



# Agency Teams Up with Forcepoint to Deliver Cutting-Edge Cybersecurity to Germany's Top Universities

One of Forcepoint's most technically proficient partners in Europe serves customers in education, industry, and other sectors with custom network security solutions, knowledge-sharing sessions, cybersecurity strategy planning, and a commitment to customer care.

As a system integrator with a robust customer portfolio that includes some of Germany's top universities, Agency knows the power of sharing knowledge to build trusted advisory relationships. This Telgte, Germany-based Platinum Partner goes to market with Forcepoint through the full sales cycle, continuously honing its own expertise through Forcepoint's certification process and adding its own unique flavor to demand generation and customer care by passing along technical and strategic insights to its own customers.

**PARTNER PROFILE:**

IT security and services provider delivering advanced network security solutions to midmarket and enterprise customers in the private and public sectors.

**INDUSTRY:**

IT

**HQ COUNTRY:**

Germany

**PRODUCTS:**

- › Forcepoint NGFW
- › Forcepoint DEP
- › Forcepoint DLP
- › Forcepoint DDP

Aveny has been helping its network security customers install and manage Forcepoint solutions for a decade—and in that time, it has grown in both size and in the scope of its client base. The Telgte, Germany-headquartered company began as a web developer and IT solution provider for industrial customers before branching out into the public sector, carving a strong niche in the higher education market.

Today, Aveny is the network security integrator for many of Germany's top universities, including Goethe University and RWTH Aachen University. In this capacity, Aveny often serves as more than just a cybersecurity solution provider—at some universities, for example, students use the Forcepoint firewalls installed by Aveny for their own hands-on network security education.

As an exclusive reseller of Forcepoint Next Generation Firewall (NGFW), Aveny works closely with the Forcepoint team to stay ahead of the curve on network security developments—and to pass those advantages on to its own customers. Providing strategic guidance in this way is a cornerstone of Aveny's strategy for developing and growing trusted advisory relationships with all of its customers, according to Aveny IT Director Hendrik Walter.

### **Maintaining a technical edge to provide customer care and grow trust**

In 2019, Aveny acquired Software Symbiose, another German networking and network security solution provider with a strong presence in higher education. The merger has brought even more cybersecurity expertise to the table for this Forcepoint channel partner, and the combined companies are the network security providers for almost all of Germany's top universities.

"When we acquired Software Symbiose, we acquired another Forcepoint Platinum Partner whose main focus and high level of technical proficiency is with Next Generation Firewall. We also joined with a company that is really big at the universities," Walter said.

A major factor in Aveny's credibility in selling Forcepoint is that the company uses Forcepoint products for their own security needs, just as it does with any products it sells.

"Our philosophy as a reseller is that any products we sell, we use them ourselves. So, we have Forcepoint in our data center. We have Forcepoint security protecting our own people. And we're one of the first partners in Germany using Dynamic Edge Protection. We first want to see the quality of the DEP technology and how it works for us and our people before we go to our customers with it," Walter said.

"We don't just sell licenses or hardware. We are dedicated to the technology behind the solution. And the fact is, we just love and believe in Forcepoint firewall technologies."

It's just as important to communicate to customers the rigor with which Aveny and Forcepoint test and improve network security solutions.

"When we work with the tech people who manage the NGFWs at the universities and at our other customers, we'll have live sessions with Forcepoint product managers. The IT team leaders who manage the entire networking infrastructure for these customers will attend. They find it so interesting and helpful, and they are really happy that they can hear directly from and be heard by Forcepoint," Walter said.

"They get to see that their IT security teams, Aveny, and Forcepoint are all working together in the process of developing products and technology. A lot of the credit for the success of these sessions goes to the Forcepoint sales team in Germany and to the technical team out of Helsinki, which is just terrific in terms of knowing and communicating the technology of network security."

### **Aveny, Forcepoint create customized, secure university networks**

The solutions Aveny and Forcepoint built for Goethe University and RWTH Aachen University showcase the level of customization to customer needs the partnership can handle.

Goethe University in Frankfurt has a mesh network for R&D with infrastructure that connects directly, dynamically, and non-hierarchically to as many other points on the network as possible. Collaboration on projects using the network must be carried out with traveling and remote students and faculty, as well as with

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third-party research partners in international locations. If network downtime disrupted a connected device monitoring and collecting data on a real-time experiment, the results could be devastating.

The university needed a solution that could stably and securely connect its people wherever they are located, across its large and distributed network, which had to be kept up and running even during maintenance. The answer was a Forcepoint NGFW-based framework using up to 250 virtual contexts to enable the customization of routing tables and traffic policies, SD-WAN technology to improve the performance and reliability of network links, and the Forcepoint Security Management Center (SMC), which enables policy changes and software updates to be pushed out without ever taking the network offline.

"What's really great is how robust Forcepoint NGFW clustering is and how well it works. For example, even if one appliance fails, you won't have downtime. The system is so intelligent that it shifts the connections from one node to another. You can even mix up hardware models, mix in virtual machines and so on because it's a unified software core and there are so many redundancies that there is no single point of failure," Walter said.

RWTH Aachen University had similar needs for its firewalls—best-in-class security that wouldn't ever cause network downtime—but with a twist. The top technical school wanted its own students to be able to learn on the NGFW technology keeping its own network safe. Once again, Forcepoint and Aveny were able to deliver a solution. Forcepoint NGFW's SMC provides quick access to main features like dashboards with valuable overviews, delivers powerful central administration capabilities, and can also be tinkered with "under the hood" by student programmers with direct API access. Students can experiment with APIs and scripts to bypass the UI with custom-written programs that auto-tune policies and push configurations directly to the firewall, making the solution both a shield against cyberthreats and an educational platform.

## Mutual trust compounds over years of working together

Agency and Forcepoint work closely together through the full sales cycle with customers. This partnership includes teaming up on pre-sales, sales, and post-sales efforts such as:

- › Technical and sales certification
- › Co-marketing
- › Lead generation
- › Sales calls
- › Sales closing
- › Deal registration
- › Proofs-of-Concept
- › Solution installation and deployment
- › After care services and health checks
- › Delivery and facilitation of ongoing services

The partnership is effective because Forcepoint and Aveny have developed a great deal of mutual trust in each other over the years, Walter said.

"One of the things I love most is that we always have an open ear on the Forcepoint side, whether it's the sales team or the technical engineers. The Forcepoint people are always able to really help us and to move on things fast if there's a problem. They know when to escalate, even all the way up to the highest levels if necessary," he said.

"I appreciate that so much. And it's a two-way street. We share our feedback and ideas with our Forcepoint counterparts in Germany and in Helsinki, and with the Forcepoint people developing the management center in France and even with the support teams in the U.S. We see that from a partner perspective, Forcepoint trusts us and takes our ideas about how to improve products and sales strategies very seriously."



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