

GETTING OUT OF THE SECURITY BUSINESS IS THE SMARTEST DECISION A CISO CAN MAKE



Since 1971, the College of Southern Nevada has grown to become a leading education institution, being the 5th largest college of its type in the US, with 37,000+ students on multiple campuses. As the largest and most ethnically diverse college in Nevada, it has prioritized the provision of an affordable, collaborative, and welcoming environment that allows all students to shine. CSN is a fully accredited institution offering hundreds of degrees and certificates in 70 academic programs – with 26 degrees and certificates available entirely online.

In 2019, CSN found itself in a dilemma. Its efforts to bolster security had resulted in spiraling costs and an unmanageable technology stack.

Both teams knew exactly what was ahead of us and jumped in together and got to work.

Mugunth Vaithyalingam, CSN CDxO

WHY CHANGE?

- Difficulty hiring security staff
- Budget stress from point solutions
- DIY security not cutting it

THE NEW REALITY

- Unified solution: Open Systems Managed SASE to fit in with Microsoft Sentinel solution
- 24x7 support and troubleshooting from experienced level-3 engineers in Mission Control operations center

WHY IT'S BETTER

- 24x7 managed operations
- Consistent costs reduce budget stress
- Ability to focus on student, faculty, and staff technology experience

“Due to the complexity of all the security solutions we were using, it had become hard to hire, train, and keep security professionals. We were in firefighting mode,” says Mugunth Vaithylingam, Chief Digital Experience Officer (CDxO) at CSN. “I routinely had to ask our CFO for additional funds to buy new security products I was assured were needed urgently.”

Yet when Vaithylingam inventoried the CSN technology stack, he found some of the security gear had never been implemented, configured optimally, or updated. Worse yet, many items were reaching end of life. “It was a budgeting nightmare, and I wasn’t confident that we were as secure as we should be.”

Allowing this situation to continue was not an option, considering the ever-tightening budgets, the wealth of personal and research information in higher education, and countless unsecured personal devices.

Vaithylingam knew things had to change. It was time to get out of the security business.

GOODBYE DIY, HELLO MANAGED SECURITY

Choosing to outsource his operations was not an easy decision, but Vaithylingam knew he had made the right call after learning about Open Systems services.

“With the Open Systems solution, we no longer need to be in the tactical day-to-day security business,” says Vaithylingam.



Failure is not an option when it comes to ensuring the security of 37,000+ students and 2,500+ faculty and staff remotely logging into our systems.

Mugunth Vaithylingam, CSN CDxO



“Instead, we manage the partner and focus on strategic security issues, like setting up the proper governance and educating the CSN community on best practices.”

VIRTUAL IMPLEMENTATION, IMMEDIATE RESULTS

Open Systems came in at a time when CSN’s IT team had to support the college’s faculty and staff who were then working entirely from home while concurrently deploying the services. Working together, the teams were able to conduct a fully remote implementation, including Secure SD-WAN, as part of CSN’s shift to a managed SASE architecture. Vaithylingam recalls, “Within a few months, all legacy hardware had been replaced, solutions were baselined, and the entire setup prepped for a full launch of the service.” The managed operations were supported by Open Systems Mission Control, 24x7. Creating a stable, resilient environment was key in a time of rapidly changing dynamics.

Remarkably, even after adapting to this new scenario, the timeline stayed intact.

“Both teams knew exactly what was ahead of us and jumped in together and got to work,” says Vaithylingam.

With Open Systems helming the full SASE architecture, engineers have unparalleled access to help CSN. Rather than simply alerting Vaithylingam’s busy team to suspicious activity in the network – which wastes time and can open the door to increased damage – Open Systems can be proactive in remediating issues immediately, based upon a preapproved plan.

“If anything goes wrong, they can triage it immediately or co-manage it with our CSN team,” says Vaithyalingam.

With the Open Systems' solution up-and-running, Vaithyalingam has found peace of mind, confident that CSN's secure network connectivity needs are in good hands. Adding to his newfound calm is the predictable cost of the service and the knowledge that he won't need to ask his CFO for more funds each quarter.

Support from Open Systems Mission Control 24x7 was even more critical as the CSN IT staff turned its focus to create an excellent online learning and working environment for its community, as well as security governance and best practices.

“We look forward to focusing on a long-term security strategy, knowing that Open Systems' technology and engineers are there to keep noise to a minimum, and work with us on response,” says Vaithyalingam.



Open Systems simply connects and secures hybrid environments so companies can focus on meeting their business goals. The Open Systems SASE Experience helps reduce risk, improve efficiency, and accelerate innovation with a comprehensive, easy-to-implement and use combination of SD-WAN and Security Service Edge delivered as a Service with a superior user experience. That's Our Service Experience Promise.

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