



Niko automates cloud security with Sophos Cloud Optix

Niko started out in 1919 as a producer of switches, power outlets and related materials. From its headquarters in the Belgian town of Sint-Niklaas, the company is now a market leader in the field and has expanded its range to include access control, lighting control, energy management and smart home solutions. Supplementing its advanced technology, the company has a strong focus on sophisticated design, high-quality products and an environmentally friendly production process – a strategy that has brought innovation and growth. The Niko group currently has nearly 750 employees across various branch locations, with a presence in Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Switzerland.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE



Niko

Industry
Services

Website
www.niko.eu

Number of employees
750

Sophos Solutions
COPX

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Innovation is at the heart of business operations at Niko. In their drive to improve how buildings work for people, their experts developed cutting-edge solutions that make buildings smarter. Technology, design and user convenience go hand in hand. The product range includes smart switches and lighting sensors, access control and energy management solutions, and a complete Home Control system. The aim is always to ensure seamless integration of solutions and create an ideal indoor climate for homes and businesses, in buildings that are ready for the future. The business processes and R&D activities require Niko’s IT landscape to be clearly structured, controllable and secure, both on-premises and in the cloud.

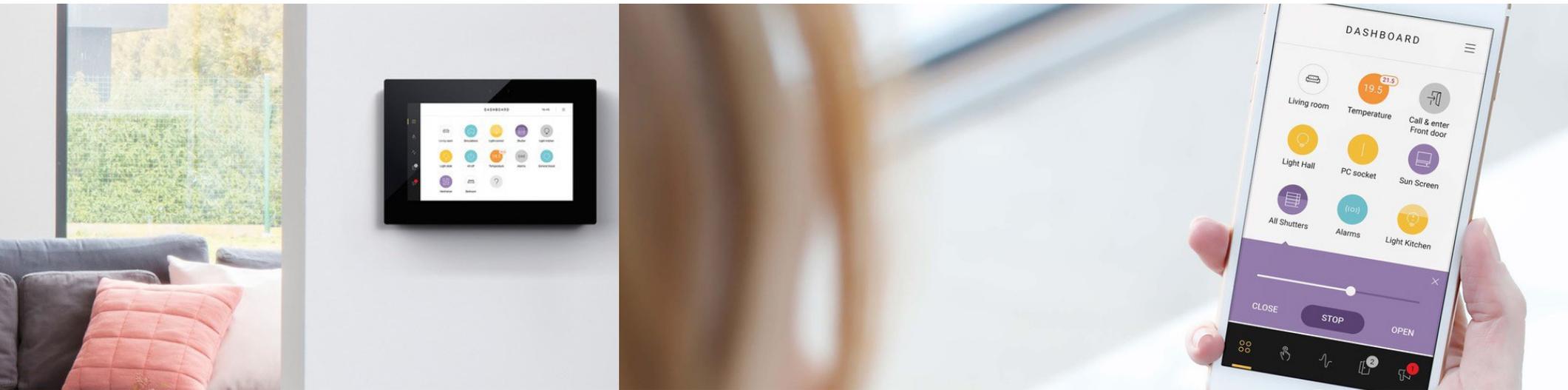
Moving to the cloud

“We support our business operations and R&D with an on-premises environment comprising 250 servers. In recent years, we have also been moving to the cloud in order to improve our flexibility and reduce costs,” says Jan Van Moere, Network & Security Engineer at Niko and responsible for the Belgian company’s infrastructure, network and cybersecurity. “We are currently running 150 servers in the cloud, divided between AWS and Microsoft Azure. Based on our history, we have a solid overview and a firm grasp on our on-premises environment. This is less applicable to our resources in the cloud. It’s a real advantage that people from different departments can independently arrange cloud capacity and start working. But this does lead to a bit less supervision and reduced visibility of these cloud activities.”

Risks assessed automatically

Sophos Partner SWITCHPOINT has been supporting Niko for years in security for its IT landscape. The two partners regularly sit down to discuss market developments and how to adapt Niko’s security in response. The topic of visibility and security in relation to cloud activities was raised during a discussion on security analytics & intelligence. “We ended up discussing security solutions that not only provide insight into cloud activities but also assess vulnerabilities and risks. SWITCHPOINT indicated that Sophos Cloud Optix not only visualises activities in the cloud but can also provide automated security.”

Although Niko was definitely intrigued by the opportunities that Sophos Cloud Optix could offer, the company takes an extremely critical approach to validating new tools. Van Moere explains, “We determine the added value of tools based on actual,



day-to-day practice. That's why we do not bother with a proof of concept in a test environment, so we can avoid having tools respond differently in production. By testing the solution directly in the production environment, we can see what a product can truly offer for our environment and what added value it can bring."

Fast installation and configuration

Working with SWITCHPOINT, Niko started rolling out Cloud Optix for their AWS cloud and Azure cloud. One major advantage is that the installation and configuration processes were very simple. That was also aligned with Niko's preferences, Van Moere states. "Configuration only took a few hours, and then the dashboard quickly presented valuable

information about how our clouds function. The dashboard offers a comprehensive visualisation of our activities at both cloud providers. This overview is useful, since it gives us a good idea of the resources we are purchasing and how we are using them. That helps us to optimise costs." But that's essentially just a nice extra, Van Moere adds.

"The main priority is that we have insight into the security measures in the cloud and how they are applied in practice."

Automatic detection

Sophos Cloud Optix also analyses the predefined policies using machine learning. "Deviations in behaviour or configurations are detected automatically. If certain access activities on a server are unusual, for instance. Let's say that a system administrator is running an activity in the AWS cloud and has outsourced part of that to someone in a different country. When that person logs in, that access is flagged. That makes it easy for us to check the activity and proactively prevent risks as needed."

Access rights are also monitored closely and assessed based on current policies. "For example, the dashboard shows us which users have access based on a one-step password without multi-factor authentication. Or if users have multiple access codes. Once that is revealed, we can take immediate action in response."

Focus on innovation and growth

By deploying Sophos Cloud Optimx, Niko can benefit optimally from the flexibility and scalability of the cloud without making concessions on security. Van Moere concludes, "Our employees can use AWS and Microsoft Azure cloud resources flexibly and safely. We always have a comprehensive overview of the activities. And we only have to monitor the flagged deviations in our dashboard in order to safeguard the current level of security. With Sophos Cloud Optimx, our security is always up-to-date and guaranteed. This allows us to focus all our energy and attention on continued innovation and growth in our organisation."

