SWK Helps Back Up and Secure Fortune Title's Data

SWK TECHNOLOGIES

CLIENT:
Fortune Title Agency

- Title insurance agency
- Based in Roseland, NJ and serves all 50 US states
- Founded in 2000
- Provides title and other real estate–related services
- Data protection is a huge concern
- SWK Network Services solutions include:
  - Network Assurance
  - Phishing Defender
  - Backupify
  - Email Encryption

About Fortune Title Agency

Fortune Title Agency is a title insurance firm based in Roseland, NJ with services offered nationally, which include providing title insurance policies, settlement services, and informational title reports.

"The foundation of our agency comes from cultivating strong professionals— it's a team effort," says Nick Timpanaro, Fortune Title's founder.

Nick's daughter, Nicole Plath, who joined the agency in 2008 and was appointed CEO in 2014, says that Fortune Title's quality of service is "what sets us apart" from other title insurance providers.

"We have the resources needed to make all clients a priority," says Nicole. "We believe in strong relationships with everyone - our clients, employees and vendors."

Part of this service quality includes protecting a very important client asset – data. According to Nicole, the number of transactions and the dollar amounts involved in real estate make property closings a prime target of hackers. These bad actors will often attempt to shadow communications with clients and vendors, and wait for an opportunity to arise where they can exploit human error and complacency.

"The two most valuable assets that hackers want are the NPPI (Non-public Personal Information) and escrow funds that we manage," says Nicole. "It's part of the nature of the work that we do."

Security Delivered by SWK

To protect themselves and their clients, Fortune Title relies on several security solutions, including many provided by SWK Technologies.

Technology is having a significant impact on the real estate sector, and having SWK Network Services as their Managed Service Provider has helped Fortune Title Agency

better secure their communications and their client data.

Nicole came to SWK through a personal contact with Business Development Executive Richard Schatzberg, whom she calls, "a good friend and mentor."

Fortune Title had been relying on in-house IT, which Richard pointed out to Nicole would become untenable as the agency continued to grow.

"Rich identified it way before I was ready to hear it," says Nicole. "Finally, I went, 'alright, why don't you guys come in and take a look at my system?'"

The results of SWK's review revealed some security gaps in Fortune Title's network set-up. They were in need of more comprehensive data safeguards.

"When I first came on, the protections and specifically our disaster recovery items I thought we had in place, weren't fully in place," says Nicole. "I was at risk for a loss."

Title insurance buyers have historically worked through intermediaries such as attorneys, real estate brokers and lenders. Most of the contact would be between agencies such as Fortune Title and these third parties, who handled the finer details.

"The end consumer of our product is the homeowner," says Nicole. "That's the person who's actually purchasing the insurance policy from us. "

"They have a relationship with their lender or attorney, and they entrust that person to handle it."

Security Delivered by SWK (cont'd)

The situation in real estate has begun to change, however, as most of the communications are becoming increasingly digital and end up connecting all parties through channels such as email.

"Technology is really changing the way our industry works," says Nicole, who also reveals that data is becoming more greatly integrated between everyone, which means more effort must be made on Fortune Title's side to defend their network.

"Security is more important to me now than ever before," she adds.

The greatest danger title agencies and their customers generally face is from scammers who hack into their communications. After surveilling negotiations, they will swoop in and try to imitate a party in the transaction so they can redirect the wire towards their account.

"Wire fraud is super prevalent right now," says Nicole. "The two biggest issues for me are wire fraud and data theft."

Nicole recalls one specific instance where one of Fortune Title's clients unfortunately fell victim to wire fraud – and where SWK had to step in to help rectify the situation.

"I had a buyer who contacted my employee on a Sunday morning, 'Did you guys get my wire? You emailed me and told me to send the money to this account,'" says Nicole. "We had to tell him we didn't. They tricked this guy into sending $10,000. I contacted SWK and told them the situation."

SWK's Network Service engineers immediately did an examination of Fortune Title's network to track down any signs of a breach. However, they were able to determine that Fortune Title had not been compromised and the client had fallen for a spoofed email on their end.

"SWK was able to prove that they did not hack into our system, and because of that insurance covered $5,000 of the damages," says Nicole. "I was able to get the client that money back."

A Need for Data Protection Best Practices

Nicole Plath, CEO,
Fortune Title Agency

Besides their inclusive Network Assurance managed service plan, Fortune Title Agency leverages several other IT solutions provided or managed by SWK to defend against data exposure and loss.

