

# CRITICALSTART® MDR Frees Up Team Resources, Improves Security Outcomes for Oil States International

Oil States International uses Critical Start MDR to enhance security, improve operational efficiency, and reduce costs through optimized cybersecurity operations.


## CASE STUDY

### AT A GLANCE


 Industry: Industrial Machinery & Equipment

 Number of Employees: 2,700

### CORE AGENDAS

 **Challenge**  
A small security team lacked resources to provide 24x7x365 coverage and needed to consolidate their technology stack.

 **Solution**  
Critical Start's deep integration with the Microsoft Security suite provided 24x7x365 security coverage and allowed tool consolidation.

 **Results**  
Improved security posture, reduced risk, increased operational efficiency, and significant cost savings through a collaborative partnership with Critical Start.



## Background

Founded in 1937 and headquartered in Houston, Texas, Oil States International, Inc. is a key provider of advanced manufactured products and services across multiple sectors. In their highly complex and regulated environment, Oil States International needs a robust and responsive cybersecurity program so that they can adapt to evolving threats quickly while minimizing the burden of security operations for their team.

## Business Priorities

As Oil States International expanded its operations and digital footprint, they recognized the need to evolve their cybersecurity strategy. Brian Lee, Global Director of Cybersecurity at Oil States, highlighted areas for improvement: "We saw opportunities to better manage our security operations and optimize our resources."

The internal team, while skilled, faced the common industry challenge of balancing multiple priorities with a constrained budget. Brian noted, "As a medium sized company we lacked the resources to maintain 24x7 security operations. Since we are not a security or technology company or a company with a large IT budget, it made more sense to outsource these responsibilities."



**The value of Critical Start's MDR was evident from day one. Working with a standout SOC was a game changer. Our team could focus on other security priorities.**

- Brian Lee,  
Global Director of  
Cybersecurity



The top three business priorities for Oil States:

- 1. 24x7x365 Security Coverage:** A lack of staffing and resources meant it took longer to react to after-hours incidents. Addressing overnight and weekend coverage to reduce the mean time to remediation for incidents was a key focus for the business.
- 2. Access to Expertise and Advanced Technologies:** Partnering with Critical Start meant inheriting new resources to help Oil States, on day one, with alerts, detections, and processes. This also included access to advanced technologies, like Critical Start's Cyber Operations Risk and Response™ platform (**CORR™**), threat intelligence feeds, and a shortcut to more mature and robust security operations that would have taken years to build internally.
- 3. Consolidation of Technologies:** Oil States had multiple security tools that provided overlapping coverage. Because Critical Start is a Microsoft Verified MXDR Partner, it allowed the opportunity to consolidate redundant tools into the Microsoft ecosystem. The cost savings of this alone were able to cover the increased costs of onboarding a new service.

## Solution

Oil States International recognized the need for a specialized MDR provider to enhance their cybersecurity capabilities. After an extensive evaluation process involving 14 potential MDR providers, they chose Critical Start because of their comprehensive integration with Microsoft Sentinel and the Microsoft Defender XDR suite. The rigorous selection process required several steps that included a request for proposal (**RFP**), SOC interview, executive presentation, and customer referrals.

For Lee, a major factor that led to the selection of Critical Start was the SOC interview. "I loved how the SOC team riffed off each other back and forth and leveraged each other's brains to solve a problem," Lee stated. He also found value in the customer referrals and executive presentation, "Critical Start showed a clear understanding of our needs and delivered a solution that promised substantial ROI."



**We saved a considerable amount by not having to purchase additional licenses for other EDR tools. Telling the board we didn't need a budget increase was a powerful narrative.**

**- Brian Lee,  
Global Director of  
Cybersecurity**



## Outcomes

The deployment of Critical Start's MDR for Microsoft brought about significant improvements in Oil States International's cybersecurity posture and operational efficiency:

- 1. Enhanced Security Posture:** With Critical Start's dedicated SOC resources managing, investigating and responding to all security alerts, regardless of priority, 24x7x365, Oil States experienced a significant reduction in the meantime to remediation, and overall risk exposure. Critical Start's continuous monitoring and continuous threat hunting promptly identify and mitigate potential threats that would take their team longer than desired to detect and remediate.
- 2. Operational Efficiency:** By offloading the bulk of the alert management to Critical Start, Oil States' internal team can focus on strategic initiatives and other critical tasks.
- 3. Cost Savings:** The integration of Critical Start's MDR with existing Microsoft tools allowed Oil State to eliminate redundant EDR and SIEM solutions, leading to substantial savings in licensing costs.
- 4. Improved Reporting and ROI:** Critical Start's detailed and actionable reports enhance the visibility and understanding of security operations at the executive level. The comprehensive reporting demonstrates clear return on investment (ROI), justifying the investment in MDR services.
- 5. Integration of Microsoft Security Suite:** Critical Start's deep knowledge of the Microsoft E5 security suite helped Oil States stand up and operationalize Microsoft Security tools that were previously unused.
- 6. A True Partnership:** Through it all, Critical Start and Oil States have built a truly collaborative partnership that continually evolves as Oil States' security needs change.



**My biggest concern moving fully to Microsoft was the ability to get support... But with Critical Start being a Microsoft Verified MXDR Partner and having talented individuals on staff, helped me feel confident to cut over. It's given my team the runway to learn the tools at their own pace.**

- Brian Lee,  
Global Director of  
Cybersecurity





## Impact on Team Performance

The profound impact of Critical Start's MDR solution on Oil States' security team performance and overall effectiveness was felt almost immediately after onboarding:

- 1. Improved Security Effectiveness:** With Critical Start handling the bulk of the alert management, Oil States' internal team can eliminate false positives and focus on mitigating issues stemming from high-priority alerts.
- 2. Improved Threat Mitigation:** With 24x7x365 monitoring and continuous threat hunting, Critical Start's MDR detects and mitigates threats before they lead to costly incidents that impact business operations. The real-time, true response mitigation minimizes potential damage and reduces overall risk to the organization.
- 3. Strategic Focus:** With the operational burden of security alert management lifted, the internal team has shifted their focus to strategic improvements, including risk assessment and mitigation, compliance management, and security awareness program implementation.

## Conclusion

When asked what advice Brian Lee would give other organizations considering MDR services, he said, "If you don't have to build a SOC, don't do it. Find an MDR provider who can do it for you." For Lee, Critical Start is that partner: "Critical Start is a great partner; they've helped us capitalize on the cost savings that comes with our Microsoft E5 license."

The partnership with Critical Start has transformed security operations and strategic initiatives for Oil States International. By leveraging Critical Start's MDR for Microsoft, Oil States significantly enhanced its security posture, improved operational efficiency, and achieved significant cost savings. The partnership allows Oil States' internal team to focus on strategic priorities, driving overall business success. Critical Start's dedicated SOC, comprehensive reporting, and advanced investigation and threat mitigation capabilities make a tangible difference in Oil States' cybersecurity operations, ensuring they remain resilient in the face of evolving threats.



**The biggest strength is how interactive and dedicated the Critical Start team is. They have built significant trust with me... Their expertise has allowed us to improve our security posture substantially.**

- Brian Lee,  
Global Director of  
Cybersecurity





For more information, contact us at:  
<https://www.criticalstart.com/contact/>

---