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SDG's GEM Streamlines Group Lifecycle Management and Improves Productivity and Security Posture

Enable Seamless Management of Active Directory (AD) and Azure Active Directory (Entra ID)

OVERVIEW

Managing groups in Active Directory is critical for maintaining organizational security and efficiency. SDG's Group Entitlement Manager (GEM) solution can streamline group lifecycle management, enhance security, and improve overall productivity for both Active Directory (AD) and Azure Active Directory (Entra ID).

Active Directory and Azure Active Directory (Entra ID) are essential components of modern IT infrastructures, providing centralized management for user authentication and authorization. Managing groups within these directories is crucial for maintaining appropriate access controls, ensuring compliance, and optimizing operational efficiency. Traditional group management methods are often manual, time-consuming, and prone to errors. SDG's Group Entitlement Manager (GEM) offers a robust solution to these challenges, enabling seamless management of group lifecycles across both Active Directory and Entra ID.

GROUP MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Active Directory groups (security and distribution lists) are the backbone of IT infrastructure, working behind the scenes to support and organize a company's users, computers, network devices, and more. Groups are commonly used for connecting user accounts to critical data, applications, and systems. Smart management of an organization's groups is imperative to maintain effective security, operational efficiency, and compliance.

Improper and inadequate management processes and controls of groups creates security & compliance risk. Common inadequacies include:

- Lack of group life cycle management.

- Unclear assignment of responsibility for group management.

- Allowing modifications to groups without understanding their purpose, compounded by the lack of an auditing trail.

- The absence of relevant descriptions for groups, leading to ambiguity regarding their intent and utilization.

MANAGING ACTIVE DIRECTORY GROUPS MANUALLY POSES ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES:

COMPLEXITY: Managing groups across both Active Directory and Entra ID involves complex and disparate processes.

TIME-CONSUMING PROCESSES: Manual group management is labour-intensive, requiring IT administrators to handle each request individually.

HUMAN ERROR: The risk of errors increases with manual processes, leading to under and overprovisioning access, which can lead to security breaches.

LACK OF VISIBILITY: Keeping track of group memberships and changes can be difficult, leading to outdated or incorrect group data.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES: Ensuring compliance with security policies and regulatory requirements is challenging without proper tools and audit capabilities.

SCALABILITY: As organizations grow, the complexity and volume of group management tasks increase, making manual processes unsustainable.

Group management is typically considered an operational matter and owned by an organization's infrastructure team. A more modern approach views group management as a core governance task with Identity Governance & Administration (IGA) oversight. Here are some business challenges faced by the organizations:

- Lacking a centralized group management option
- Dependency on IT Team for group management operations
- Periodic group certifications & its visibility
- Lack of dashboard for group critical indicators
- Auditing & reporting

SOLUTION: SDG'S *GROUP ENTITLEMENT MANAGER (GEM)

SDG's GEM solution addresses the challenges organizations face by providing a comprehensive platform that manages both Active Directory and Entra ID groups efficiently and securely. The GEM solution empowers end-users, department heads, and managers to perform group management tasks without IT intervention, while maintaining the necessary oversight and control.
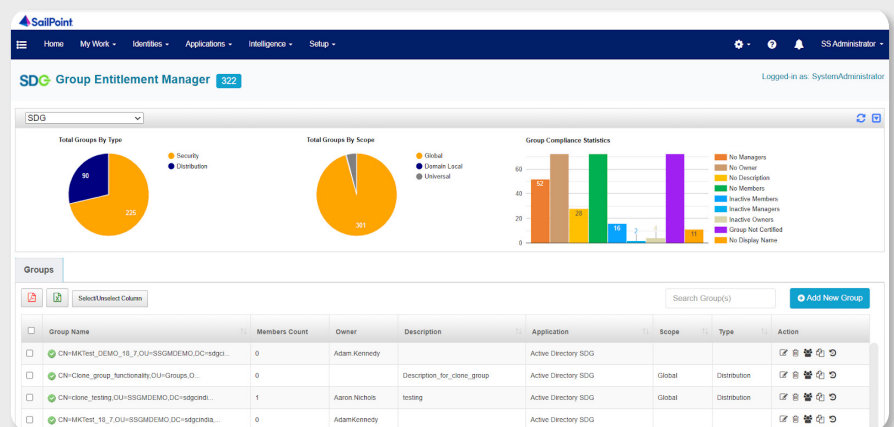
KEY FEATURES INCLUDE:

