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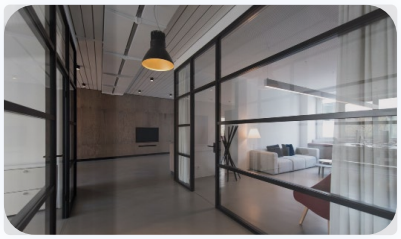
CASE STUDY

As Business Grows Exponentially, NQM Funding Easily Scales Secure Network Access Across the US

NQM FUNDING LLC



Website: Visit website
Industry: **Diversified Financial Services**
Location: **USA**
Employees: **500-1,000**
Workforce: **Hybrid**
Network: **100% Cloud**

“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.”

- Brent A. Sudeck, CISSP Network Architect

The Company:

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 NP Inc.), started out in their Southern Florida headquarters and is now licensed in 46 states across the US, with branches and brokers spanning nationwide.

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NQM Funding's Rapid Expansion Demanded a Secure and Agile Secure Network Access Solution

Over the past four years, NQM Funding, which started as a regional company in South Florida, 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 "a secure, fast, and reliable way to connect to our corporate network."

The old network solutions weren't keeping up with business growth

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 US. "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.

Addressing the alarming rise in ransomware

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 were infected with ransomware, and it makes a VPN connection back to our network, it could potentially infect the rest of the network."

Protecting data for a remote workforce

Another issue Brent was facing 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."

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Easily Scalable Network Security Access

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."

Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) promised peace of mind

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 we delivered the cloud-based solution he needed to quickly and easily scale secure network access across the US, and enable continued growth.

Since 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."

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."

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Secure Network Access Is Now a Business Enabler

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."

Achieving Business Goals

Brent says that deploying our solution 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."

Quick connections promise productivity

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 alot of moving parts and alot 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"**

Consistent user experience – from anywhere

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.

Minimizing the attack surface with a converged security solution

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 nill. 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 Perimeter 81

Perimeter 81 is a robust, yet easy-to-use, converged networking and network security platform which connects all users, in the office or remote, to all resources, located on-prem, or clouds. It is a cloud-native service that includes advanced capabilities such as Zero Trust remote access, Internet access control, malware protection and firewall as a service. It enables any business to build a secure corporate network over a private global backbone, without hardware and within minutes. The entire service is managed from a unified console and is backed by an award-winning global support team that has you covered 24/7.

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