

Relationships Come First: Building a Foundation with Information Security Executives®

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Introduction

At T.E.N.'s 2019 ISE® Sales and Marketing Breakfast, eleven leading industry executives offered their insights and experiences with security vendors and how they have built relationships with sales and marketing teams for mutual success. The discussions centered around top-of-mind issues in cybersecurity, how marketers can navigate the CISO's buying cycle, the influence of security teams on product implementation, on giving back to the industry, and much more. Over one-hundred security vendor representatives attended this exclusive event, receiving valuable knowledge about the best ways to connect with future clients and foster long-term relationships with them.

ISE® VIP Panel Participants



Frank Aiello
VP, CISO
Maximus



Devon Bryan
Executive Vice President,
Chief Information Security
Officer
Federal Reserve System



Roland Cloutier
CVP, Chief Security Officer
ADP



Renee Guttman-Stark
Chief Information Security
Officer
Campbell Soup Company



Kim Keever
CISO and Senior Vice
President of Security,
Analytics & Technology
Services
Cox Communications



John Masserini
Global CISO
Millicom International
Cellular



Marci McCarthy
CEO and President
of T.E.N.
CEO and Chairman of ISE®
Talent
Moderator



Kevin McKenzie
VP & CISO
Dollar Tree Stores



Paul Morris
Chief Information Security
Officer, Executive Director,
Information Assurance &
Cybersecurity Division
Transportation Security
Administration (TSA)



Jim Nelms
Chief Information Security
Officer
LabCorp



Shelbi Rombout
SVP, Deputy CISO
MasterCard



Bob Varnadoe
Chief Information Security
Officer
NCR

Discussion Summary

BUILD THE RELATIONSHIPS FIRST, ENGAGE WITH THE TEAM AND THEN SELL THE PRODUCT

“I’m not looking for a product; I’m looking for a long-term relationship that I take with me no matter where I go, especially if they’ve helped me be successful. So build the relationship first before you try and sell the product.” – *Kevin McKenzie, VP & CISO, Dollar Tree Stores*

Our breakfast began this year with each panelist detailing their enterprise’s unique security needs and requirements along with the initiatives they’re pursuing in the future, with many focusing on reclaiming visibility, identity and access management, cloud security, IOT security, and data loss prevention. Regardless of the industry and future security pursuits, every executive agreed on the following: vendors need to know intimately who they’re selling to and be aware that the buying cycle is often slower than they would expect. “Have you ever sold to the government before?” asked **Paul Morris, Chief Information Security Officer and Executive Director, Information Assurance & Cybersecurity Division** for

Transportation Security Administration (TSA). “The pipeline is not going to fit your sales compensation log. We’ll spend a year chasing down a solution, getting management on board, building a spending plan, and then next year, we’ll finally implement.”

“You have a choice when we begin to talk: do you want to be a partner or a vendor? There’s a big difference in those. The vendors are constantly changing, but we’re willing to work with our partners even if companies change.” – *Jim Nelms, Chief Information Security Officer, LabCorp*

“Where there is a need, risks can sometimes be necessary—that’s true for business relationships, too.” – *Bob Varnadoe, Chief Information Security Officer, NCR*

Understanding your client expands to understanding the people CISOs work with within their own company, including the upper management they report to and the security team members they work with every day. Each of them has a common goal they’re working together to achieve: Implementing security solutions that line up with current business objectives. “We’re absolutely group decision makers,” said **Kim Keever, CISO and Senior Vice President of Security, Analytics & Technology Services for Cox Communications.** “It’s either my directors or team members who find solutions and raise them up. Everyone on my team knows they have to be customer service-oriented, so new solutions have to add positive effects to that experience.”

“If my team brings something to me, it’s going to have a different momentum than me trying to talk them into something. If they’re not bought in to a solution, then they’re not going to run it the way I want it to be run, so it does me little good.” – *Roland Cloutier, Corporate VP & Chief Security Officer, ADP*

“We have a group of rock stars supporting us, influencing our day-to-day decisions. I encourage you to show them the same degree of care as if they were us—because we definitely won’t be making investment decisions without them.” – *Devon Bryan, Executive Vice President & Chief Information Security Officer, Federal Reserve System*

Relationships don’t begin and end with the CISO. Instead, the best relationships are the ones where vendors are communicating with the CISO’s entire security team, establishing trust throughout the company. Not only does open communication streamline the relationship process, but also it can save valuable time for both the enterprise and vendor. **Renee Guttmann-Stark, Chief Information Security Officer for Campbell’s Soup Company** advised, “If you’re talking to my people about implementing a solution, find out if it’s funded—because if it isn’t, I’ll have to shut it down simply because we’re not at that stage of the buying cycle yet.” By being honest about what they can offer each other and what is expected, vendors and security teams can go beyond simplistic business perimeters and become counted-upon partners for many years to come.

