Elevating Auto Parts Manufacturer and Distributor: Mastering IT Security, Infrastructure and Applications

GSP North America (GSP) is a leading aftermarket manufacturer and distributor offering superior Automotive Aftermarket Parts in North and Latin America. Headquartered in China, GSP manufacturers and distributes their products globally through a series of distribution centers throughout North America, China and Europe.

GSP engaged Cherry Bekaert's **Digital Advisory** and **Risk & Accounting Advisory** practice to be their reliable one-stop tech shop for all their technology needs. We carried out an extensive range of services including:

▶ **Managed Service Provider (MSP)** and Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP)

▶ Fractional Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

▶ Business Intelligence Reporting

▶ Process Automation & Optimization

Maximizing Efficiency with a Robust IT Infrastructure

Initially, Cherry Bekaert performed a thorough assessment of GSP's current IT infrastructure.

We developed a comprehensive IT infrastructure and cybersecurity strategy for their U.S.-based business to help them stabilize their environment, enhance security and radically reinforce their interconnectivity. In addition, we employed best practices to improve their security posture and reduce risk, particularly for their U.S. headquarters, as well as globally across their organization.

> **Cherry Bekaert's team was instrumental by providing us the security blanket we need, ensuring that our safety and operations is functioning and protecting against and recovering from ransomware interference."**
>
> Michael Ceritano, *Chief Operating Officer, GSP North America*

GSP outsourced to Cherry Bekaert to scale, simplify and standardize their IT footprint by delivering the following solutions:

▶ **Data backup and recovery:** By further automating GSP's robust data backup solutions via Microsoft's cloud, their data remains protected. Efficient recovery processes were put in place in case of any data loss or system failures.

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- ► **Enabled multi-factor authentication (MFA):** MFA was put into place for additional security measures to verify employees' identities by requiring a second factor to be provided. This not only ensures legitimate users to gain access to GSP's infrastructure and applications, but it also prevents cyber threats from arising.

- ► **Dedicated 24/7 help desk:** Implementing a 24/7/365 help desk granted GSP the ability to manage their business around the clock, allowing users to report any issues and ask for assistance to timely support.

- ► **Optimized warehouse Wi-Fi network:** Warehouses often are not assembled with the finest internet connectivity in mind. Our team installed a stable and reliable Wi-Fi network throughout GSP's warehouse, providing long-range signals to increase productivity of operations.

- ► **Cybersecurity Managed Services:** After Cherry Bekaert's Digital Advisory and Risk & Accounting Advisory practices worked in partnership to align security policies and procedures, we partnered with a Managed Detection and Response (MDR) third party, where we executed on Security Operations Center (SOC) and Security Event Information Management (SEIM) to continue monitoring and remediating security issues. This enabled security personnel to gather, manage, optimize and use data to identify any threats and vulnerabilities.

- ► **Remote monitoring and management (RMM):** We transformed their processes by upgrading all computer systems to Windows 10/11 Professional from legacy systems. Moreover, we onboarded GSP's staff so their systems can be governed with not only cybersecurity protocols, but also proactive device management. We configured their Android devices used in the warehouse via Microsoft's Intune through Microsoft 365 so they can remain centrally managed and secure. This improved their user experience and productivity, including security governance such as threat detection, firewall management and regular security protocols to prevent data breaches.

> In terms of order fulfillment, a high percentage of our purchase orders are in form of a B2B e-commerce transaction. With the ability to swiftly move data securely through our systems, it has enabled significant improvement in our processing today and in the future."

Michael Ceritano, COO

- ► **Security awareness training:** We addressed the importance of security amongst GSP's employees to prevent and mitigate risks by embarking on phishing campaigns to guide users on how to identify and avoid clicking on security threats in emails. Coaching on security awareness helped GSP's employees properly grasp and recognize cyber hygiene, the security risks associated with their actions and how to identify cyberattacks they may face via email and/or the internet.

> Cherry Bekaert provided guidance on establishing a wireless network at one of our U.S. facilities, redesigning for a reliable scanning and communication throughout, and by omitting manual inputting of tasks. With the efficiency of scanners now, our productivity has continued to have an upsurge."

