



Finally, Peace of Mind



CompTIA Security Trustmark™ empowers businesses to find solution providers and vendors that have mastered IT security.

Chris Santini is looking for a solution provider he can trust to secure his business network. But how can he find one? As managing director of TimeCapital Securities Corp., a full-service brokerage firm in Smithtown, N.Y., Santini wanted to safeguard his small business network and customer information from internal and external threats. However, Santini didn't know whom he could really trust to address his IT security needs.

"Initially, we thought there was a market void," says Santini. "We work with our share of integrators. But I'm not a technical guy, so I was never quite sure which IT consultants were most skilled in securing and maintaining our network. That changed when I heard about the CompTIA Security Trustmark."

Indeed, the CompTIA Security Trustmark is an accreditation program that arrives at a critical time for IT vendors, solution providers and end-users. Thirty-two percent of small and medium businesses across North America have been attacked more than four times by cybercriminals in the last three years, according to McAfee, a vocal supporter of the CompTIA Security Trustmark. And 26% of those attacked took at least a week to recover from the damage.

Clearly, businesses need more effective ways to mitigate those risks. The CompTIA Security Trustmark Program—developed with the help of Kaseya International Ltd., McAfee Inc., Microsoft Corp., Symantec Corp. and a committee of large and small VARs—empowers end-customers to find qualified solutions providers and vendors that embrace, master and maintain best practices for IT security. "Not all things are equal when it comes to the security controls and infrastructure of service providers," says Charles Ross, senior manager for global risk management at McAfee. "Organizations need to develop a level of trust that data processed, maintained or stored on their behalf is done securely to satisfy fiduciary responsibilities. The CompTIA Security Trustmark provides this comprehensive view of service provider security that is unparalleled in the industry today."

"I think of it as a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for IT security," adds Santini. "I know the CompTIA Security Trustmark is reasonably new, but over the next few years it will become a standard accreditation requirement for any IT consultant that wants to work on our network."

"I was never quite sure which IT consultants were most skilled in securing and maintaining our network. That changed when I heard about the CompTIA Security Trustmark."

—Chris Santini, managing director of TimeCapital Securities Corp.



“This isn’t about slapping a label on your product or on your web site and claiming you’re secure. The accreditation really has teeth and it involves a pretty rigorous testing process.”

—Anton H. Ruighaver, director of operations at AHR Consulting LLC

Channel Support

Eager to tout their security expertise, numerous solution providers (see sidebar, First Mover Advantage) have so far earned the CompTIA Security Trustmark, and dozens more are pursuing the accreditation.

True believers in the accreditation include Anton H. Ruighaver, director of operations at AHR Consulting LLC in Oakland, N.J. “This isn’t about slapping a label on your product or on your web site and claiming you’re secure,” asserts Ruighaver. “The accreditation really has teeth and it involves a pretty rigorous testing process.”

The testing process, according to Ruighaver, includes an in-depth written test, a one-on-one verbal interview with a security expert, and substantial documentation to prove a solution provider can safeguard its own operations and customers’ businesses. Plus, the CompTIA Security Trustmark needs to be renewed on an annual basis—ensuring that accredited companies keep up with the changing IT security landscape.

For Ruighaver, the accreditation filled a clear market void. AHR Consulting is deeply familiar with government compliance mandates like Gramm-Leach-Bliley, Sarbanes-Oxley and HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

Moreover, AHR focuses extensively on the health care vertical, where customers are extremely sensitive to privacy and security issues.

In order to give AHR customers peace of mind, Ruighaver considered pursuing deeper ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) knowledge. But after doing some research, Ruighaver determined that ITIL was often too costly and too time consuming for small IT consulting firms like AHR to pursue. But he had no such concerns about the CompTIA Security Trustmark, which quickly emerged as AHR’s top accreditation priority for 2008.

Vital Signs Technology Inc. has also earned the CompTIA Security Trustmark. The San Ramon, Calif.-based solution provider is particularly well known in IT security circles, having launched managed firewall security services for customers across the San Francisco Bay Area.