A USER-FRIENDLY INTERFACE: SDG's GEM provides a user-friendly interface that does not require in-depth technical knowledge to use and completely designed using SailPoint plugin framework.

A combination of clickable Tiles, Bar, and Pie chart representation of key group governance attributes, including:

- Total number of groups by type (Security Group/Distribution List), and scope
- Number of groups without owner
- Number of groups with inactive owner
- Number of groups without description
- Number of groups without any member
- Number of groups with inactive members
- Number of groups not certified

GROUP LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT: The ability to Create / Modify / Delete groups and Clone existing groups.

INTEGRATION WITH THE IDENTITY LIFECYCLE: Integrated with group owner life cycle state:

- In the event an owner is terminated; group ownership is transferred to their manager.

OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT: Periodic scans and targeted reviews of groups with no owners.

- Groups with no owners are scanned and a new owner is assigned.

HYBRID ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT: The GEM provides seamless management across both on-premises Active Directory and Entra ID, ensuring consistent policies and processes across hybrid environments.

AUTOMATED APPROVAL WORKFLOWS: Integrated approval workflows ensures that group changes are reviewed and authorized by appropriate personnel, enhancing security and compliance.

DELEGATED ADMINISTRATION: Support for different user populations and allowing them to manage groups only within their designated areas of responsibility like group owners, GEM admins, and system administrators.

REAL-TIME AUDITING AND REPORTING: Robust auditing capabilities help organizations track changes and maintain compliance with security policies and regulations. Available options to export reports for group membership.

SELF-SERVICE GROUP MANAGEMENT: Enhance efficiency and responsiveness within the organization by empowering users.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF SELF-SERVICE GROUP MANAGEMENT:

- **REDUCED IT OVERHEAD:** IT administrators can offload routine group management tasks, freeing up their time for more strategic activities.

- **FASTER RESPONSE TIMES:** End-users and department heads can make necessary changes quickly, improving agility in adapting to changing business needs.

- **ENHANCED SECURITY:** Automated workflows and approval processes ensure that group changes are properly authorized, reducing the risk of unauthorized access.

- **GREATER SCALABILITY:** GEM can handle increasing volumes of group management tasks as the organization grows.

- **IMPROVED COMPLIANCE:** Real-time auditing and reporting capabilities help maintain accurate records. Auditing capabilities ensure that changes are documented, aiding in compliance efforts.

- **USER EMPOWERMENT:** Empowering group owners to manage their groups fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility.

- **CONSISTENT POLICIES:** Ensures consistent group management policies across both On-Premises AD and AAD.

CONCLUSION

Effective management of Active Directory groups is essential for organizational security and efficiency. SDG'S *Group Entitlement Manager offers a way to simplify and streamline the management of Active Directory and Entra ID security groups and distribution lists and provides a comprehensive solution to automate and streamline these processes. By providing a user-friendly dashboard and automated workflows, GEM empowers organizations to improve efficiency, enhance security, improve compliance, and significantly reduces the administrative burden on IT staff. Investing in GEM is a strategic decision that can deliver long-term benefits and support the organization's growth and success.

*'Group Entitlement Manager' is formerly known as "Self Service Group Management"

ABOUT SDG

SDG is a leading provider of technology, consulting, and managed services that enable organizations to confidently execute cybersecurity, cloud, identity, and risk management solutions to mitigate risk, protect assets and grow securely. To learn how SDG can help your organization, visit sdgc.com or call us at +1 203.866.8886.

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