

Unified firms create new t

The growth prospects from Blue Cube Solutions' strengthened cyber security proposition are tantalising for CEO Gary Haycock-West having joined forces with two complementary businesses – all former rivals.

In late August Blue Cube Security merged with its rivals Epaton and Next Generation Security (NGS) to create a new group with skills in cyber security, cloud, infrastructure and digital transformation. The enlarged business, called Blue Cube Solutions, will leverage Epaton's storage expertise and NGS's cyber security knowhow to offer a richer portfolio to businesses across London, Leeds and Sussex. "Blue Cube Security, NGS and Epaton have been sparring with one another for many years, but now is the time to work on the same side," said Haycock-West. "The convergence of cyber security, cloud, infrastructure and digital transformation is more relevant than ever and remains at the top of most boardroom agendas."

Founded in 2000, Blue Cube Security has steadily expanded organically – until the three-way merger – mainly through moving from product sales into services. "The threat landscape is a constant game of cat and mouse," added Haycock-West. "We traditionally worked with vendors to fix problems. This evolved into an amalgamation of products and our own services, put together to defend against cyber attacks. We have developed our services significantly and gone from being a vendor product sales business to sell more services than we do products."



Gary Haycock-West

We have been presented with a new landscape. It's now about having agility in your thinking and routes to market

Largely due to the growth of cloud platforms the cyber security arena is a continually evolving space, meaning that companies such as Blue Cube Security need to adjust their go to market strategy. "The distribution model with cloud solutions is changing, with the large cloud providers such as AWS not necessarily using a distribution model and third party vendors

not really knowing how to react," commented Haycock-West. "So we have been working with vendors and cloud providers, although predominantly AWS to find a solution for that."

Strong demand

Covid-19 had an upward impact on demand for Blue Cube Security's services, generating 66 per cent

growth driven by remote working and the increase of cyber crime due to people being forced to use technology new to them. However, it's a long time since technology was new to Haycock-West, having immersed himself in IT for nearly all of his working life. At school he studied computers and some family members were already

working in IT at that time. Large mainframe computing, all the rage before the arrival of distributed and personal computing, gave Haycock-West an insight and taster that put him on the pathway to a career in tech. His first job was on an IBM-based mainframe platform in retail, from where he moved into manufacturing and then financial services.



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"I became a salesman offering IBM related products and travelled the county meeting all sorts of different large organisations," recalled Haycock-West. "This gave me the wonderful experience of talking to many innovative businesses and understanding the stresses and strains different organisations undergo, which I didn't fully appreciate at the time. I then started working as a reseller of systems services and solutions which enabled me to adapt my own

to become a true services business. Our own SOC in Yorkshire adds greater depth to what we are able to offer to our customers."

Haycock-West's 21 year history with Blue Cube Security and prior experience as an early proponent of IT solutions means he is used to the rapid pace of industry change and how to meet the various challenges. "We have been presented with a new landscape," he stated. "It's now about having

Going into non-IT sectors has made me a more rounded and balanced businessman

skills from an operational and technical role into a sales role. This influenced some of what Blue Cube Security offers today."

Expansion

He noted that Blue Cube Security is displaying strong growth and that further expansion is on the cards, including a fresh recruitment drive for talent. "Having just brought together three strong businesses and with the synergistic way we plan to work we have enhanced our cyber security posture," commented Haycock-West. "With Next Generation Security bringing additional customers and product sets to enhance and bolster the cyber security arena, and Epaton having storage management, we can integrate and offer our own secure storage solution.

"We will promote these services to our enlarged customer base and a broader range of organisations which will enhance our footprint. It also allows us

agility in your thinking and routes to market. Cloud domination means we have had to reinvent some of our services. We've been on a journey with AWS to become a highly accredited partner. From that perspective we are in touch with our customers' needs, the vendor market and the available solutions."

Another opportunity Haycock-West recognised was the advantage of expanding his own keen interest into other businesses in executive, non-executive and director roles. "This has broadened my thinking, and going into non-IT sectors has made me a more rounded and balanced businessman," he explained.

"It helps me relate to different market sectors and how the challenges of one business are similar to another where, on the face of it, they appear distinctly different. I enjoy running a business, I enjoy talking to people and look forward to continuing to do so for many years to come." ■

Just a minute with Gary Haycock-West...

Roll model: Jeff Bezos: He took a massive risk when setting up Amazon and despite everyone saying it was a failing business, through sheer perseverance and tenacity he changed the way the world shops and thinks.

What do you fear most? Nothing.

What talent do you wish you had? To be a Ju Jitsu master. It gives better strength of body and mind.

Name three ideal dinner guests? Winston Churchill, a phenomenal leader for everyone to see in the face of adversity; Whitney Houston, I just love her music; and Mr Incredible because I appreciate the challenges of family life and by pulling the family dynamics together you can achieve all sorts of things.

In hindsight: I have never been shy about making decisions, but should have been braver quicker and done more earlier.

The hardest decision you made last year? It was linked to learning how to navigate the Covid-19 storm. More decisions had to be made than ever throughout last year. I didn't know what to do, and couldn't seek advice as no one else had been through it.

If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing? I'd be a barrister. I love a good argument and making a point.

Who do you admire most in the channel? We have far too many good suppliers and I wouldn't want anyone to get jealous.

How do you relax when not working? Spending time with my extended family and enjoying my motor cars and motorbikes, although I have just got into having an e-bike.

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