

How Cerbos Helps Salesroom **Simplify and Scale Access Control** Quickly and Securely

Case Study



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"Leave authorization to Cerbos. There is no external single point of failure, so your main excuse is void. Doing it on your own from scratch, and scaling it will cost you more than you think, even without factoring in opportunity cost. Focus your time and energy on finding PMF, go with Cerbos."

CHUCK HARDY,
Head of Engineering,
Salesroom



Salesroom is an interactive video conferencing platform for sales professionals. It uses AI to help salespeople accelerate their sales cycles.

Highlights

Challenges

- Simplifying access control implementation and management
- Finding a scalable and secure permission control solution
- Writing and deploying policy updates easily
- Auditing and testing policies quickly

Solution

- Quick and easy set up
- Secure authorization system
- Easy policy writing that can be done by non-engineers
- Simple policy updating without changing code
- Quick scalability
- Exceptional team

Results

- Ability to focus on the tasks that matter
- Total visibility into authorization policies
- Time savings
- Peace of mind

Challenges

Simplifying access control to focus on achieving product-market fit (PMF)

When Chuck Hardy, the Head of Engineering at Salesroom, and David Workman, a Senior Software Engineer, joined the company, they knew that they had to do permission control right the first time. Specifically, they didn't want to build an in-house authorization system.

Previous experience had taught Chuck and David that while it was easy to cobble together a DIY authorization system, it would cause a lot of complexity down the road.



"We implemented an in-house authorization system at my previous company. It kind of did the job but it was difficult to update. It couldn't support all the use cases and we never had time to develop it after release. This caused a lot of confusion and we were often worried that it was not working correctly," David recalls.

Beyond the inconvenience, the cost of building an authorization system from the ground up was astronomical.

Chuck explains, *"When I did an audit, I found that the cost of managing authorization and authentication in-house over the entire lifespan of the company was in the 7 figures. And this is without factoring in the opportunity costs."*



With the benefit of hindsight, David knew that if he didn't implement a reliable and scalable authorization system, the problem would only get bigger as Salesroom scaled.



"When I started working at Salesroom, a baked-in authorization solution was starting to take shape. We realized that we had to change track before we ended up in our previous mess: an authorization system that was difficult to support, update, and maintain," he says.

Chuck wanted a third-party access control solution so that David and the engineering team could focus on solving customer problems.



"From a business perspective, I wanted to make sure that our engineers could spend most of their energy on achieving product-market fit (PMF)," he states.

Chuck and David briefly considered going with Open Policy Agent, but felt its policy distribution and administration was difficult to manage. They also evaluated Okta but found it lacked the granular attribute-based control needed for most use cases. It was also much more expensive.

Fortunately, Chuck had met Emre Baran, the Co-founder & CEO of Cerbos, at an event years ago and kept in touch. When Chuck learned that Emre was at the point of releasing Cerbos—a self-hosted, open-source user permission software—Chuck proposed it to his engineering team.



"Cerbos ticked all of our boxes. We also liked their plans for the future and wanted to get onboard early," he explains.





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Solution

Simple, scalable, and secure access control solution

David was amazed by how quick and easy it was to set up Cerbos. In contrast to the hours David had spent writing code for the in-house permissions solution at this previous company, Salesroom completed Cerbos proof of concept in one week and rolled it out in just two more.

“It didn’t take long to get everything up and running,” says David. “We could reach out to them with any questions we had.”

Today, David and his team of engineers don’t have to spend all their time writing and updating policies.



“With Cerbos, non-engineers can write, update, and audit policies, which frees up our engineers for other important tasks,” says David.

And when the engineers do need to get involved, they find Cerbos easy to pick up and learn. In particular, David is thrilled that he doesn’t have to change the application code whenever he wants to update a policy.





“I don’t have to look at code or a bunch of database queries to see if something’s working right or not. I can just make a few small changes without touching the application code,” he states.

David was also impressed how easily Cerbos integrated with Salesroom’s existing webs apps and APIs.

Chuck and David also don’t have to worry about their authorization solution being a single point of failure. Cerbos is self-hosted with no external dependencies or latency.

David explains, *“We can run Cerbos next to our application with as many instances running as we need. Plus, we can have one dedicated host we’re running it on so there’s less risk of it going down and taking everything down without us knowing.”*

The scalability of Cerbos also gives David confidence that the authorization platform won’t morph into a tangled mess as Salesroom grows.



“We’re not worried about scaling because we can easily increase our load on Cerbos. It will also be easy for us to change how we’re distributing policies as we reach different points of scale,” he says.

The Cerbos team has provided exceptional support to Chuck and David. They know that they can depend on Cerbos to ensure that their authorization system is running smoothly.

“Cerbos is developer focused, and it feels like they are part of our team. They give us confidence and peace of mind because we know they’re protecting us,” Chuck says.





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Results

Time, peace of mind, and mental bandwidth to focus on building a great product

Cerbos gives Chuck peace of mind and frees up the Salesroom engineering team to focus on building the best possible video conferencing platform for their customers.

Chuck says, “Deploying Cerbos has allowed our engineers to spend their time on what really matters for Salesroom’s success. And I sleep better at night.”

Today, the product and leadership teams at Salesroom have total visibility into the policies that they write in Cerbos. This helps them understand persona permissioning and make better decisions about how to shape features.



“Instead of thinking of how much time Cerbos has saved us, I think about how much time it didn’t cost us. It didn’t cost us any time. Cerbos just works. I don’t have to think about it. It’s as simple as that,” he reports.





The peace of mind that Cerbos gives Chuck and David is unparalleled. *“We can look at the policies and have a good idea of what they’re doing and whether they’re doing it correctly. We’re not worried about giving access to the wrong people,”* David says.

For software companies that need authorization services, Chuck recommends Cerbos.



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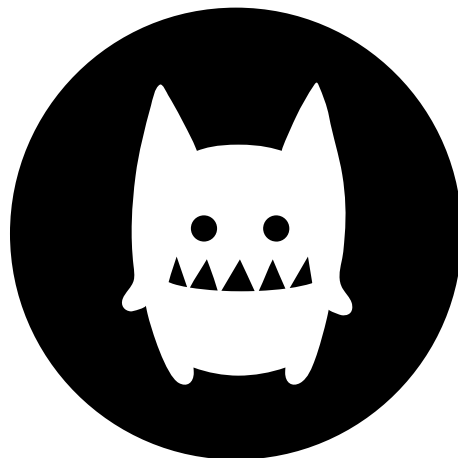
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