SEVEN REASONS TO GET ACCREDITED

Solution providers that earn the CompTIA Security Trustmark benefit in seven key ways. The accreditation:

- 1. Acts as a competitive differentiator** for Solution Providers soliciting end-user business.
- 2. Provides confidence and assurance** to end-users of Solution Provider security expertise.
- 3. Enables organizations** to meet compliance governance, including PCI compliance.
- 4. Establishes foundational security practices** relevant to all Solution Providers, regardless of size.
- 5. Offers holistic security evaluation** of a Solution Provider for end-users and vendors.
- 6. Promotes strategic business partnerships** with product and software vendors.
- 7. Qualifies partners or service providers** for partnership programs for key industry vendors.

Source: CompTIA

Behind the Scenes

CompTIA worked for several months to develop the vendor-neutral CompTIA Security Trustmark. The development effort involved teams of experienced security industry experts working in tandem at several workshops, notes Robert Biddle, vice president of member programs at CompTIA.

“Next, the workshop findings were vetted and validated by a survey of 1,000 senior security personnel,” recalls Biddle. “Ultimately, the security industry at large gave our findings the stamp of approval, and that helped us to shape the resulting Security Trustmark.”

At its core, the accreditation is “the standard of quality for information security,” said Todd Thibodeaux, president and CEO, CompTIA. “Companies that attain this accreditation adhere to our industry’s highest standards for security practices and processes.”

To attain the CompTIA Security Trustmark, companies are independently audited by IT security experts. The audits assess security policies, capabilities, practices, and processes in areas such as:

- business continuity planning
- access management
- incident management
- personnel security
- security awareness and training
- data protection
- technical infrastructure
- partner management
- physical and environmental security compliance
- service delivery

When it comes to education and testing, CompTIA has a strong track record. The association has

developed and maintained certifications (designed for individuals) for nearly three decades. More than one million individuals have earned CompTIA+, CompTIA Network+, CompTIA Linux+ and other certifications from CompTIA.

But while certification is for individuals, the CompTIA Security Trustmark is an in-depth accreditation for entire companies. "When you look at CompTIA's track record as the IT industry's leading association, they're uniquely qualified to develop and maintain the Security Trustmark," says Chuck Lennon, president of TeamLogic IT, a solution provider in Mission Viejo, Calif.

FIRST MOVER ADVANTAGE

The following leading solution providers and managed service providers were among the first to earn CompTIA's Security Trustmark.

AHR Consulting

www.ahrconsulting.com

The Oakland, N.J.-based company expects the accreditation to help drive new revenue opportunities in the health care vertical.

Alvaka Networks

www.alvaka.net

Known as one of Orange County, California's top managed security providers

Black Box Computer Consulting

www.blackboxcc.com

Known throughout Ithaca, N.Y., as one of the area's top security consulting firms serving small businesses.

Cat-Tec

www.cat-tec.com

Headquartered in Ontario, Cat-Tec's IT Guardian managed security service now benefits from the Security Trustmark accreditation.

Cloud Services Depot

www.cloudservicesdepot.com

Formerly Secure My Company. This master MSP hosts backup, endpoint security and other services for peer MSPs and VARs.

Computer Transition Services

www.ctsinet.com

The Lubbock, Texas-based solution provider also is part of the Ingram Micro VentureTech Network—which includes some of North America's most successful VARs and MSPs.

Jenaly Technology Group

www.jenaly.com

The Portsmouth, N.H.-based company ranks among New England region's fastest-growing MSPs.

MSP Services Network

www.mspsn.com

This Omaha, Neb.-based master MSP provides a range of services to peer VARs and MSPs.

Network Management Group, Inc.

www.nmgi.com

Widely known as Central Kansas's most successful network solution provider.

Preferred IT Group

www.preferredITgroup.com

Now evangelizing the Security Trustmark to small and midsize customers across Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

Ron Cook's Connecting Point Technology Center

www.cpvegas.com

When promoting the Security TrustMark, this Las Vegas-based solution provider notes that 70 percent of small firms that suffer a major data loss go out of business within a year.

