



"F-Secure's service model is like Velcro – it's so simple, it works perfectly, and makes me ask "Why didn't I think of that myself?"
Bart Spel, Chief Operational Officer, Avantage

Case Study

Great service is the key to Avantage's success

About Avantage

Based just outside Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Avantage is one of the country's oldest IT service providers. Avantage serves 750 clients, mainly small- and medium-sized businesses in industries like construction, financial services, trade and media, as well as education and government institutions.

In all Avantage takes care of 25,000 seats - and keeps them safe with F-Secure solutions like Protection Service for Business and Messaging Security Gateway.

Great products. But how to stand out?

"For example, with Messaging Security Gateway we handle millions of emails a week. 98% of those are spam, and we block everything but the legitimate 2%. Our customers never know this, and they don't even want to know it. They just want to know it works. Anti-spam isn't sexy to talk about, and so selling the product can be a challenge. It's why good service becomes such an important differentiator for us," says Bart Spel, Chief Operational Officer.

In the customer's mind, technology is a commodity and as such it's a price-based market. The business owner or decision maker is interested in two things: being as secure as possible for the lowest price, and not seeing or noticing the security at all.

So on the one hand Avantage offers its clients protection services that are more cost-efficient and flexible than what they're used to. On the other hand, F-Secure's efficient management tools save Avantage a lot of time that can be put to good use: "Updating accounts or adding seats takes just a couple minutes. We gain a lot of time that can be put to more sales and more personal service."

Facts-at-a-glance

Our service partner
Avantage

The solution
Using the service model to keep clients protected

The customers
Small to medium businesses and organizations throughout the Netherlands

The benefits
Amazing loyalty
Ease of doing business
Great satisfaction for both Avantage and their clients

"Of all our customers who have started using the service model, not a single one has left it. And we're now changing our whole business model to use SaaS wherever possible."

Even the technology business is a people business

"We do about 90% of our work remotely. We could do 100% of it remotely - but we make it an issue to spend time with our customers", says Spel. "If you're always remote, you don't hold up a relationship - even the technology business is a people business. And we really like building relationships with our customers. Knowing them well helps us offer better solutions and it gives them greater satisfaction and confidence. For Avantage, great service is a key differentiator and a point of pride. F-Secure's model helps us maintain a great standard of service."

If you like it, you keep it

Avantage has been offering SaaS including Protection Service for Business for many years now. Previously, customers had to sign contracts for several years at a time, and it was cumbersome and cost-heavy. Now the contract run period is so small and flexible, customers don't need to give it a lot of thought. For Avantage, the sales process has become extremely easy and the selling time shortened dramatically.

And once on the service model, do clients tend to stay there? "If you like it, you keep it. And none of our customers have left (the SaaS model). We see tremendous amounts of customer loyalty. They feel in control and they're happy with the cost, flexibility, and performance of the security."

"In fact we're changing our whole business model" to be on the service model wherever possible, says Spel. "It just makes sense for our customers. And it's great for Avantage too."

"We really like working with F-Secure because they make it easy. And they work together with us – it's almost like a partnership where we keep each other competitive. We give them ideas how to improve their products, and they give us ideas how to improve our sales."

Working together keeps both sides competitive

Avantage is extremely pleased with the performance of F-Secure's products, and furthermore says that the ease of working with F-Secure has been unparalleled.

"Traditionally we have always seen F-Secure as among the best in anti-virus, but to be the best a lot of processing power was needed. We asked for faster, lighter performance, and F-Secure listened. Now their performance is on par with the fastest solutions, and the protection is still the best there is."

F-Secure – Protecting the irreplaceable

While you concentrate on what is important to you, we make sure you are protected and safe online whether you are using a computer or a smartphone. We also backup and enable you to share your important files. Our services are available through over 200 operators around the world and trusted in millions of homes and businesses.

Founded in 1988, F-Secure is listed on NASDAQ OMX Helsinki Ltd.

fscs_avantage_htc_2012-11-05

F-Secure Corporation

Tammasaarencatu 7

PL 24

00181 Helsinki

Finland

Tel. +358 9 2520 0700

© 2012 F-Secure Corporation. All rights reserved. "F-Secure" is a registered trademark of F-Secure Corporation and F-Secure product names and symbols/logos are either trademarks or registered trademarks of F-Secure Corporation. All product names referenced herein are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.