

Axos Financial Secures and Streamlines Database Access with Delinea StrongDM

✓ Challenges

Axos was growing fast. Every year, 200 managers had to review and attest more than 200,000 database permissions. They needed to redesign the database access management model to keep pace with company growth, and creating a system of efficient access processes without compromising data security was critical for SVP Raghu Valipireddy.

More than half of Axos Financial employees are technical users. With a highly technical user base, onboarding them was slow. It wasn't uncommon for some to require access to as many as 50 databases. In the past, users had to individually file 50 separate database access tickets because there was no construct of role.

✓ Solution

Axos implemented an RBAC approach to streamline the provisioning process and reduce the number of access requests per database. Users now make a single request in StrongDM and receive all the appropriate access for their roles. Raghu Valipireddy said, "[New users] don't even need to enter a password because it is AD authenticated. So, once they log into the computer, they can interact with databases."

Axos eliminated direct database access. Users now must go through StrongDM, which serves as an additional security layer between users and databases, removing direct database access and providing visibility into access patterns.

“Our intention was to figure out how to manage the risk from an operational and security standpoint—that’s what drove us to StrongDM.”

→ Raghu Valipireddy, SVP, Axos Financial

Axos Financial At-A-Glance

- **Industry:** Financial
- **Employees:** 1,000+
- **Infrastructure:** Azure
- **Compliance:** FFIEC (Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council)

Axos Financial, the holding company for Axos Bank, Axos Clearing and Axos Invest, struggled to manage database access at scale and streamline hundreds of thousands of access requests.

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You guys listened to what we really needed and helped us break it down into small pieces, and you brought in a lot of the folks internally... You took those notes and went back and fought for us from an engineering standpoint. And you helped those features get prioritized internally.”

→ Raghu Valipireddy, SVP, Axos Financial

✓ Results

StrongDM provided an additional security layer and comprehensive audit logs, cutting 50 access tickets per new hire to one and giving them a full audit trail. Employees adopted it quickly, so the rollout moved fast.

The Axos team evaluated multiple providers, but StrongDM won on usability. According to Raghu Valipireddy, “At the end of the day, if it doesn’t get adopted and if it doesn’t get used by our employees, we’re not even making the slightest progress from a security standpoint... StrongDM is the most customer-friendly of all the solutions, and it’s easier to use than anything else we have seen. We’ve seen Teleport and many other database security products in the market right now...”

StrongDM captures audit logs at the gateway level outside the database, so Axos has an audit trail detailing who accessed which database and what they queried without impacting the performance of the database. “If we need to investigate a security incident, these audit logs are extremely useful to gain visibility.”

“If someone is looking for a quick approach to secure how access is being provisioned and they want to make that maturity improvement very quickly, I would tell them to look at StrongDM because of how easy it is to use and how easy it is to deploy and roll out. It will help them leapfrog the access improvements they need or want to make in their programs,” said Raghu Valipireddy, SVP, Axos Financial.

Axos collaborated closely with their Customer Success Manager, who listened to the specific challenges and acted as the voice of the customer to the Delinea engineering and product teams.

Together they shipped new features and closed specific gaps. When asked about the customer support and onboarding process, Raghu said, “Throughout my career within the access space, I’ve bought a number of tools, and I would honestly say the experience I had from the onboarding perspective at StrongDM is the most impressive I’ve seen compared to any other company. I’ve worked with all of those big vendors from an onboarding standpoint, but nobody has done such an impeccable job of assisting with onboarding compared to StrongDM.”