### ORGANIZATION:

Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance Nederland B.V.

#### INDUSTRY:

Financial Services

#### CHALLENGE:

Decrease level of TCO and complexity associated with a legacy firewall solution.

#### SOLUTION:

Replace legacy firewall with Palo Alto Networks PA-5000 Series next-generation firewall for protection while enabling IPS and better reporting.

#### RESULTS:

Increased user and application visibility and control, easier management and reporting, safely enabled applications, heightened security, ability to run IPS easily and transparently without affecting network performance.

*“Everything has become a lot easier. We can now do a lot more by ourselves. I get insight faster as the reports are now much better organized. Palo Alto Networks generates numerous reports, giving us a clear direction. With the old firewall, it took us days to unearth the information. Now it’s simply a click on a button. I’m now more in control. Also the IPS capabilities are doing a great job for us.”*

**Sander Blankendaal**  
ICT Exploitation Department

Palo Alto Networks provides IPS capabilities and could make an outstanding fit into a Security Information & Event Management (SIEM) environment. It is the fastest growing and most advanced approach to securing information and IT infrastructures. Crédit Agricole may adopt SIEM easily when it feels the need for that.

The new firewall provides Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance with more insight into who is using which applications and into the associated risks this will eventually present. This added information could be useful in compliancy reporting. Furthermore, this information can be applied to fine-tune the administration of users and applications, and for access control: who is authorized to use what part of an application. Vulnerable or dangerous applications are blocked. If the use of a particular application is necessary, there’s the option to determine a limited user group with restricted access. The firewall also filters malware from the traffic. Applications that use a lot of bandwidth but that are nevertheless allowed, are assigned a lower priority on the network to give company critical applications right of way. Furthermore, the firewall offers functionality such as IPS, proxy, URL filtering and SSL-VPN without performance loss.

#### **MORE INSIGHT FOR BETTER DECISION MAKING**

After the implementation, the solution provided even better results than Blankendaal anticipated. “Everything has become a lot easier. We can now do a lot more by ourselves. I get insight faster as the reports are now much better organized. Palo Alto Networks generates numerous reports, giving us a clear direction. With the old firewall, it took us days to unearth the information. Now it’s simply a click on a button. I’m now more in control. Also the IPS capabilities are doing a great job for us.”

Even though security was never compromised in the old situation and the former firewall was doing what it was supposed to do Blankendaal now feels reassured because patching of the Palo Alto Networks firewall requires less effort and knowledge, and is picked up on sooner. This means that new security functionality is quickly adopted and old vulnerabilities are resolved much faster.

To even be more in control, Blankendaal plans to move to a comprehensive SIEM environment. Kahuna’s SIEM platform helps organizations protect the most essential company processes and information. Palo Alto Networks would fit in seamlessly in the platform. SIEM collects ‘log events’ of everything connected in an IP network, such as firewalls, switches, routers, servers, laptops, proxies, applications, work stations, etc., but also tourniquets and access gates. This provides holistic insight into the entire IT infrastructure regarding i.e. external threats from malware and hackers, internal threats such as data breaches and fraud, and also the degree of compliance. This enables organizations and their IT department to proactively identify, classify and react to incidents faster.

Blankendaal has found Kahuna to be an excellent partner: “The lines are short. I have easy access to the management and the engineers. Kahuna quickly reacts to questions and requests. Our account manager offers great added value thanks to his knowledge, experience and good, transparent way of communicating.”

### IN CONTROL WITH PALO ALTO NETWORKS NEXT-GENERATION FIREWALL

Thanks to Kahuna's Managed Firewall solution, Crédit Agricole Consumer Finance is now a lot more in control. Getting insight into vulnerabilities and threats has become a lot easier. Management of the firewall environment has become simpler and can be handled to a large extent by the organization itself. The IPS functionality has heightened the level of security. The infrastructure is future-proof; new security concepts like SIEM are easier adopted.