TeamLogicIT

www.teamlogicit.com

Based in Mission Viejo, Calif., TeamLogic IT is one of North America's most successful IT services franchises, and the company is now expanding into Europe.

Technology Specialists

www.tspec.net

The Fort Wayne, Ind.-based consulting firm pushed beyond A+ certification to earn the Security Trustmark accreditation.

tekjet LLC

www.tekjet.net

Based in Denver, Colo., this solution provider blends managed security services with creative services.

Vernon Technology Solutions

www.vernontech.ca

The Ontario-based solution provider has made its mark with a range of hardware as a service (HaaS) customer options.

Vital Signs Technology

www.vitalsignstechnology.com

The San Ramon, Calif., solution provider specializes in managed firewalls and other proactive managed services.



COMPTIA'S TRUSTMARK PORTFOLIO

The CompTIA Security Trustmark represents the first step in a larger CompTIA initiative. Indeed, CompTIA plans to expand its Trustmark accreditation programs to include more specializations—including managed services.

As a harbinger of that work, CompTIA – working with MSP Partners and IPED (the Institute for Partner Education and Development) – in April 2009 introduced “MSP Pro ... powered by CompTIA”, a base-level exam for managed service providers. Building on that work, CompTIA is developing an advanced-level managed services accreditation.

CompTIA is uniquely positioned to continue expanding the Trustmark portfolio. For nearly three decades CompTIA has developed and maintained demanding professional certifications designed for individuals. With the CompTIA Security Trustmark, CompTIA has added accreditations that blanket entire organization, building on the legacy while propelling accredited companies forward.

Creating Global Pull

The Security Trustmark is available on a global basis. Although the first solution providers to earn the accreditation are located in North America, many international firms are working towards the accreditation. TeamLogic IT, for instance, has solution provider franchises across North America and recently established two franchises in the United Kingdom.

“Our goal is for all of our franchises to qualify for the [Security] Trustmark,” says TeamLogic IT’s Lennon. “By participating in the Trustmark, it communicates to our customers that we’re serious about our long-term business relationship.”

Over the next few weeks, TeamLogic IT plans to begin messaging around the accreditation, adding CompTIA Security Trustmark logos and background documentation to the company’s Web site and marketing materials. Similarly, AHR has launched email communications to existing and target customers about the accreditation.

“Individual solution providers can toot their own horns about the CompTIA Security Trustmark accreditation,” adds AHR’s Ruighaver. “But if end-users don’t know it exists, the industry won’t move forward.”

“At the end of the day, it’s not solely CompTIA’s responsibility or solely our responsibility to increase end-user recognition for the accreditation,” says Lennon. “It’s our joint responsibility.”

CompTIA is on the same page. The association is working with numerous vendors and solution providers to ensure the accreditation enjoys growing awareness among end-users.

“This is the rare occasion where VARs, vendors and end-users are all onboard with an accreditation effort from the start,” concludes Robert Biddle, VP of member programs at CompTIA. “Together, those three audiences are propelling the CompTIA Security Trustmark forward, establishing it as an international accreditation for trusted IT solution providers.” ●

GET STARTED

The CompTIA Security Trustmark is renewable on an annual basis. Learn more at www.comptia.org/trustmark or trustmark@comptia.org

Produced by Nine Lives Media Inc.

Nine Lives Media Inc. (www.ninelivesmediainc.com) takes aim at niche IT audiences through online media and custom media. Our online media destinations include:

- MSPmentor (www.mspmentor.net), the ultimate guide to managed services
- The VAR Guy (www.thevarguy.com), what’s next in the IT channel
- Works With u (www.WorksWithU.com), the independent guide to Ubuntu Linux

Nine Lives Media Inc. produces custom media for a range of clients across the globe. For information, contact Amy Katz, CEO, 978-468-0092 or amy@ninelivesmediainc.com.