

State of Missouri Heightens Security Position with Security Awareness Training from Security Mentor

Highly Positive Feedback on Security Mentor Security Awareness Training Across All State Agencies

THE CHALLENGE

The State of Missouri recognized early on that employees play an important role in securing its most sensitive information. Its focus on helping government workers become more well-informed with security began in 2013, when the State of Missouri initiated a program to teach its employees how to recognize vulnerabilities and protect against both internal and external threats. But there were issues from the start.

“Although the program content was fine, we soon learned that there were some serious issues with how it was presented,” said Michael Roling, Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), State of Missouri. “Once the program was instituted, we didn’t like that the user just sits there and only needed to take a quiz at the end. This was a major issue for us. Employees weren’t paying attention or changing their actions. As far as we know they were bored and not actually learning anything. For these reasons, we needed engagement. We needed training that was more interactive. We needed to make an immediate change.”

“Additionally, our previous training was done only once a year and this was not effective at all. The content that their employees were looking at was not provided often enough. If the content isn’t fresh, it doesn’t remain front and center in the employee’s minds,” he said.

With techniques such as spear phishing and social engineering on the rise, the State of Missouri decided to take its awareness training to the next level. To do this, they needed the industry’s most effective security awareness training and education program.

“Our employees can have a major impact in fighting cyber-attacks. But, in order for them to really change their behaviours, we needed to make security awareness education part of our corporate culture. We needed to find a comprehensive, collaborative, ongoing program that was engaging, fun and always up-to-date,” said Roling.

THE SOLUTION

“Our employees can have a major impact in fighting cyber-attacks.”

In July of 2015, the State of Missouri selected Security Mentor as its security awareness training and education program provider of choice.

The State reviewed a number of vendors, according to Roling. With some he found that their training was text-based and boring. Others relied on video, which raised a number of concerns. “Employees can start a video, leave the room, do other work, or simply do nothing at all. There was no way for us as an organization to guarantee they’re watching or actually learning anything,” he said. “We also felt that with those training programs, our employees would view security training as a burden and this was the last thing that we wanted. Training should be beneficial, not a burden or just a requirement.”

Security Mentor’s training was different and exactly what the State was looking for. “Security Mentor addresses cybersecurity awareness in a very innovative, graphical and interactive way. The training sessions tell an engaging story and use gamification features to make the user an active participant,” Roling noted.



State of Missouri

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The State of Missouri is the 18th most populous state with more than 6 million residents. The Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) provides direct IT support to nearly all of the state government agencies, reaching more than 40,000 end users.

BENEFITS

- Successful training program reduces the State of Missouri’s risk across the board
- Addresses cybersecurity awareness in an innovative, graphical and interactive way
- Made the State of Missouri a model and national leader in cybersecurity awareness



BENEFITS

Security Mentor's awareness training has been extremely well-received and is helping Roling's team reach its goal of making the State of Missouri a model and national leader in cybersecurity awareness.

Lowered Risk

According to Roling, Security Mentor has lowered the State of Missouri's end user risk across the board. "Our end users have become the best detection system that we have in our security stack. As we have been making them more aware, they are uncovering more," he said. "Our end users are not afraid to let us know about concerns they are finding. Security Mentor has really brought down any communication barrier there may have been in the past."

Improved Security Posture

By focusing the training on security threats that people experience in their everyday lives, and creating insightful and engaging lessons that promote interactive learning, Security Mentor is helping State of Missouri employees become much more security savvy. "I'm ecstatic with the progress I've seen thanks to this program. Security Mentor is clearly helping enhance the overall security posture of the State of Missouri," Roling said.

Passionate Employees

Eight months after its rollout, more than 85% of employees have participated in Security Mentor training. That's a huge achievement, according to Roling. "Security Mentor is different than anything I've seen before. Once we switched to Security Mentor, we received compliments for the first time ever from our employees on our security awareness training."

Simple, Powerful Administration

"With our previous training program, the set up process was painful. We lost hours of time on the phone with the support team, just getting the program in place. It has been a completely different experience with Security Mentor. No longer do I have to repurpose staff hours to focus in on whether or not our security training program is working. I can devote precious time to other things. Establishing a partnership with a company like Security Mentor to lighten our burden has been amazing. The entire Security Mentor support staff has been absolutely outstanding," he said.

In fact, Roling says "One of the biggest benefits of Security Mentor's training is that employees can take what they've learned and apply it to both their personal and professional life. A number of our employees have asked how they can use Security Mentor's security awareness training outside the organization."

The State of Missouri has also had many inquiries from other government organizations that want to benefit from Security Mentor's program. "We have let other state organizations know how easy and beneficial Security Mentor has been for us. Moving forward, we plan to expand the program to other organizations within the State of Missouri. Hopefully they will jump on board as quickly as we did," noted Roling.

To learn more about how Security Mentor's security awareness training can help your business, contact 831.656.0133 or sales@securitymentor.com, or visit www.securitymentor.com

"Since instituting the program, we have seen and felt a major shift in culture around security. Security Mentor not only trains our employees, they educate people."

Michael Roling,
Chief Information Security
Officer (CISO) for the State
of Missouri

ABOUT SECURITY MENTOR

Security Mentor is a visionary and global leader in the security awareness training and education industry that enables organizations to reduce risk by creating cyber-savvy employees. The Security Mentor Training Platform provides a single portal for integrated security services including training, phishing simulation, policy management, lesson quizzes, pre/post training assessments, and gamification. Our flagship product is our Security Awareness Training. Brief, interactive, highly engaging lessons teach critical security skills in an easy-to-understand, memorable, and fun format that drives real behavior change. Our PhishDefense phishing simulation service provides continual awareness training enabling organizations to safely phish their own staff, directing vulnerable employees to real-time, targeted training sessions. Incorporated in 2008, Security Mentor's innovative products and services are used by enterprises worldwide, the military, government, nonprofit and educational organizations.



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