



Colgate-Palmolive keeps its social media clean

With Cerby, the iconic brand can apply corporate security protocols to its social media apps

Results with Cerby

- Eliminates social media password sharing
- Protects social media logins using corporate security protocols
- Automates mandatory password rotation
- Provides visibility into social media login activity
- Removes internal IT burden with Cerby in-app help and live support

William Colgate started selling soap in New York City in 1806 — before launching the first toothpaste sold in a tube. Meanwhile, Palmolive got its name from its signature product, a palm and olive oil soap. The two companies joined forces in 1928, and the rest is history. Today, Colgate-Palmolive Company employs 34,000+ employees, has annual revenues of \$18 billion, and sells its products in 200 countries and territories.

Protecting the brand is job one

When operating a renowned company like Colgate-Palmolive, it pays to be vigilant about protecting brand image and reputation. That's why Colgate-Palmolive partners with Cerby. Cerby allows Colgate-Palmolive to secure any application to its corporate identity systems, even those that don't support strict security standards — such as social media accounts.

Alex Schuchman, Colgate-Palmolive's Chief Information Security Officer, feels the weight of that responsibility acutely. "We have hundreds of social media accounts," he explains. "On a few occasions, malicious actors have taken over accounts. When something like that happens, it has the potential to be injurious to our brand. Beyond losing access to the account, we can begin to lose followers and the trust of our customers." When an account takeover occurred, Alex and his team would jump into incident response mode, working to restore content and change potentially hundreds of passwords.

Alex says Colgate-Palmolive considered developing its own solution to address the challenges. “We have the development resources, but it didn’t seem like the best use of them, especially considering we’d have to continually update and maintain it in response to changes from the social media platforms — and support both web and mobile access.”

Innovation at work

The organization initially found an application they thought could help. But as Ed Mueller, Digital Content Architect for Colgate-Palmolive, explains, it didn’t go well. “We abandoned the implementation and went in search of something that met our needs. We selected Cerby.”

“Colgate-Palmolive routinely partners with startup companies that offer innovative solutions to business problems that don’t have a clear answer in the marketplace,” Alex explains.

Clear insight in account activity

Cerby provides a convenient, secure listing of all of a client’s social media accounts, and provides insight into who is accessing and interacting with those accounts.

“We’re a large and complex enterprise,” notes Ed. “Besides Colgate-Palmolive employees, we share account access with various ad agencies, marketing organizations, consumer affairs agencies, and so on. Previously, that entailed a whole lot of password sharing. When individuals leave our organization or one of our marketing agencies, they could take those passwords with them, and that’s just too risky. Cerby mitigates that risk.”

With Cerby, Colgate-Palmolive can see, for example, that 17 people have access to its Mexico TikTok account and that 4 people routinely post from that account. Cerby also provides an audit log of login activity.

“For a global company that is continually growing and investing in its social media presence, these capabilities are essential,” notes Alex.

One of Ed’s top concerns is ensuring consistent, quality, on-point messaging across the organization’s digital channels. The company wanted to eliminate the need for each account’s individual “owners” to respond to verification code requests. “That saves time and keeps new content flowing smoothly to our two-million-plus followers,” he said.

A managed service for passwords

Password rotation is critical to Colgate-Palmolive’s security protocol, yet social media accounts were always a sticking point. “You can have a policy stating that users must rotate their passwords every 30 days, but we couldn’t enforce that for Instagram or Facebook, for example,” Alex says. “And just try to convince a busy social media influencer to rotate their password on their own — it just doesn’t work. Now we can build in password rotation as an automated process and apply it to our social media accounts.”

Ed says Colgate-Palmolive wanted a platform that is more like a complete managed service than just an application. “Users with a question can simply click the help button and get the support they need.”

“Have you ever tried to call tech support at TikTok or Twitter?” poses Alex. “There’s not a process for that. Even for corporate accounts, there’s no dedicated support number — their support services are geared toward advertising, not access. So, if someone gets locked out of one of our accounts, they’re frustrated and call us. Now, that doesn’t happen.”

Treat social media apps like corporate applications

“This solution allows us to treat social media platforms like corporate applications, subject to the same security rules, including multi-factor authentication and password complexity,” Alex concludes. “Social media platforms were designed for individual users, not for enterprise corporations. Now we’re able to manage social media like a corporate application.”

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*Alex Schuchman, CISO
Colgate-Palmolive Company*



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