Michael Ceritano, COO

Administering Existing Cybersecurity and Compliance with Fractional CISO Solutions

During GSP's project initiation phase, Cherry Bekaert played a fundamental role, providing GSP with a fractional Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) as a service capability. This facilitated reduction of risk and further enhanced cybersecurity protocols. We worked closely with GSP's leadership to understand their environment and associated risks. Based on the initial assessment, we developed personalized cybersecurity protocols that included the proper controls and processes to manage those risks. Security measures were implemented by ensuring regulatory compliance, as well as developing policies and procedures. We provided a high-level information security management approach by way of the NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) 800-171 framework to expand their IT documentation. By establishing effective policies and procedures for GSP, they are better able to maintain effective controls. We developed a SharePoint environment to house and manage their security documents. We continue to provide guidance and share best practices, as needed so that their policies and procedures remain effective.

> Partnering with Cherry Bekaert made it possible for us to focus on other areas of the business. I have complete confidence in our data's security, integrity, and reliability as we continue to support our facilities, our staff, vendors, and our customers. Their team actively listened to our challenges and helped us guide our IT infrastructure and cybersecurity strategy and put protocols in place to ensure we are operating with efficiency and security."

Michael Ceritano, COO

Business Intelligence Enabling Insights to Business Decisions

GSP needed guidance to improve their dashboards and reports across sales, operations and finance to drive decision-making through accurate and timely reporting. As a starting point, we identified some underlying data pipeline issues and worked with GSP to refactor and optimize their data to extract trustworthy data from their ERP system, Business Central, in a timely manner and with proper security protocols in place. Implementing a more scalable, robust, reliable and secure reporting environment has resulted in improved efficiencies, significantly impacting decision-making. We digitally transformed their business processes by:

► Implementing a data visualization model for delivering multifaceted data analytics capabilities

► Cultivating connectivity between multifaceted systems, simplifying the development and compatibilities within operational performance reporting

► Developing a Power BI common data model to use across multiple reports, making for better user adoption and faster report deployment

► Deploying reports and dashboards to support business needs, enabling the organization to access, slice and dice information

> With more robust reporting capabilities across our sales, operations, inventory and finance divisions, it helps us to visibly track and optimize performance in real-time which drives us to make informed decisions. Furthermore, by reducing downtime, it enhanced our productivity, reduced incidents and prevented delays, resulting in an increase in fulfilled customer orders and higher revenue. Leveraging Cherry Bekaert's expertise in managing IT infrastructure, ensuring data security and optimizing technology resources, allowed us to focus more on our core operations."

Michael Ceritano, COO

Automating Business Processes to Increase Workflow Efficiency

GSP had recently implemented a new ERP system implemented to help scale the business, but it was struggling to optimize the surrounding processes and integrated applications to enable all the expected benefits. We digitally transformed and re-engineered their business processes to increase efficiencies by:

▶ Improving warehouse shipping operations to increase efficiency, timeliness and security of process

▶ Optimizing the onboarding process for e-commerce customers for scalability and to reduce onboarding time

▶ Automating sync of data across systems to improve accuracy and reduce resource labor time involved with manual processes

Like many manufacturers working with limited resources, efficiency of processes is key to enabling them to focus on their customers and increase revenue opportunities to scale their business. By further automating and eliminating obstacles in their current processes, GSP has been able to increase efficiencies across their operations.

About Cherry Bekaert

Cherry Bekaert's Digital Advisory team is comprised of strategists who have broad industry experience and keen business acumen. Utilizing an agile and flexible approach, we help examine what you want to achieve with a focus on people, process, technology and culture. Many recognize the need to create a data-driven culture, and Cherry Bekaert is experienced in helping clients define, map and execute on that journey while addressing the organization's risks, enabling growth and supporting sustainable operations. Leveraging our strategic process, we help digitally enabled organizations, especially middle-market companies, do more with less. Our team stays on top of the latest technology trends, but we know that technology is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Cherry Bekaert is here to guide you on what solution is appropriate and relevant for you to adopt as it pertains to delivering the highest value to your organization.

For more information about how Cherry Bekaert's Digital Advisory team can help set your company up for success, reach out to us today!

> GSP's growth and change management experience was helped steered by Cherry Bekaert's subject matter experts in every area that we could imagine that we needed assistance with. They already knew the path or the right thing to do customized for our business, and they guided us in the right direction in our pursuit to flawless execution!"

Michael Ceritano, COO

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