

Case Study

Hibbett Scores with Cequence Security API Discovery, Compliance, and Protection

HIBBETT

A Highly Successful Athletic-Inspired Fashion Retailer

Hibbett has grown rapidly in both size and popularity since opening its first store in Alabama in 1945. The company distinguishes itself from other retailers with its wide network of convenient locations in smaller cities that aren't typically served by the larger brand stores, its personalized customer service, and comprehensive access to coveted footwear, apparel, and equipment from the nation's top brands. In addition to its vast network of retail outlets located across the United States, Hibbett also supports a large on-line presence. Hibbett's loyal customers can choose between visiting stores located in their own communities, or the convenience of ordering products from the company's website (hibbett.com).

IT and Business Challenges

Lee Morris has worked for Hibbett for over 30 years and is now the company's Senior Director of Security and Infrastructure Architecture. "Security is no longer the department of 'no,'" said Morris. "With all of the powerful technology solutions we have in place, we are now recognized as a business enabler."

Hibbett relies on a hybrid IT environment for its retail and online operations. Several of the company's critical services are supported on-premises, while others are now transitioning to the Oracle cloud, with a suite of SaaS products and Azure Identity Services. "Hibbett has gone from just a few API processes moving data between a couple of applications, to an environment where almost everything we do is through API communications," said Stephen Scandrett, Senior Security Engineer at Hibbett Sports. "There's a lot of data moving between all of our internal applications and external systems. Managing that communication from a security perspective is the ultimate priority for our team, given the importance of protecting our revenue stream, along with our proprietary and confidential customer information."

Before implementing the Cequence solution, Hibbett was looking to strengthen their API security and bot management solutions. "We only have a modest number of APIs now, but that will increase rapidly as we move more of our infrastructure to the cloud," explained Scandrett. "We needed a way to make sure everything was secure and built into the system before ramping up our API usage. We didn't want to wait until it got beyond our control and became a headache to manage."

"The Cequence Unified API Protection Platform is one of the key technologies that is enabling IT to become a much larger contributor to our company's success."

Lee Morris

Sr. Director of Security
and Infrastructure Architecture,
Hibbett Sports

Challenges

- ✓ **Needed better visibility into APIs** to reduce the risk of data loss, theft, fraud, and business disruption
- ✓ **Looking for a solution that was easy to deploy**, without the need for third-party tools
- ✓ **Wanted the ability to detect and remediate API vulnerabilities** before moving new apps into production

Ensuring Availability

One of the IT team's biggest challenges is protecting application availability during new solution deployments. "Everything needs to be operational 24x7, or it will have a negative impact on our business," noted Scandrett. "Availability is a huge component of security, and I didn't want any new security measures to affect our revenue streams or business partnerships in any way, shape, or form. We had to make sure any systems we implemented wouldn't cause latency or throughput issues with our APIs or the data that's transferred between them."

Searching for a Way to Improve API Security

Morris and Scandrett started the search for an API protection solution by listening to peer reviews and reading industry analyst reports. They looked at the most recent Gartner Peer Insights data to identify the top API security companies.

Morris and Scandrett then created a list of the API security and bot management capabilities that were essential for their organization. "Discovery was the most important functionality for us because we had limited visibility into our internal and external APIs," explained Scandrett. "The second criterion was the testing capabilities of the solution. Many of our APIs were developed in-house and we needed to strengthen the static and dynamic code analysis scanning to proactively identify vulnerabilities. We needed the ability to test all of our code and fix any issues before new applications were pushed out to production."

Why Cequence Security?

After a thorough review of available offerings, including watching demos and attending several vendors' presentations, Hibbett chose the Cequence Unified API Protection Platform. "Cequence was the only solution that met all of our criteria," said Morris. "In addition to being named as an API protection technology leader in the industry analyst reports, Cequence had very positive customer reviews — not only for its API security products and capabilities, but for its high level of customer service as well."

Another reason Hibbett chose Cequence was its out-of-the-box integrations with over 300 third-party APIs. "All of the other vendors' solutions required some type of third-party tool to perform blocking actions for runtime protection," Scandrett explained. "Whether a WAF or an API gateway, they all needed additional software to provide the necessary functionality. Cequence was the only vendor that was able to do everything we needed without requiring us to purchase and deploy any additional software."