These services each help to create an extra layer of protection against vulnerabilities and human errors. Perhaps one of the most important areas where SWK Network Services delivers assistance is for Fortune Title's communication and productivity

applications. The agency makes frequent use of the Office 365 business suite, which allows users simultaneous access to a cloud-connected platform and enhanced collaboration tools.

"365, OneDrive - all of those things help me make my job easier," says Nicole.

However, in an industry such as real estate, networked Microsoft Office applications can be vulnerable to prolific hacking attempts. Though Fortune Title uses software to limit reliance on email services, electronic correspondence is still necessary for many communications. When they do have to use email, they leverage SWK's Email Encryption solution and multi-factor authentication to protect every message that goes out and prevent hackers from using it as an endpoint to breach.

Most importantly, SWK Network Services has significantly improved Fortune Title

Agency's business continuity and disaster recovery capabilities by providing a cloud-based data backup solution.

"SWK's disaster recovery solution is excellent," says Nicole. "We've had issues with our terminal server going down, etc. That's a big thing for me from a compliance perspective with my vendors."

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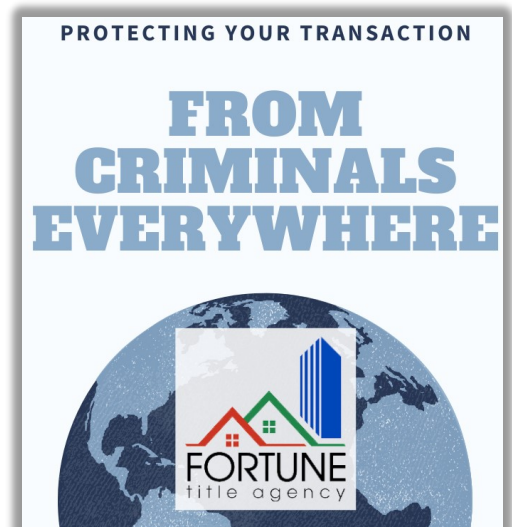
A Need for Data Protection Best Practices (cont'd)

Title insurance agencies are regulated by their partners as well as by regional authorities, and firms that cannot demonstrate compliance can lose business. Business continuity is a best practice that Fortune Title must abide by to stay competitive.

"If I was to lose power, I would need to be functional in a few hours," says Nicole.

Nicole also says that SWK is helping Fortune Title move their data increasingly to the cloud. "We're starting to move to a cloud-based model overall."

In addition to these solutions, Fortune Title ensures best practices are followed internally through training provided by Phishing Defender via SWK. Employees receive educational resources and are regularly tested with simulated phishing to gauge their readiness against cases like the one that befell the agency's client previously.

Fortune Title is also one of many SWK Network Service customers that has had a new chat box system implemented into their support plan.

"With the chat boxes you're seeing a marked progress with the functionality," says Jason Ciarlante, one of the Technical Account Managers (TAMs) that has worked with Fortune Title Agency. "This is unheard of in the MSP world."

Though Nicole was skeptical about the change in the model at first, she soon warmed up to the quick access to support resources.

"I didn't think I'd like the chat boxes as much as I do," says Nicole. "I think people just need to take the first step with it and give it a shot. Once they see it, they'll really enjoy it."

"One of the issues we come across is that while a company like ours' grows, it gets harder and harder to keep the relationship that we want," says Jason.

"We want our clients to remember that they have a partner."

Nicole also gave a special shout out to another TAM working with Fortune Title, Joshua Donker, for his work with helping the agency adapt to a new IT support model.

"He has been at our site several times for our onboarding and has also worked with a number of my staff via phone support," says Nicole. "I was initially nervous about moving over to the new support system as my staff had become accustomed to someone being in the office most of the time. This transition could not have gone smoother and I have received nothing but good feedback from my staff about our IT Support."

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SWK Enables Success for Fortune Title (cont'd)

Nicole has seen a significant difference since migrating from an in-house IT model to having SWK as Fortune Title's MSP. The security solutions provided by SWK Network Services have improved the agency's ability to meet best practices for safeguarding client data.

"My relationship with SWK has drastically increased the level to which I am protecting my data and my money," says Nicole. "I now have vulnerability testing, and penetration testing, which makes my company a better company."

Nicole adds that as Fortune Title grew, the agency's IT demands also intensified and required service of equal scope.

"I needed an IT company with resources and relationships," says Nicole. "That's what I got. A company my size needs more."

If you want to learn more about how SWK can help you with your business process challenges, and how the latest software and technologies can help you integrate, automate, and secure your systems, contact us today.

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