

Three Things Executives Need to Know About Security

Far too often executives and security managers speak entirely different languages. Executives focus on profitability and speak in terms of ROI while security managers focus on often abstract risks and speak in terms of what could happen. This creates mutual misunderstanding and in some cases an “us-versus-them” mentality. Security managers think executives are apathetic to security needs while executives sense security managers fail to understand the importance of the bottom line. The good news is this need not be the case.

Executives of companies that adopt a quantitative, process-based approach to security find security managers learn to speak their language. This approach to security allows executives and security managers to replace adversarial relationships with cooperative, symbiotic relationships.

Companies with effective and efficient security organizations have the data available to them to answer the following three questions. Just as executives now demand more transparency and accountability from IT, they must also require more value from their security organizations.

What are Our Top Security Risks?

Business leaders need to understand the top security risks their companies face. Security risk exists only when a critical asset is vulnerable to attack by a legitimate threat. Taking a quantitative, process-based approach to measuring risk allows security managers to clearly and concisely communicate the risk to executives.

Quantitative analysis allows security managers to present solid cost-benefit analysis of security mitigation strategies. This helps executives and security managers make solid evidence-based business decisions to improve security while maximizing resources.

What Value is the Security Department to the Bottom Line?

Process-based security requires valuation of a company’s critical assets and items. This information is not only essential in prioritizing security and continuity resources it is valuable for prioritizing other resources as well. By providing independent data on the value of critical processes and assets the security organization contributes to the executive decision making process and increases profitability.

Is Our Security a Competitive Advantage?

Effective, process-based security not only ensures maximum return on security investment and contributes valuable data for operational business decisions, it makes companies more competitive. In the context of increasing globalization, security is playing a larger role in business-to-business relationships. Companies with superior security will be able to outmaneuver competitors for customers, partners and shareholders.

Answering these questions will help executives focus their security organizations on the bottom line and get everyone pulling in the same direction. Additionally, they will have the data to empirically demonstrate the effectiveness of their security. Transitioning to process-based security methodology requires cooperation and buy-in from all parties but results in both stronger companies and stronger security functions.