



As Business Grows Exponentially, NQM Funding Easily Scales Secure Network Access Across the U.S.



INDUSTRY

Financial Services

HEADQUARTERS

Boca Raton, Florida

COMPANY SIZE

201-500 employees

OVERVIEW

NQM Funding is a full-service correspondent lender focused on providing customers with competitive products, programs, and pricing. As a leading mortgage lender for over 25 years, NQM Funding (formerly N.P. Inc.) started in their Southern Florida headquarters and is now licensed in 46 states across the U.S., with branches and brokers spanning nationwide.

Over the past four years, NQM Funding experienced exponential growth and skyrocketed from 20 employees to 500 over four years. Brent A. Sudeck, CISSP Network Architect and longtime IT advisor at NQM Funding, says the quickly growing workforce needed a “secure, fast, and reliable way to connect to our corporate network.”

OUR SOLUTION



Our attack footprint doesn't exist anymore. Once users make their connection – we implement the least privilege principle, so we're able to give people exactly what they should be able to access and nothing more.



CHALLENGE

The traditional VPN and RDP (remote desktop) solutions that they had been using were good enough while the company was small and regional, but as NQM Funding grew and expanded into more and more states, network scalability was becoming a major issue.

According to Brent, the traditional VPN setup proved to be too slow as new branches were opening across the U.S. “When making a connection outside of the state, having to come back down through south Florida really wasn’t very workable,” said Brent, adding that their RDP solution was incompatible with the company’s main SaaS solution.

The growing threat of ransomware had also become a major concern, and the organization needed to ensure that the rapidly growing workforce was connecting securely from company laptops: “If one of those laptops was infected with ransomware, and it makes a VPN connection back to our network, it could potentially infect the rest of the network.”

Another issue Brent faced was data protection: “A lot of people weren’t making any type of connection to our network at all, which became a problem in and of itself. The users’ data was then getting stranded on their laptops. If those laptops were to get lost or stolen or broken, that data is gone. However, if they were to connect to our network, the data could synchronize with our servers, we’d be able to back it up and protect it.”

SOLUTION

After finding traditional network access solutions were affecting productivity and leaving NQM open to risk, Brent began researching solutions that could provide quick and secure network access to hundreds of remote employees working across the US.

While initially looking for an upgraded VPN, Brent quickly found that wouldn’t allow for scaling the network and ensuring a fast connection: “it still had the same issue: you had to backhaul all your traffic from Seattle to Florida, and that’s a long way, and that’s going to be highly latent.”



Brent was also very happy with the support our solution provided throughout the sales and deployment processes: “The people I dealt with were all excellent. Everybody bent over backwards to answer my questions. From day one, the support was there, and it was fantastic.”

That's when Brent began looking for a Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) solution: "The ability to only give users access to what they needed, to have some sort of device posture check (DPC) to make sure our anti virus solution was running and up to date on the users' laptops before they made a connection, gave us the peace of mind to say: ok, that device won't be spreading ransomware to the rest of our company."

Another deciding factor for Brent was being able to achieve visibility and control over the network. As hundreds of new employees joined the organization, governance became a critical aspect of ensuring secure network access.

As Brent researched and tested the leading Zero Trust solutions in the market, he found Harmony SASE delivered the cloud-based solution he needed to quickly and easily scale secure network access across the US, and enable continued growth.

As the company has a small IT team, Brent was the one tasked with configuring and deploying the solution, making it imperative that the chosen solution was easy to implement. Brent says one of the main reasons he chose us was the intuitive interface and ease-of-use: "I was able to play with it, I saw how easy it was to deploy a network and gateways and make my VPN connections – it was all very simple."

OUTCOME

Thanks to the solution's easy-to-use interface, Brent was able to quickly roll out the solution to all employees. "Now we're fully deployed, and I couldn't be happier with the way things are going. It's working exactly the way we wanted it to work."

Brent says that deploying Harmony SASE provides the company with the scalability that they needed, allowing them to open new offices and rollout quickly and effortlessly, without having to add additional IT personnel or spend time on lengthy on-boarding and training.

"Scaling was such an important thing. The company was able to much more easily merge and purchase branch offices in other states. By having the solution in place we could quickly deploy to those branch offices, and have them up and running and on boarded into our system and sharing data with us, within days."

NQM Funding's remote workforce now has the quick connectivity and security that are critical to their business: "Productivity is of paramount importance in our company. When you're closing a mortgage on a home there are deadlines that you don't get to move simply because you are having technical difficulties. There are a lot of moving parts and a lot of teams that have to be involved, and if one person – your loan officer can't connect, or can't work, or is working too slow, there's no excuse – they have to be able to do their job."

Brent is also happy that no matter where users are connecting from, our solution allows them to see "the same drives mapped, they have access to the same data without having to take another step of connecting to a remote desktop, or connecting through a VPN."

Whether they are in the corporate headquarters or in Seattle, when users connect via their laptops, they share the same intuitive user experience.

All-in-one ZTNA, device posture check (DPC) and Firewall-as-a-Service capabilities provide Brent and the organization with all of the defenses that they need when it comes to secure network access.

Brent says DPC "is an absolute must – having the peace of mind that when a laptop connects, it's not going to infect our network – that was huge for us."

FWaaS enables a secure connection from any device: “We’ve been able to configure firewall settings so that if you connect with a non-corporate laptop, they can connect – but they aren’t connecting to any of the file servers or backend server network, so if their laptop is infected, it’s not going to affect us.”

Brent adds “I no longer have any internet-facing ports open on our corporate firewalls. So that makes our attack surface null. That was a huge change. Our attack footprint doesn’t exist anymore. Once users make their connection – we implement the least privilege principle, so we’re able to give people exactly what they should be able to access and nothing more.”

ABOUT CHECK POINT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. (www.checkpoint.com) is a leading AI-powered, cloud-delivered cyber security platform provider protecting over 100,000 organizations worldwide. Check Point leverages the power of AI everywhere to enhance cyber security efficiency and accuracy through its Infinity Platform, with industry-leading catch rates enabling proactive threat anticipation and smarter, faster response times. The comprehensive platform includes cloud-delivered technologies consisting of Check Point Harmony to secure the workspace, Check Point CloudGuard to secure the cloud, Check Point Quantum to secure the network, and Check Point Infinity Platform Services for collaborative security operations and services.

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