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Bank of Yokohama enhances email trust, reinforces customer trust with DigiCert Verified Mark Certificates

Executive Summary

Company name: The Bank of Yokohama, Ltd.
Industry: Financial Services
Headquarters: Yokohama, Japan

Key business requirements:

- Protect customers from email phishing attacks
- Provide customers with a clear-cut means to quickly verify emails from bank
- Improve customer engagement with emails from the bank

Solution:

- DigiCert Verified Mark Certificate (VMC)

Key benefits:

- Verified logo in customer emails distinguishes bank communications from those of potential attackers
- Phishing attacks have significantly been reduced
- Email open and engagement rates have increased.
- Bank has gained competitive advantage by providing innovative communications security

Requirement

Assure customers that company email is legitimate and secured

The Bank of Yokohama, Japan's largest regional bank, faced a challenge communicating with their customers. On average, the bank sent out 240,000 customer emails a day that ranged from bank statement and withdrawal notifications to promotional campaigns. However, the bank's same customers were targets of sophisticated phishing emails designed to gain access to customer accounts.

To combat this threat, the bank had recently deployed DMARC (Domain-Based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance) to combat email spoofing. However, DMARC couldn't provide a visible marker that proved to recipients that emails from the bank's domains were legitimate communications. The bank needed to deploy the BIMI (Brand Indicators for Message Identification) standard that would display a verified, blue-checked logo to show that their emails could be trusted. "Our goal was not only to get DMARC ready but also to get BIMI and to prepare against phishing emails to our customers," said Akihiro Fushimi, business leader with the security integration team at Bank of Yokohama. "We considered it a priority for our customers."

ICT Planning and Promotion Department, Security Integration Team, Leader, Akihiro Fushimi, CISSP, and Takumi Kuze

Solution

DigiCert Verified Mark Certificates authenticated emails and enabled corporate logo to be displayed

To deploy BIMI, the bank needed to use Verified Mark Certificates (VMCs). VMCs act as proof to email providers, such as Gmail, that a given email has passed the authentication checks supplied by DMARC and that the sender owns the logo referenced in their BIMI record.

Once the email provider obtains this proof, it displays the company logo — giving customers visual proof that the email may be trusted.

Already a customer of DigiCert TLS certificates, the bank chose DigiCert Verified Mark Certificates (VMCs). "DigiCert Verified Mark Certificates offered us a comprehensive solution that enhances our email security and strengthens our brand presence," said Hiroshi Nakamura, CISO at Bank of Yokohama. "By displaying our verified logo in customer inboxes, we can provide instant visual confirmation that the email is genuinely from us, reducing the risk of falling victim to phishing attacks."
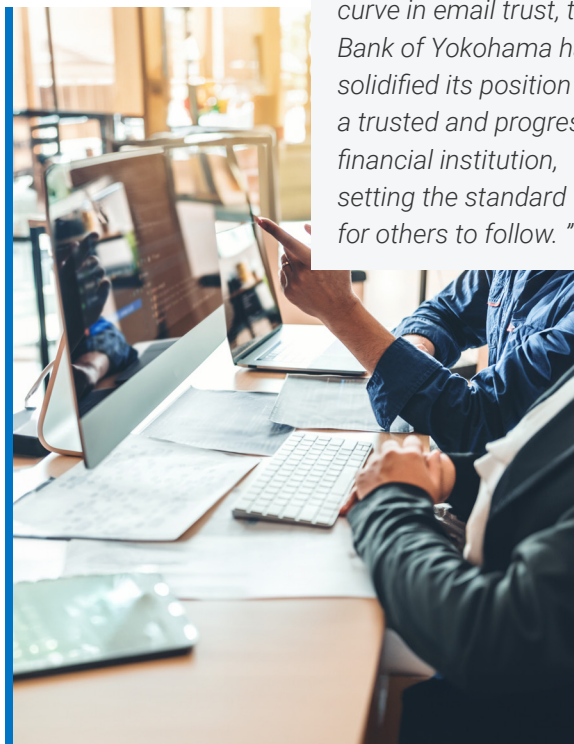
"By displaying our verified logo in customer inboxes, we can provide instant visual confirmation that the email is genuinely from us, reducing the risk of falling victim to phishing attacks."

Dramatically cutting the number of phishing attacks

"Purchasing Verified Mark Certificates from DigiCert CertCentral was smooth. We didn't have any issues," said Takumi Kuze of the security integration team. After a rigorous attestation process, DigiCert validated the bank's email domains and their logo and issued the VMCs.

"Since implementing DigiCert's Verified Mark Certificates, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of reported phishing incidents involving our brand," Nakamura said. "What's more, email is still a key tool for building relationships with our customers. It's critical that they have trust in the emails we send to them," he added.

"By staying ahead of the curve in email trust, the Bank of Yokohama has solidified its position as a trusted and progressive financial institution, setting the standard for others to follow. "

Strengthening brand reputation and competitive advantage

In addition to improving the level of customer trust, DigiCert Verified Mark Certificates also significantly strengthened the bank's brand reputation in the crowded financial services space. As one of the first financial institutions in Japan to adopt this innovative technology, the bank has differentiated itself from its rivals and showed its willingness to invest in solutions that prioritize customer security and prevent brand impersonation. This forward-thinking approach has not only attracted new customers who value security but has also helped to keep existing customers who appreciate the bank's efforts to protect their sensitive information and financial assets.

As customers become increasingly aware of the importance of email trust, the bank's proactive adoption of VMCs has positioned the bank as a leader in this space, enhancing its brand image and attracting security-conscious customers. By staying ahead of the curve in email trust, the Bank of Yokohama has solidified its position as a trusted and progressive financial institution, setting the standard for others to follow.

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Increasing customer engagement with bank emails

Because the VMCs enable BIMI, customers now had a clear visual cue of the authenticity of the bank's emails. "We have empowered them to make more informed decisions about the trustworthiness of the communications they receive. This, in turn, has helped us to protect our customers' sensitive information and financial assets, reinforcing our commitment to their security and peace of mind," Nakamura explained.

The increased trust and confidence fostered by VMCs not only strengthened the bond between the bank and its customers but also contributed to improved email engagement rates. They found that customers were more likely to open, read, and respond to emails that display the bank's verified logo, perceiving these communications as more credible and trustworthy. As a result, the bank has actively started to notify customers what a legitimate email should include, so that more of their customers understand what to look for.

"Normally, security projects are not fun, but this one has been because we're seeing such improved email engagement with our customers," Fushimi added.