



The Challenge

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta was interested in modernizing their legacy Sidewinder firewalls (FW) during the 2016 calendar year. While Sayers was working on the firewall opportunity, FHLBA wanted to also take some time and unused funds to consider replacing their insufficient email security solution. Their email gateway's support contract was set to expire January 1, 2017. Sayers was tasked with proposing the best modern Next Generation Firewall and most cost friendly and secure email system.



What we did right

With the FW, we knew they had a good perception of Palo Alto Networks and were going to compete with the low cost Fortinet alternative. Knowing this, the sales team immediately gathered the necessary internal engineering resources and created a game plan with the local Palo Alto Networks sales (in flux) and engineering team.

- ▶ Negotiated pricing with Palo Alto Networks once we knew FHLBA's budget.
- ▶ Fortinet tried to underbid our proposal, but with our strong relationship, on-going communication and education on product value, we were awarded the business.
- ▶ Strong communication between Sayers, Palo Alto Networks and distribution ensured the product was shipped and invoiced in 2016.

With Proofpoint, we engaged our engineers early on in the process clearing up some technical questions and concerns. The initial quote from Proofpoint did not include all the features requested by FHLBA. Sayers engineering caught the minor, but critical, mistake before it was sent to FHLBA.

✔ What we learned

We always need to ensure we understand the client expectations! Over communicate and clarify. Unfortunately, FHLBA would have preferred that we completed the first Palo Alto Networks product demonstration on-site. We did; however, have all subsequent product discussions on-site. We didn't realize how important this was, but quickly adapted when learned.

- ▶ We knew FHLBA had an aggressive time-line and budget, what we didn't know early on was their budget. Having known this earlier, we could have prevented the under bidding situation with Fortinet.
- ▶ We should always ask clients if they have a preferred technology before we engaged and start market research. We need to hold our vendors accountable and ensure they stick to client defined time lines.
- ▶ We assumed Palo Alto Networks would provide references in a timely fashion, but had to scramble close to their deadline to ensure they obtained relevant references as requested.

Both Palo Alto Networks and Proofpoint solutions had to be invoiced before the end of 2016. Palo Alto Networks was completed without issues. We assumed that Proofpoint would expedite the order, but instead, once Proofpoint received their PO from distribution, they closed for the remainder of the year. We did not follow up with them and it got lost with the other year end opportunities.

✔ The Solution

The Client selected Proofpoint for their email system and Palo Alto Networks for their Next Generation Firewall. Sayers will be providing professional services in 2017 for the installation of their Palo Alto Networks solution.