SYMANTEC MALAYSIA,
NEW ERA FOR CYBERSECURITY

David Rajoo, Director, Systems Engineering, Symantec Malaysia.

Key Player In Cybersecurity

Symantec Corporation (SYMC), an American cyber security company, is spearheading the cybersecurity initiatives in Malaysia. In the war against cyber threats, SYMC have given organisations, governments and people a fighting chance to secure their valuable data wherever it may sit. Founded in 1982, the company is now a global player that offers integrated cyber defense against sophisticated attacks across all infrastructures.

To date, the organisation boast approximately 50 million people who are relying on Symantec's Norton and LifeLock Digital Safety Platform to safeguard their personal data, devices, identities and home networks. With a footprint in 35 countries and bolstered by a workforce of 11,000, the Symantec Security Operations Malaysia Sdn Bhd – formerly Blue Coat System's global service centre (GSC) – started their operations in Kuala Lumpur (KL) in 2008.

Since its inception, the KL centre plays a critical role of providing tech support for network protection and other core technologies across both regionally and globally. Furthermore, they have various engineering operations here to monitor all data ports globally, and with sturdy roots on Malaysian soil, is expanding to a workforce of 120 strong here. This will allow for extensive, more high-value operations to be conducted in the ever-improving KL centre.

Additionally, as part of the arsenal of tools to combat cyber threats, the KL centre has also integrated Malware Research Engineering and Reverse Engineering, which is responsible for dissecting malwares – softwares that can disrupt, damage or gain unauthorised access to your system – to understand how it works, and how it can be prevented and eliminated. They also do testing and bug fixes, network operations, quality assurance, and solutions architecture, coordinating with the rest of SYMC in the region and around the world.

Bringing Value to the Malaysian Ecosystem

Across the globe, Symantec's teams have mobilised to develop solutions and technologies to enhance their offerings, keeping customer's information secure. For example, their Security Technology and Response (STAR) division comprises a global ensemble of virus hunters, threat researchers, security engineers and threat analysts to provide support to all corporate and consumer security products. Furthermore, the Symantec Research Labs (SRL) have developed state-of-the-art rootkit and browser protection technology to proactively block future exploits of identified vulnerabilities.

They are constantly in pursuit of technological enhancements and innovation, and currently holds more than 2000 global patents, sourcing ideas across the company and through acquisition. In addition, their focus on providing solutions for endpoint security and management, endpoint virtualisation, information risk management, and data loss prevention ensures a safe environment for individual users and organisations.

These and more, are services that SYMC have brought to Malaysia, as they believe that the cybersecurity environment here is promising, allowing them to mobilise and utilise their expertise with palpable outcomes.

Drawcard For Investment

Malaysia, being the second largest market in ASEAN following closely behind Singapore, is a fecund playground for cybersecurity initiatives, with much elbow room to grow. As it stands, the KL centre outranks the other hubs in terms of growth factor, competing with hubs the likes of China and India.

The management team of SYMC believes that there is an amazing opportunity to invest in the cybersecurity talent ecosystem here, in order to reach a critical mass to contribute to the protection of cyberspace. Their reasoning behind the establishment of the KL centre is straightforward: firstly, KL is a global hub that offers world-class infrastructure, be it residential complexes, education institutes or transportation and communication. Secondly, as the company

itself has been here for 20 years, they are no stranger to the Malaysian legal system, which is largely derivative of the British Common Law.

Language capabilities is no point for contention, as English is used in all modes of communication which is deeply fostered in the large pool of local and foreign technical experts based here. The Malaysian ecosystem also includes modern amenities, high yet affordable standard of living, and robust healthcare with experienced medical professionals. These are no doubt, attractive prospects for expatriates and grey-collar foreign workers.

Supporting the ecosystem allows SYMC to also leverage on it to ascend the value chain. They do so by numerous collaborative initiatives with relevant government agencies and organisations to drive engagement. Furthermore, they work closely with local academia to ensure a healthy output of fresh cybersecurity talent that are well-equipped – both technical capabilities and soft skills –to contribute to the thriving ecosystem.

The Malaysian Operations

Symantec Malaysia continues to be a key site for delivering world-class tech support for Network Protection technologies to serve customers globally. Depending on market trends and continual assessment of their investments and operations across the globe, future plans to grow the Malaysian operations may be in the pipeline. Currently, the springing awareness and focus centering data privacy issues in Malaysia instills confidence in its potential for expansion.

Not one to rest on their laurels, they are looking to expand their technical expertise by delving into Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud technology, Big Data and behavioural analysis in order to enhance cyber security to weather the ever-evolving threat landscape. SYMC ensures that their ability to espouse new cloud services never ceases.

The war against cyber threats is constantly evolving; new and more malicious threats are emerging everyday, threatening the cyber landscape. As such, SYMC looks to expand their threat research to minimise, prevent and eradicate threats as it appears. Furthermore, they are looking to expand their Cloud technology and platforms to offer more extensive cloud solutions to their customers.

However, the present state of the market reflects a shortage of technical expertise. SYMC combats this by investing in additional in-house training which, in turn, help to upskill existing talent to better equip them for the future.

Diversifying Talent To Thrive

When it comes to preparing local talent for the cybersecurity landscape, Malaysia aspires to be the regional leader. Various collaboration with the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation and LGMS under the Asia Cybersecurity eXchange is clear indication that Malaysia is ready to share their cybersecurity roadmap, and facilitate knowledge-sharing in order to grow the cybersecurity capabilities among industry players. SYMC is also part of these initiatives, serving as mentor to budding cybersecurity talent on their way to become cyber experts.

While obtaining the right talent – someone with the right soft skills and high EQ – may be a challenge, retaining them is a whole other ballgame altogether. As such, Symantec ensures that they have an unshakable organisational culture. Their people are imbued with passion to protect the world's information. They encourage diversity and they believe that their team represent a dynamic and creative force behind every action.

Not only that, SYMC ensures that opportunities to upskill, grow and give back to the community. Their annual Global Service Week (GSW) is a full week of service, encouraging SYMC employees to commit at least an hour of community service with a nonprofit project of their choosing. This year itself, they have banked a total of more than 9,500 hours of community service across 19 countries in just one week. These programmes focuses on varying social aspects ranging from STEM education, online safety, the environment, and women, minority groups and low-income groups.

This aspect of the company is highly appreciated by the Malaysian talent as they have a strong sense of community. When queried further, the Malaysian talent is said to be committed to quality and are customer-focus. They perform various functions within the company, including Malware Research Engineering, Software Quality Assurance, Cloud Services NOC teams, Malaysia business leadership and Tech Support. As the KL centre provides technical support for the region, case resolution in a timely manner is key metric to ensure success.

Over 30 Symantec volunteers visited Dignity for Children and imparted the art of creating self-watering system made from recycled bottles to the students.