A Fast and Easy Deployment

The Cequence API protection solution was also very easy to deploy, requiring no changes to Hibbett's on-premises, cloud, or SaaS infrastructure. "All we had to do was make a quick public DNS change to route our traffic through Cequence," explained Scandrett. "It was as simple as that. We didn't have to change any of our internal coding, and we experienced no down time or latency during the installation."

Gaining Visibility into all APIs

Every API that Hibbett has is now going through Cequence. "One of the biggest benefits we've obtained with Cequence is the ability to identify all of our APIs and detect any flaws in our code before launching a new solution," said Morris. "We see API breaches in the news all the time now, and this was an area where we really didn't have

Solution

The Cequence Unified API Protection Platform

Benefits

- ✓ Gained the ability to easily discover and protect all internal and external APIs
- ✓ Achieved a fast and seamless deployment, without needing third-party integration tools
- ✓ Obtained multiple API protection features with just one, integrated solution
- ✓ Increased data security by identifying and fixing API vulnerabilities before launch
- ✓ Gained the ability to create custom policies for mitigating and blocking bot attacks

"We see API breaches in the news all the time now, and this was an area where we really didn't have enough insight. Cequence is enabling us to make sure our critical services are adequately protected before deployment, allowing us to continue to grow and prosper in the highly competitive sporting goods market."

Lee Morris

Sr. Director of Security and Infrastructure Architecture, Hibbett Sports

enough insight. The Cequence Unified API Protection Platform is enabling us to ensure our critical services are adequately protected before deployment, allowing us to continue to grow and prosper in the highly competitive retail market.”

Saving IT Time and Accomplishing Multiple API Protection Goals

The Cequence solution has also eliminated the need for Hibbett’s security administrators to spend a lot of time on API management. “To put a number to the actual IT time savings we’ve obtained would have been impossible prior to deploying Cequence,” admitted Scandrett. “If we had attempted to do everything manually or seek out separate tools to accomplish what Cequence provides, it would have taken a huge amount of time. And even then, our efforts would have accomplished only a small portion of the work that Cequence can do as part of its comprehensive, API protection solution.”

Creating Custom Policies for Mitigation

“Our security team works with Cequence’s threat intelligence professionals in to create custom policies for mitigation and blocking bot attacks,” said Scandrett. “That’s another reason we chose Cequence. As far as I know, none of the other API protection vendors provide a 24/7 threat monitoring service. This visibility enables us to fine-tune our security policies based on threats that could potentially harm our operations. Knowing what’s out there and gaining the ability to proactively block malicious traffic is obviously helping us mitigate risk.”

Recommending Cequence to Others

When asked if he would recommend the Cequence solution to his peers, Scandrett replied, “Absolutely. Cequence is a great fit for any organization that doesn’t want to dedicate a lot of extra IT resources to deploying API protection using a mix of third-party tools. Cequence does everything we need in just one comprehensive, integrated tool.”

“Cequence provides so many API protection and mitigation features with just one tool, instead of having to purchase and integrate a suite of separate solutions from multiple vendors.”

Stephen Scandrett
Senior Security Engineer,
Hibbett Sports

Final Thoughts

“At Hibbett, IT has been able to transform from being simply a cost center, to a strategic arm of the organization that is contributing to the bottom line,” concluded Morris. “We are now creating efficiencies in the processes that we couldn’t provide without the infrastructure and the systems we have in place. The Cequence Unified API Protection Platform is one of the key technologies that is enabling our IT security team to become a much larger contributor to our company’s success.”

About Hibbett

Hibbett, headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, is a leading athletic-inspired fashion retailer with 1,158 Hibbett, City Gear, and Sports Additions specialty stores located in 36 states nationwide as of October 2023. Hibbett has a rich history of serving customers for more than 75 years with convenient locations, superior personalized customer service, and access to coveted footwear, apparel, and accessories from top brands including Nike, Jordan, and adidas. Consumers can browse styles, find new releases, shop looks, and make purchases through its best-in-class omni-channel platform.