EDUCATE THE INDUSTRY BECAUSE THE INDUSTRY WILL BE EDUCATED ABOUT YOU

“If you really want to get my attention, educate the industry, make a mark on the industry. The more attention you give, the more you’re going to get back.” – *John Masserini, Global CISO Millicom, International Cellular*

The information security industry lives and breathes on just that: Information. Security executives are often preoccupied with information about the latest threats, but they will also be on the lookout for new technologies and cutting-edge techniques, becoming knowledgeable of the reputations that vendors bring with them. “I’m a voracious reader,” continued **John Masserini**. “I spend the better part of an hour over coffee reading industry news, finding new companies through what they give back, so if you have a blog, if I read something about you that sparks my interest, I’ll find you.” The influence a vendor can make on the industry doesn’t stop once a deal is made; what a solutions provider can give back to their partners also travels far through word-of-mouth. “I always turn to five or six other CISOs to ask them about solutions providers I encounter to see if trust can be established,” noted **Paul Morris**. “It’s valuable to start at that place because it doesn’t come from a phone call.”

“What can make a vendor successful is being willing to work with and educate my team about how to use their solution effectively—teach us something that we don’t know.” – *Roland Cloutier, CVP & Chief Security Officer, ADP*

Your influence and reputation as a solutions provider can be affected by the smallest of things, even the way you choose to reach out to CISOs. **Roland Cloutier** definitely does not encourage being constantly contacted on LinkedIn, his personal email, and text messages if you cannot reach him at work. “If I express disinterest or regrets, accept it. Don’t go around me,” he cautioned. “Don’t have your CEO call my CEO. Even if you fit the bill perfectly, that is an automatic out-the-door, and you are never coming back in again.” On the flipside, if an executive says to call them at a specific time, then be sure to follow-up with them at the recommended time. Being able to respect your client’s timetable, listening to them, and meeting them halfway makes you instantly stand out from impatient vendors who just want to make a sale.

“If there is a disruptive technology that we believe is going to transform what we have to do for our organization on a day-to-day basis, many of us have leverage we can pull to accelerate those conversations within our organizations.” – *Devon Bryan, Executive Vice President & Chief Information Security Officer, Federal Reserve System*

A way to gain an edge over your competitors is if your company culture matches your potential client’s company culture. Executives feel more at ease if they can see that your

employees and the culture they're bringing with them can integrate into their enterprise as easily as your solutions can. In addition to being active in the cybersecurity community and giving back, a growing factor that executives are looking for in vendors as well as their own teams is diversity. **Renee Guttmann-Stark** remarked, "If you come to a product demonstration or a deal with ten people and it's not a diverse group, then I question the culture a little." Overall, you should remember that working with security executives should be a give-and-give situation, not give-and-take. The knowledge and expertise both parties have to offer each other should be a shared, valued experience, not a competition of egos that damages the relationship.

"Don't come in thinking you know more about the environment than the team does. They just haven't figured out how to explain it articulately to upper management yet, and that's where you as a consultant have the most value." – *Shelbi Rombout, SVP & Deputy CISO, MasterCard*

INNOVATION STARTS SMALL, SO PARTICIPATE IN THE SMALLER EVENTS FOR GREATER ACCESS

"It's worth it to walk the back halls of crowded expo room floors because that's where the hungriest, innovative people are—with small vendors who couldn't afford a prime spot. Being able to follow-up with them again at T.E.N. events and gain actual face-to-face time is beyond valuable." – *Devon Bryan, Executive Vice President & Chief Information Security Officer, Federal Reserve System*

There is no doubt that large expo halls attract worthwhile vendors with innovative, transformative solutions, but these are often tricky environments that make it difficult for executives to strike up meaningful conversation with them. In fact, many executives admit to being intimidated and spending little time there despite their value. That's why executives tend to flock to T.E.N.'s smaller events: the ISE® Programs and ISE® Private Dinners. **Bob Varnadoe** remarked, "The thing I enjoy about Marci's events are the smaller scale, intimate environments where it's easier to have conversations with peers and vendors and is much more productive."

