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## CUSTOMER SUCCESS

# Attica Bank

## Leading Greek Bank Chooses Symantec Over Microsoft for Enterprise Endpoint and Email Security

When Attica Bank's Symantec Endpoint Protection 11 license was due for renewal, the Greek bank was faced with a dilemma: upgrade to Endpoint Protection 12.1, or switch to Microsoft Forefront, which was being offered free of charge as part of the Microsoft Enterprise License Agreement (ELA). There was only one way to find out, and that was through a rigorous evaluation of the two solutions. The Symantec endpoint security solution won hands-down over Microsoft in every criteria—security functionality, performance, consolidation, and total cost of ownership. Attica Bank not only standardized on this best-in-class endpoint security solution for its 1,500 endpoints, it also extended the solution through Symantec Protection Suite Enterprise Edition to include email security.

### Decision time: Symantec or Microsoft?

Alex Belsis' initial introduction to Endpoint Protection 12.1 came almost one year ago, when Attica Bank's Endpoint Protection 11 service agreement was close to expiring. At the time, the Greek bank was operating a distributed environment through more than 100 branches and 1,500 endpoints.

The challenges for this IT security officer and his team were all too familiar to so many organizations, including shrinking budgets, limited headcount, and growing demands for best practice security measures. However, there was another issue on the horizon: Microsoft was offering its Forefront endpoint security solution free of charge. It was Alex's job to decide whether to stay with Symantec or switch to Microsoft.

A rigorous evaluation process between the two solutions was organized by the bank. The following summarizes the outcome of that evaluation against a suite of key endpoint security criteria.

### 1. Security

Attica Bank required a comprehensive, single-agent endpoint security solution to support different types of devices with multiple layers of protection. The team began by evaluating the standard offerings, such as antimalware, antispyware, desktop firewall, and host intrusion detection system.

### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

**Website:** [www.atticabank.gr](http://www.atticabank.gr)

**Industry:** Financial Services

**Headquarters:** Athens, Greece

### SYMANTEC SOLUTION

Endpoint Security

## Why Symantec?

- Extensive, integrated portfolio of products and services
- Track record in financial services industry
- Security functionality, virtual machine performance, total cost of ownership, and integration

They also performed a deep dive into other features, including:

- Endpoint tamper protection, to prevent users with administrative privileges from disabling the end point protection agent.
- USB and floppy drives device control, to ensure unique removable devices sanctioned by the IT department are allowed to connect to endpoints. The bank also needed to prevent users from connecting their own device to the bank systems and copying, moving, or deleting data, files, or programs.
- Proactive threat protection, to stop malware with signature and behavior-based techniques, and include controls that look beyond the operating system such as memory usage and kernel-level modifications.

Endpoint Protection, the evaluation revealed, includes features that help identify and contain new threats. These include Insight (which is supported by the Symantec Global Intelligence Network) real time SONAR, and Application Control. These security controls were crucial to Attica Bank. The analysis concluded that the comprehensive functionality extended beyond the standard offerings—antivirus, antispyware, desktop firewall, and host intrusion detection—into tamper protection, USB device control, and application control.

## 2. Performance

Attica Bank's server infrastructure is 100 percent virtual, operating on a heavily consolidated environment through more than 100 VMware servers. Alex and his team acknowledged the close partnership between Symantec and VMware over the years—and their common goal to maximize endpoint security performance in virtual environments. During the evaluation and subsequent deployment of Endpoint Protection 12.1, Attica Bank experienced a significant increase in VMware performance and an equivalent reduction in CPU and memory usage. This was most noticeable when performing resource-intensive antivirus tasks such as antivirus "storms" or signature updates.

## SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

### Key Challenges

- Decision required whether to upgrade from Endpoint Protection 11 to 12.1, or switch to Microsoft Forefront
- Requirement for comprehensive, single-agent endpoint security
- Optimize VMware security performance

### Symantec Product

- Symantec™ Endpoint Protection 12.1
- Symantec™ Protection Suite Enterprise Edition

### Symantec Partner

- Syntax Information Technology, Inc. ([www.syntax.gr](http://www.syntax.gr))

### Technology Environment

- Endpoints: 1,500
- Operating systems: All flavors of Windows, Linux Operating System, Mac OS
- Servers: VMware

## BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

- Introduced comprehensive, single-agent endpoint security solution to support different device types with multiple layers of protection
- Identified and contained new threats across the bank
- Led to significant increase in VMware performance and equivalent reduction in CPU/memory usage
- Supported all platforms and operating systems
- Consolidated email security within one, unified endpoint security solution
- Integrated with other solutions, such as DLP and Managed Security Services
- Led to significant reduction in total cost of ownership

## 3. Flexibility

Another criterion was support for Attica Bank's heterogeneous endpoint environment. The chosen solution needed to support almost all versions of the Windows operating system—from Windows 2000 workstations and Windows 7 to Red Hat Linux, Ubuntu Linux, and Macintosh. Several bank branches operate on legacy systems and the chosen solution needed to reflect this. The evaluation concluded that Endpoint Protection would support all of these different endpoint platforms.

