

CISO Reflection Guide

(and Flowchart of Decision Considerations)

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Reflection Guide

There are many inflection points. One commonly occurs around the 3 year* mark.

- What specifically does it ‘feel’ like?
- When I join a company, I’m ‘this’ kind of CISO.
- What kind of leader am I?
- How will staying at this company help me grow?
- These are the areas I’ll want to expand or improve.
- Reflecting on HOW I’ll stay. Will I:
 - Keep At It?
 - Slow It Down?
 - Accelerate?

This guide is similarly useful as an exercise to rediscover your north star.

* Note: This varies by person, it generally occurs between the 2nd and 4th year.

Am I at the 3 Year Flex?



I FEEL more certain
about my
performance in the
role



I FEEL more
connected to the
security program – it
has my fingerprints
on it



I FEEL satisfied and
simultaneously
curious “itchy”

Reflect on the “Itch”

Am I making a difference?

- What are the differences that I have made?
- What impact have I had on the company?
- What impact have I had on the business of the company? (with our clients, partners and messaging)
- What impact have I had on the internal teams?
- What impact have I had on individuals in the security team?
- Does it feel rewarding?

Am I doing what’s best for my career?

- Am I still on an upward trajectory?
- Where do I want to be in 2 roles from now?
- Who are the people that I will need to know to get to that role in 2 roles from now?
- If I was the recruiter for that 2 roles away job – would this be the time to move on?

Am I effective?

- Am I as effective as I was when I started?
- Am I more effective?
- Am I effective with different stakeholders than I was a year ago?
- Does it feel rewarding?

Am I in the right peer group?

- Who just landed a job, that made me pause? (why?)
- Who could I pickup the phone and talk to as a peer in another company?
- What does it seem like “others” are doing that is more / better?

Is this still fun?

- Am I enjoying coming to work each day?
- Am I enjoying the environment I’m in?
- Am I enjoying the challenge (or the ease) of the work?
- Do I feel connected with the team?
- Am I able to have fun with the team? (more or less than before?)
- Am I proud of my work?

Am I ready?

- This is about you.
- Not your team.
- Not your company.
- Are you personally ready for change?

What kind of CISO have I grown into?

(Like, if you were going to write the ideal role, what would you naturally do next?)

If you cannot pick just one, which are you “more?”

1

Builder

I feel comfortable deciding what’s needed and not afraid to just do it. I like to define guard rails and rules. I naturally create repeatable processes and templates. I am familiar with the tools and know how they connect.

2

Fixer

Give me something that isn’t working and I’ll figure out what is needed to improve it. I’m comfortable being intentional and methodical. I know that it isn’t always easy to win people over, but I have a track record of success.

3

Scale Operator

I like to think about throughput and will naturally add automation and reduce variables. I think about how we can do more and have it be better /faster. I am more comfortable in larger organizations with more products / services.

Reflecting on myself (as a leader) – how would OTHERS describe me



I'm valued, and have more trust from more senior executives than I expected



My team members are more independent than before and their output is better



I'm making suggestions and speaking up on topics where I previously listened



I'm invited to give my opinion and when I do, people relate to what I'm saying

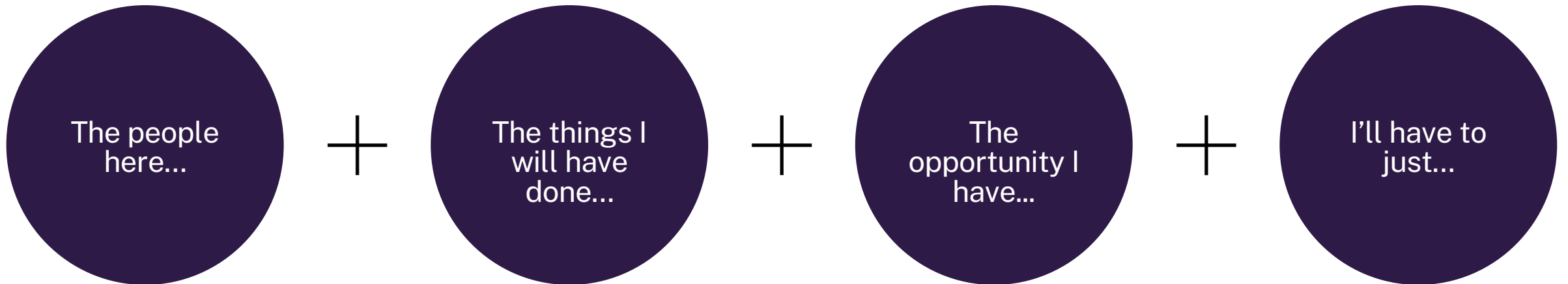


It feels comfortable and natural to have more trust and responsibility

When these are all true – it's because you fit in. Here. Let's think about what it would be to stay...

Staying at this company will help me get “there” because...

When I think about where I'll be in 2 jobs from now (pause, think about that);
Staying here, at this company, will help me get there because....



These are the areas I'll need to expand and develop

Influence

List the areas of influence I want to improve and grow (some categories may include):

- Senior Leaders
- Decision Makers
- My Staff
- My Peers
- Industry Influencers
- Regulators

Demonstrated Impact

List the ways in which impact will be demonstrated (some suggestions include):

- They are measurable
- They are reported
- They are discussed
- They are used as foundations for other

My Comfort with...

These areas are currently 'uncomfortable' for me, but areas where I want to develop and focus.

Thought Leadership and Innovation

List the expectations around thought leadership and innovation. Specifically. Is it in the company's industry? In the domain of security? Other?

These things I'll want to Change

In some ways, I know I'll need to change to arrive at my future goal (some may include):

- Listening
- Delivering
- Managing time
- Delegating
- Communicating

What else?

If I'm going to stay here, and invest 2 more years, What else do I want to achieve?

These are my opportunities

Only you know your environment and what the opportunities are – take some time to think through each option...

(lists are helpful)

Keep at it

Be specific...

Pros and Cons

Slow it down

Be specific...

Pros and Cons

Accelerate

Be specific...

Pros and Cons

Wait, Do I NEED to Leave?

Sometimes the answer is leave.

- Maybe there is a better offer – the kind you cannot turn down.
- The reality is, you're not as effective as you want or need to be.
- Frankly, you just don't enjoy the role or its responsibilities.

