Ampcus

is top cybersecurity service provider

Staying ahead of the game in the world of cybersecurity might be next to impossible, but the kind of proactive thinking and strategy required to do so is par for the course at Ampcus Inc. President Salil Sankaran is proud of how far the company has progressed in the cybersecurity space, and he sees the women-owned organization as a leading provider of many information technology services.

Ampcus established its federal practice in 2007, and the company continues to work extensively with government organizations. But today, 50 percent of the company's business comes from commercial and 50 percent from federal.

With hacks, attacks and a multitude of online security breaches happening at an alarming rate, the need for cybersecurity services is more paramount now than ever before. While there are any number of technology consultants available to help companies navigate the scary seas of the online world, Ampcus has established itself as one of the country's top cybersecurity service providers.

The cybersecurity problem

Ampcus is involved with policies, guidelines, identity access management solutions, intrusion detection and prevention systems and monitoring services, along with network- and database-level security. As more and more data are placed in the cloud, the threat for companies of all sizes has increased dramatically over the years. As specialists in the field, Ampcus is focused on making sure the security of its clients' information is not compromised in any way.

But doing so is a very arduous task, and Sankaran is aware that training is the main key to success.

"It's a very dangerous world," he said. "Once you have anything online, it becomes tough. The big trend we're seeing now is in training. Most of the time, something happening to a company's data is because of human error."

Sankaran is seeing more bots — web robots that run simple software applications — on the internet now than ever before, many of which are being used by hackers to automate their attacks. "We are seeing a lot of phishing emails — emails that pretend to be coming from a legitimate source, but are created to steal sensitive information — lately as well," he said. "Maybe you're training your employees not to click on any emails, and your company is proactive in warning employees about phishing. Still, 12 to 15 percent will click on something even if they're told not to, if the degree of curiosity is too great."

Perhaps even more importantly, according to Sankaran, is when a company chooses a supplier to work with that has access to data. The big Target Corp. data breach, for example, came though one of its suppliers.

"Are they being audited or vetted enough?" Sankaran often asks. "You do a lot of business with other companies, and maybe they have access to your systems they don't need. What's even more scary? When a breach happens, it may not be discovered for 30-45 days."

Why Ampcus stands out

What sets Ampcus apart from other consultants on the commercial side is its comprehensive test lab and environment it has built for clients to use. "We have set up an entire framework within the company, so clients can come here and do their testing live on-site," Sankaran said. "We also have an innovation lab for [research & development], and our employees see they can work on the latest and greatest technologies here."

Ampcus is also an [International Organization for Standardization] 9000-, ISO 20000-, ISO 27001- and [Capability Maturity Model Integration] Level 3-certified company, certifications very few women- and minority-owned businesses have.

The company is actively involved with many industries, and that list continues

Anjali Ramakumaran

Salil Sankaran

to increase proportionately with its own internal growth. "The industries we serve are numerous: banking, financial, communications and telecom, *(continued on page 126)*

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(continued from page 124) governments, health care, fashion … we're very diverse," Sankaran said. "As a company, right now we are a little over 600 employees. We take care of them. They are happy, and we see many who have been with us a long time."

The power of diversity

It is said that diversity of thought powers innovation, and that adage certainly applies at Ampcus. To begin with, the company was founded by CEO Anjali "Ann" Ramakumaran, 2014 winner of the Women in Technology Entrepreneur Leadership Award and esteemed Women's Business Enterprise National Council member/supporter. The company employs individuals from almost 30 countries around the world, and both Ramakumaran and Sankaran consider them to be best and the brightest. With such a diverse group, the Ampcus team is able to come up with many new ideas from its brainstorming sessions. "We did a lot of brainstorming when the big Sony hack happened," Sankaran said. "We analyzed it and created a framework to test internally, and even learned how we could have possibly prevented it. All that [action] comes from diversity of thought: You get the best minds from all over the world. It helps us bring better solutions to our customers."

The key to solving security problem — simple answer, difficult execution

Ampcus approaches online security much like security in the real world: Issues arise due to human error, and thieves are always looking for people who leave things open. "It's no different in the online world," Sankaran said. "People are always the weakest link in the security chain. There are criminals with very bad intentions out there, and training is the first and foremost thing that needs to be done."

Ampcus has a presence in New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, California and Atlanta and has plans to move into Chicago, Michigan and New Jersey as well. The company prides itself on a very high employee retention rate of 94 percent, which is bolstered by its cross-training program where employees who may have come with one specialty are able to become specialized in another field of expertise. ●