## 4. Consolidation

Attica Bank is no different to most organizations in its desire to consolidate its IT infrastructure. And it was at this point that the bank decided not only to upgrade its Endpoint Protection deployment to 12.1, but also to standardize on Protection Suite

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### Alex Belsis

IT Security Officer  
Attica Bank

Enterprise Edition. Besides consolidation, the major driver here was the inclusion of Symantec Messaging Gateway, powered by Brightmail, which enables the bank to defend its email perimeter, and quickly respond to new messaging threats. Until that time, Attica Bank had been using another email content security solution, and by implementing Messaging Gateway, the bank consolidated several technology solutions under a single license agreement.

Messaging Gateway added further valuable features which enhance data protection. These include the ability to scan emails as they leave the network, built-in DLP functionality, and the optional email encryption licence that can automatically encrypt sensitive emails.

“Messaging Gateway is an excellent product and we are really excited to move to this solution,” says Alex. “It is top in Gartner’s list, we have seen many improvements compared to the previous solution, and the antispam engine and reputation services are some of the product’s highlights. Moreover, the migration was straightforward with no major issues, and so far we have experienced an excellent after-sales support.”

## 5. Integration

Attica Bank evaluated the integration of Endpoint Protection with other solutions—and it quickly became apparent that Endpoint Protection integrated seamlessly with Symantec solutions for Data Loss Prevention and Managed Security Services.

In addition, this layered security approach has endpoints, mail server, and mail/web gateway all working together to give the bank stronger, more effective security compared with buying fragmented solutions from multiple vendors. Symantec Protection Center (free with Protection Suite) gives the bank a single view with actionable intelligence and integration into the Symantec Global Intelligence Network.

“The IT infrastructure of a typical financial services organization is complex and subject to fast change. In this environment, rapid, straightforward integration tackles both those issues head on,” says Alex. “Data loss prevention provides us with out-of-the-box interfaces and connectors for Messaging Gateway. Plus it provides a unified and integrated management platform, affording us a centralized overview of different security controls like endpoint security, email content security and data loss prevention.”

## 6. Total cost of ownership

Attica Bank’s evaluation of Symantec Endpoint Protection 12.1 against Microsoft Forefront concluded that Microsoft Forefront security would have required the deployment of hundreds of new PCs at the branches.

This was a crucial deciding factor: choosing Symantec circumvented the need to purchase additional PCs, new systems management platforms, and new software installations. Moreover, for email content security, the bank would have needed to purchase Forefront for Exchange which was not offered free for Microsoft enterprise customers licensed under core CAL. However, because Attica Bank already had Endpoint Protection 11 installed, the upgrade path of non-legacy systems to the latest version didn’t impose any technical limitations or additional costs.

## Benefits at every step from Symantec Protection Suite

In summary, Attica Bank’s evaluation of Endpoint Protection 12.1 and the subsequent switch to Protection Suite Enterprise Edition led to the following benefits:

- Reduced costs
- Consolidated and integrated multiple security controls
- Supported endpoints environment, including legacy systems

- Aligned with security policies and technical security requirements
- Increased system performance and effectiveness, especially in the VMware environment
- Educated end users on security threats at the endpoints

Attica Bank now considers Symantec a trusted advisor and one of its most valued technology partners. This is based on:

- Extensive, integrated portfolio of products and services
- Symantec solutions listed highly by Gartner and Forrester analyst reports
- Long track record of successful implementations in the financial services industry
- Growing market share
- Excellent collaboration with specialized local partners on enterprise security such as Syntax Information Technology, Inc.
- Quality of aftersales support from Symantec support centers

“Every way you look at it—security functionality, virtual machine performance, total cost of ownership, and integration—Endpoint Protection 12.1 wins hands-down over Microsoft Forefront,” Alex concludes.

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**Alex Belsis**  
IT Security Officer  
Attica Bank