

CHARTING A SECURE FUTURE: SHELTERED HARBOR AND FIS GUIDE MIDSIZED BANK TOWARDS CYBER RESILIENCE

- Size (range): 2.2 billion – mid sized community bank, 150 employees
- Accounts Protected: deposit accounts
- Time from Program Inception to Certification: 8 months
- Team composition and headcount: Operations Manager, existing IT team – 6 people
- Service Provider: FIS Global

INTRODUCTION

The bank is considered mid-sized, and it is a highly responsive business bank that specializes in providing tailored financial solutions to its clients. Recognizing the importance of cyber resilience and data protection, this bank embarked on a journey to enhance its cybersecurity posture. Prior to implementing the Sheltered Harbor method, it had a robust backup plan for files and server backup, but there were concerns regarding the vulnerability of their data centers. This case study explores how the bank became more cyber resilient by adopting Sheltered Harbor's approach for resilience and data protection, with the help and guidance of FIS and their FIS Data Restore solution.

THOUGHTS ON CYBER RESILIENCE AND INITIAL PLAN

The executive team at this bank understood the significance of being cyber resilient, especially considering the potential risks associated with data breaches and disruptions. FIS had also presented FIS Data Restore, a Sheltered Harbor solution, as a clear path to improved cyber resilience. "The bank had already implemented a backup plan by placing files off-site along with our server backups. However, our two data centers were not

air-gapped or immutable, leaving both susceptible to potential damage,” stated their Chief Technology Officer (CTO).

BANK'S PLAN AND EXEC LEVEL BUY-IN

Recognizing the need for a more robust data protection solution, this midsize bank identified Sheltered Harbor as a suitable option. The bank's executive team, particularly the CTO, was already familiar with Sheltered Harbor since he came to the bank from FIS. This knowledge led to the team prioritizing the implementation of Sheltered Harbor. The Sheltered Harbor method offered air-gapped and immutable data storage, aligning with the bank's goals for resiliency and disaster recovery. The executive buy-in was immediate, as they understood the value of having a secure and isolated data backup solution.

“Buying into Sheltered Harbor was not cost prohibitive for us. We instantly saw the value their method provided,” added the CTO. FIS supports Sheltered Harbor by offering a cost-effective solution for banks of all sizes.

STRUCTURING THE IMPLEMENTATION

To facilitate the implementation process, the bank engaged the services of FIS and FIS Data Restore, FIS' comprehensive Sheltered Harbor vaulting solution, making implementation a breeze. FIS assigned a dedicated analyst who took charge of running the project and guided the bank through the implementation steps. The FIS project manager identified the key team members required for the project and worked closely with the bank to obtain the necessary validation documents. A steering committee was formed to oversee the project, and bi-weekly project meetings were conducted to track progress and ensure timely deliverables.

GETTING OUTSIDE HELP

The FIS team's expertise and support played a crucial role in registering the bank's Sheltered Harbor membership, coordinating with key team members for file extracts, and assisting with setting up automated jobs, their encryption key, access to the FIS Managed Risk and Security Services (MRSS) portal, and connection with the Sheltered Harbor monitoring log. FIS also continues to offer support post-implementation.

The team actively participates in the Sheltered Harbor discussion groups and calls to stay updated on best practices while learning how to best leverage the full potential of the

program.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The bank's implementation of Sheltered Harbor proceeded smoothly, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the operations manager, executive team, and FIS. Employees ensured that all automated jobs were set up correctly and compared the automated logs to the core data to verify their accuracy. Once two weeks of matching data was achieved, they knew they were ready to go live. The implementation success was attributed to the prioritization of Sheltered Harbor by the operations manager and executive team.

GOALS AND BUILDING TOWARDS RESILIENCY

The bank's primary goals in adopting the Sheltered Harbor method were to ensure resiliency in case of data loss or disruption, establish themselves as leaders in data protection, and assure customers of their commitment to data security. Partnering with FIS made it possible for them to achieve their goal of vaulting their data. They anticipate both customers and regulators will inquire about data protection measures in the future and want to position themselves as early adopters of this method.

GETTING PREPARED

The bank dedicated approximately one year to prepare for a catastrophic cyber attack. During this time, the bank updated their policies and procedures to include their certification in Sheltered Harbor as a priority. The team recognized the importance of air-gapped data and committed to annual recertification through FIS Data Restore to ensure ongoing resilience and data protection.

FIS, with their FIS Data Restore solution, was the first service provider to be Sheltered Harbor data protection certified; this influenced the bank's decision to move forward with FIS and enabled them to swiftly achieve their certification.

CONCLUSION

By adopting the Sheltered Harbor method with the guidance of FIS, this bank significantly enhanced its cyber resilience and data protection capabilities. The collaborative efforts of the operations manager, executive team, and partner (FIS) played a crucial role in the successful implementation of becoming Sheltered Harbor compliant. The FIS service delivery team also provides ongoing support in the event of any file problems and monitors client certification dates to ensure yearly validation testing is completed on time so the bank can maintain their certified status.

The bank now stands as a leader in this space, assuring its customers that their data is safe and secure. The proactive approach to cyber resilience and data protection exemplified by this mid sized bank's adoption of the Sheltered Harbor method showcases their commitment to providing innovative and secure banking solutions to their clients.