"The unique format of the ISE® Private Dinners means they aren't overt sales opportunities. It's a chance to meet vendors, to listen to an industry topic that a peer has selected. You see where the vendor's solution fits into that topic rather than listen to a two-hour sales pitch." – *Frank Aiello, VP & CISO, Maximus*

Other executives echoed **Frank Aiello's** sentiments, noting that T.E.N.'s ISE® Programs and ISE® Private Dinners are the best places to reconnect with colleagues and share ideas about the problems they're experiencing—and vendors are name-dropped all the time, even if

they aren't in attendance. "I was at ISE® North America four years ago, and a vendor's name came up twice," said Aiello. "Turns out they were the ones who solved my problem, and I've had a relationship with them ever since. Hearing success stories about vendors at T.E.N. events carries a lot of weight." This sentiment is not only true for positive vendor stories but also negative ones as well. Just as vendors can make a name for themselves by giving back to the industry, they can also leave a stain of distrust behind them if they offer false promises.

"Marci's events host a source of truth for vendors. If they come claiming untruths about a solution that doesn't deliver, they won't be invited back, and the rest of us in the industry will hear about it. There's an accountability element there." – *Jim Nelms, Chief Information Security Officer, LabCorp*

Vendors, no matter their size, get the exposure at T.E.N.'s events that they aren't able to achieve at large-scale events due to the former's emphasis on one-on-one interaction. For new, smaller vendors, they also have the opportunity to be showcased as a Gazelle at the ISE® Lions' Den and Jungle Lounge, where top security executives judge vendor solutions based on a 5-minute pitch and a 5-minute Q&A. Security executives also love participating as ISE® Judges for the ISE® Awards because of the in-depth look they receive in how new vendor solutions have contributed to security executive and project team success. Many have followed up and established relationships with Award Nominees as a result, particularly those that demonstrate leadership, vision, innovation, problem-solving, and more. Solution providers also have the unique opportunity to nominate a current customer, showcasing how much they respect their client's work with them and their client's use of their solution. As vendors give back to their customers, customers and executives alike share the impact of the vendor's solution through word-of-mouth, which heightens interest of their solution throughout the event and beyond. The end result is an establishment of trust and a positive reputation that your customer and attending executives take with them wherever they go.

"What Marci brings with her to the table—that's where the relationship starts with me. The clients she brings are the ones I connect with the best and who tend to be the most long-lasting." – *Shelbi Rombout, SVP & Deputy CISO, MasterCard*

As security leaders struggle to keep pace with threat actors, they want to make contact with the best vendors whenever they can, establishing relationships they can count on in the long-term. However, for that to be possible, solutions providers must also be willing to meet these executives halfway. They must get to know their potential clients and what their needs are; make irreplaceable connections with everyone on the security team, not just the CISO; be willing to educate and make a difference in the industry; and put themselves out there at smaller, more exclusive events where they can answer executive questions and engage with them honestly on a one-on-one basis. Some traditional marketing strategies may jeopardize

these connections before they have a chance to be made, which is why it's so crucial for vendors to take note of what works for executives and what doesn't, so vendor and client alike can work in tandem to achieve success together. After all, it's not just for their mutual benefit but for the benefit of the industry as a whole.

If you are an information security and/or cybersecurity solution provider, we invite you to sponsor any of our ISE® Regional Programs, or book a series of ISE® Private Dinners, held in over 44 cities across the U.S. and Canada, in order to reach your targets directly. Connecting with CISOs and their team to build long-term relationships in exclusive, private settings is what executives want from solution providers like you, and T.E.N. can help you achieve a revolutionized marketing strategy with our events. For more information on these and other sponsorship opportunities, visit [our website](#) or contact our sales team at **sales@ten-inc.com** today.

About T.E.N.

T.E.N., a national technology and security executive marketing and networking organization, facilitates peer-to-peer relationships between top executives, industry visionaries and solutions providers in the cyber security industry. Nominated for numerous industry awards, T.E.N.'s executive leadership programs enable information exchange, collaboration and decision-making opportunities for Information Security Executives and cyber security solution providers alike. Its flagship program, the nationally-acclaimed Information Security Executive® (ISE®) of the Year Program Series and Awards, is North America's largest leadership recognition and networking program for security professionals. T.E.N. delivers ISE® Private Dinners across 44 major cities throughout the U.S. and Canada to create even more opportunities for Information Security Executives, professionals and security solution providers to Connect, Collaborate, and Celebrate. For more information, visit <http://www.ten-inc.com>.

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