

# CASE STUDY

## CRE Secure

### GSI's Scalable, Secure Managed Services Enable Gold-Standard Security for Company's Online Payment System

CRE Secure's strategic move to combine their security-as-a-service payment acceptance platform with GSI's industry-leading IT security management has paid off big. The online payment security provider has gained the PCI DSS compliance so critical to their business, the gold-standard service they need to serve their own customers, and the freedom to get back to solving the PCI DSS compliance hurdles facing e-merchants worldwide.

#### Overview

Led by a team of innovative, successful entrepreneurs and e-commerce experts, CRE Secure has seen great success in helping online merchants achieve PCI DSS compliance. The company's secure online payment system ensures compliance for all of their customers' stores, and provides a hosted checkout page that instantly mirrors any retailer's website design. Because of this one-of-a-kind service, CRE Secure customers are able to organize, manage and ship products from their online stores, and accept credit card transactions safely – a critical capability in an era so deeply entrenched in security.

#### Business Challenge

Given the highly secure nature of the CRE Secure enterprise, the company was faced with several challenges when launching their PCI DSS offering.

- First and foremost, before CRE Secure could offer customers a system for becoming PCI DSS compliant, they needed to become PCI DSS compliant themselves – and quickly. With new global standards being introduced about the specific criteria behind compliance validation, they needed a hosting provider who could provide expert guidance in this area.
- Secondly, they needed the PCI DSS compliant environment to be able to withstand even the most cunning of hackers – a must for hosting their proprietary application and enabling their customers to securely handle credit card data.
- Next, with the anticipated boom in business, they wanted a flexible, scalable IT environment that could handle additional capacity, as the company continues to grow.
- And lastly, CRE Secure recognized the value in leveraging a highly secure, PCI DSS compliant infrastructure themselves – they wanted a partner they could trust to take on specific IT security responsibilities and do the job well. By sharing this responsibility, they would be able to focus their energies on securing their customers' websites, as well as strategically building the business.

#### Solution

GSI was a natural fit for CRE Secure's needs. The company's depth of experience in security compliance gave GSI a leg up in understanding the issues surrounding CRE Secure's ability to achieve PCI DSS compliance and maintain a highly secure, scalable environment.



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GSI's customized solution for CRE Secure combined:

- **GSI Matrix Virtualization Platform** to address CRE Secure's need for scalability and PCI DSS compliance, while achieving cost efficiencies for the company.
- **A high-performance, rock-solid web application firewall** to satisfy CRE Secure's desire and need to provide the utmost security for their customers' data, and address Section 6.6 of the PCI requirements – one of the more difficult PCI criteria to satisfy.
- **GSI CompliantHost managed services** to allow for complete management of CRE Secure's complex environment, including dedicated client support, security validation assistance, 24x7 monitoring, and other value-added services like alerting and change management.

### Why CRE Secure Chose GSI

Among others, value and expertise were the leading reasons behind CRE Secure's decision to go with GSI.

- **Knowledge.** Specifically, GSI's years of experience in PCI DSS compliance and successful track record were very appealing to CRE Secure. The company needed an experienced provider, and GSI was referred to them by other customers who praised their expertise.
- **Value.** Another determining factor was simply value. "In our search for a provider of PCI DSS compliant services, we found very few hosting companies that provide the expertise and level of compliant services that GSI does – particularly with managed services," said Michael Fuller, CRE Secure's COO and chief compliance officer. "When we looked at the additional costs associated with the security management PCI requires, we determined that GSI's managed services delivered the best value."
- **Secure, scalable solution.** The solution fit the bill, with the scalability of GSI's Matrix and the added security from GSI's WAF solution. Using GSI's firewall solution also meant that they would not have to incur the significant expense of purchasing a high-dollar WAF directly from a provider.
- **Gold-standard service.** CRE Secure felt they could successfully work with GSI on a daily basis and build an ongoing relationship. "It was important that we found the right partner who would provide secure managed services at the gold standard needed to serve our own customers," said Fuller. "At the end of the day, this is why we chose GSI."

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### Results

The relationship between CRE Secure and GSI has proved to be a winning combination, with both companies highly satisfied with the successful results of the compliant managed services solution. Here are a few ways in which CRE Secure has benefited:

- **Security compliance.** CRE Secure achieved PCI DSS compliance within a reasonable time frame, and their Report on Compliance has now been accepted by Visa. “GSI saved us time and money by working in tandem with our QSA to make sure we met all the required security standards,” said Greg McGraw, president and chief executive officer of CRE Secure. “Their depth of security expertise proved instrumental throughout the validation process – making it a much more expedient process than it otherwise would have been.”
- **High availability.** CRE Secure has been very satisfied with the availability of their environment and GSI’s ability to respond quickly to issues. “Being in the credit card transaction security business, it is extremely critical that processing not be interrupted,” said Fuller. “GSI’s uptime and responsiveness have been exceptional.”
- **Effective change management.** The company is impressed by GSI’s change management process. “We want to restrict any hacker’s ability to compromise our system. GSI provides the most restricted access that any solution could offer – and it’s working well,” added McGraw. “The ongoing maintenance and development of our application environment, and the change management process GSI has in place have all been very workable and effective in achieving what is needed.”
- **Scalability.** Additionally, by moving into a managed services environment, CRE Secure has the ability to add capacity easily and efficiently.
- **Responsive client support.** And lastly, CRE Secure is particularly pleased with the high level of support and responsiveness they receive from GSI’s ServerHeroes® team – from system design and security compliance guidance to proactive, day-to-day client support. “GSI has done a great job in communicating with us and is always available when we need questions answered,” said McGraw. “Any type of problem or bug or error – we get immediate, proactive alerting, which is essential for our security needs. This type of approach makes us want to be a GSI customer for years.”

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