How Debite built scalable and reliable access controls with Cerbos

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"One thing is for sure - we would've launched later than we did. As a result, we would have less customers. And the maintenance part is also very important. Our technical team would be dealing with daily stuff regarding access controls, access logs. Now, we don't have to spend any time on that."

ENGIN ATTAR,
Head of Product and Growth,
Co-Founder, Debite

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Debite is a dynamic financing and payments platform tailored to early-stage startups and high-growth companies in the UK. Their unique corporate cards offer credit limits up to £250k and come with built-in instalments that allow founders to spread the cost of their business expenses up to 12 months.

Highlights

Challenges
- Implementing a secure and scalable authorization system
- Easily updating and maintaining access logs
- Writing and testing policies accurately and quickly
- Swiftly satisfying compliance requirements

Solution
- Quick set-up with easy-to-understand code
- Comprehensive audit logs
- Version control for easy testing and validation
- Technical advice from an expert team

Results
- Secure and scalable access control system
- Quicker than expected company launch
- Confidence and ability to ship products faster
- Bandwidth to focus on building new products
- Ability to go through compliance easily and smoothly

Challenges
Building a scalable and reliable solution for access controls

Having a scalable and reliable access control solution, both in the internal dashboard and in the customer platform, are invaluable for any financial technology company,

Engin Attar, the Head of Product and Growth, and Co-Founder of Debite, along with Emre Süzen, CTO of Debite, took the authorization issues they have experienced in their past organizations into account, when working on Debite.

> *"It was very hard to keep updated policies for access control and keep logs of everything. So we knew how important it was for us to have an easy solution, so we don't have to build it over and over again.",* Engin recalls.

The Debite team knew how hard it is to update and maintain access logs, and that it is the one thing that developers don't like to do. Moreover, they recognized that it is difficult for product managers to keep logs and roles, as well as test them.

With Debite's authorization criteria in mind, Engin knew that they needed a centralized, secure and scalable way of managing access control, and that it was needed immediately.

> *"We saw that Cerbos APIs were great. It's very fast to write new policies. Response times and reliability are two very important requirements. Cerbos is quite fast and reliable.",* Engin says.

After a meeting with the Cerbos team and a final review, Debite began implementing the Cerbos solution.

> **"If it wasn't reliable, then we would have very serious problems.** It was very important not to have a single failure point for us, so that our operations can go on."

Solution

Scalable and secure authorization layer

Debite's development team, their CTO and the backend team were involved in the Cerbos integration process. "We could get through 90% of Cerbos' code within a couple of hours," he says.

"We had no product managers at the time. It took us a couple of weeks to implement it, while also working on some other stuff as well.", Engin says.

Engin describes his experience with Cerbos as delightful, and is thrilled about how helpful the team at Cerbos was, as well as their level of expertise. Getting started with Cerbos was very easy, and the team was there to help Engin with the few technical questions that he had.

> *"The API documentation is self-explanatory, we used that a lot as well.",* he notes.

Debite use Cerbos in the back office and in the front end, don't have to think about it, and it's a time saver for them.

"It was very important for us to be able to add new user profiles, one after another when we are building new products. It enabled us to ship our products faster.", Engin says.

On a typical day, the team at Debite don't have to deal with anything related to Cerbos, which Engin notes is the best part. When it comes to developing new products, providing new access controls, or if there's any company specifically requiring a new access type, it's easy for the Debite team to create and edit that without help from Cerbos.

"That's the most important thing for us, and it makes our daily lives so much easier.", he highlights.

When it comes to compliance, an important factor for any financial technology company, Debite has benefited from Cerbos' features greatly to satisfy their financial services compliance requirements.

> *"We have different profiles on our site for underwriting. We are working with a bank called Modular, we use their EMI license. Cerbos helped us go through the compliance process so much easier and smoother than compared to an in-house solution. Additionally, since we are using Cerbos for access controls and logs, we were able to get the required disaster recovery certificates much faster.",* Engin says.

Deploying Cerbos provided the team at Debite with a scalable and efficient authorization layer, as well as a confidence in their operations due to comprehensive audit logs.

> *"Had we built it ourselves in-house, we would have probably missed certain things. For example, it is common to overlook logging of certain actions and buttons on the interface. With Cerbos you don't have to think about that. Having a built-in logging functionality gave us a sense of trust.",* he says.

"It just works, we are using it in the back office and in the front end. We don't have to think about it, and it's a time saver for us."

Results

Security, compliance, and the power to ship products faster

Thanks to Cerbos, Debite has a scalable and reliable solution for access controls. Engin and his team take advantage of the robust authorization solution to ship their products and go to market quickly.

Engin says that the decision to go with Cerbos was an easy one for the team at Debite, and recognizes that Debite would have launched later than they did, had it not been for the collaboration between the two companies.

"We started working together when we were building Debite. So we went from zero customers to a hundred customers. And the timing was very important for us, it enabled us to do that.", he says.

The team at Debite highlight how much time Cerbos has saved for them. Writing new policies and editing them is so simple, that it has enabled Debite to go to market very quickly, as well as offer new products faster.

> He explains, *"If we wanted to create the same solution for ourselves, I think it would have taken us so much time, and in terms of figures, it would have cost us easily £200,000. And maybe with the maintenance and everything it would go higher than that."*

Decoupling access control has given Engin and his team time to focus on building Debite, instead of trying to set-up permission logic.

"Instead of writing access controls, access logs, for yourself, using Cerbos will make your life so much easier. Because it gives you an easy-to-use platform to do all of this, without any, or minimal, effort from the development team and the product team. It's reliable. It's fast, and it's, most importantly, a time saver.", he highlights.

Best of all, Debite has found a perfect fit partner in Cerbos at the beginning of their journey, allowing Debite to grow exponentially without any set-backs, from the get-go.

> *"We were very lucky that we came across Cerbos when we were building Debite."*, he emphasizes.

For financial technology companies that are looking for an authorization solution, Engin recommends Cerbos.

"Check the APIs, build a proof of concept. And I would say, if the requirements are met, Cerbos would make your life so much easier. And when you think about the maintenance, for the long-term, it makes sense to switch to Cerbos.", he says.

What's next for Debite and Cerbos? Engin looks forward to taking advantage of the new product features Cerbos is constantly developing, and continuing to scale Debite securely.

"It just works, and it enables us to go to market very quickly, compared to an in-house solution. It allows us to offer new products faster as well, because writing new policies or editing them is so easy."

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