

The CISO Interview

A Preparatory Guide For CISOs

Let's get some things out of the way...

1

A LOT has changed since you last looked for a job, especially for CISOs

CISOs are **expected** to drive their own onboarding.

2

That starts at the **interview.**

Hiring managers (and recruiters) “categorize” CISO

3

Understanding this, will help you
present yourself

CISO Profile: (The Recruiter / Hiring Manager's Perspective)

What Kind of CISO Are You?

- Builder, Fixer, Scale Operator
- Ready, Done it / Do it Again, Smarter Now and Ready, This is Different
- Team Experience?
- “Unique CISO Skill?”
- Approach to policies (ahem, compliance)?

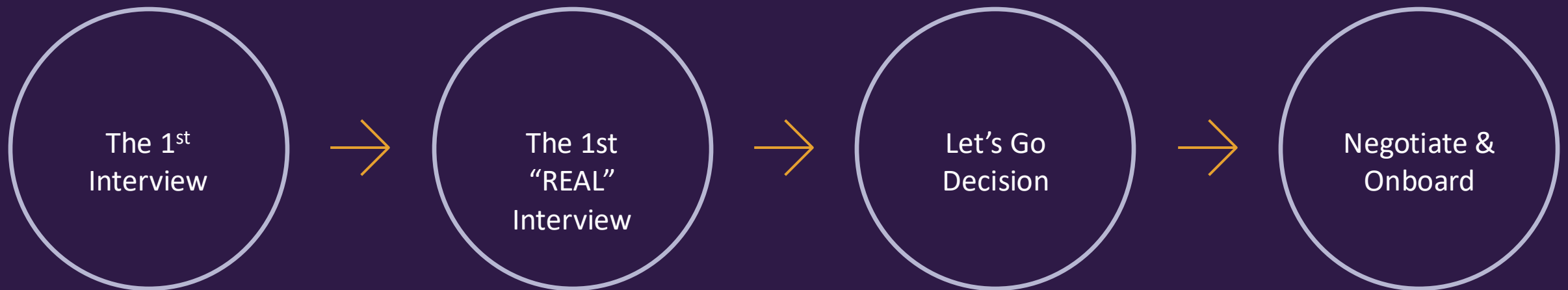
What Environment Will You Thrive in?

- What kind of manager / oversight do you need next?
- What industry / external environment will you thrive in?
- What resources will help you? What to watch out for?

The process

The “Stages” Of the CISO Interview

Understanding what’s happening on ‘their’ side during each stage, will enable you to better perform and present.



The “Stages” of the CISO Interview

Understanding what is happening on ‘their’ side during each stage of the interview process, will enable you to better perform and present yourself.



The first interview

You found out about the job
They found out about you
They said, ooh, we should know more about them
There were some emails and a meeting was scheduled
How long & with who?



The first “real” interview

You didn’t mess up & there were no glaring red flags
You’ll be meeting someone whose opinion will matter
How soon is this meeting? And who is it with? And what are the subsequent steps?



Let’s go decision

After many other discussions, you’re both at “should we?”
You have a sense of what you’re walking into and it excites you.
They think you would fit in and be better than the other candidates that they met.
What questions do you still have?



Negotiation & Onboard

If you’re at this stage – congrats!
Is it what you expected?

**Let's deconstruct the stages that
get you to the offer**

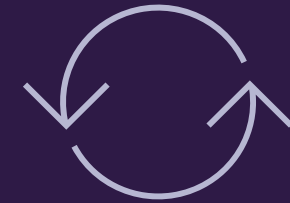
Read (and reread) the Job Description



Company Overview and Context
Is it current, realistic and relevant



What's the "first" requirement?
It's the most important



Which requirement is 'repeated?'
This indicates the priority



Do they say where to 'start'?
Now you know what to do first



What part of it are you already awesome at?
This is what will distinguish you



Is it 'achievable?'
Success likelihood matters

The “first” interview

The “First” Interview

What has already happened?

They reviewed your application and managed to schedule an interview.

- Resume Review.
- Other candidates were considered.

Your Goal



- Get to the next conversation!
- Find out the thing that you were ‘most worried about’ related to the company.
- Does it ‘seem’ like a person you’d want to have lunch with? (even if you won’t work together)

How to Prepare



- Prepare to listen.
- Prepare to answer.
- Prepare to introduce yourself.

What They Know About The CISO Role May Surprise You



Did they have one before?



What are they reading?



Who do they talk to?



What could they expect?



Find out what they know! And know what they're expecting.

The “real” interview

The “Real” Interview

What has already happened?

You made it through!

- A conscious consideration was made to further discussions with you.
- They discussed some ‘concerns’ or ‘want to learn more’ things.

Your Goal



- Align your experiences to their needs. Even if they haven't ‘told’ you their need.
- They want someone who has done exactly this at a place exactly like theirs. (bridge the divide!)
- Start to envision what being there will feel like

How to Prepare

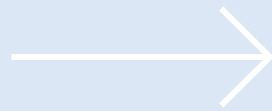


- What do you THINK that they need? (research)
- What do you THINK that they want to hear? (use this to ‘frame’ how you talk about your experience / journey.)
- Prepare specific stories that can ‘answer’ many ‘questions.’

What They're Looking For

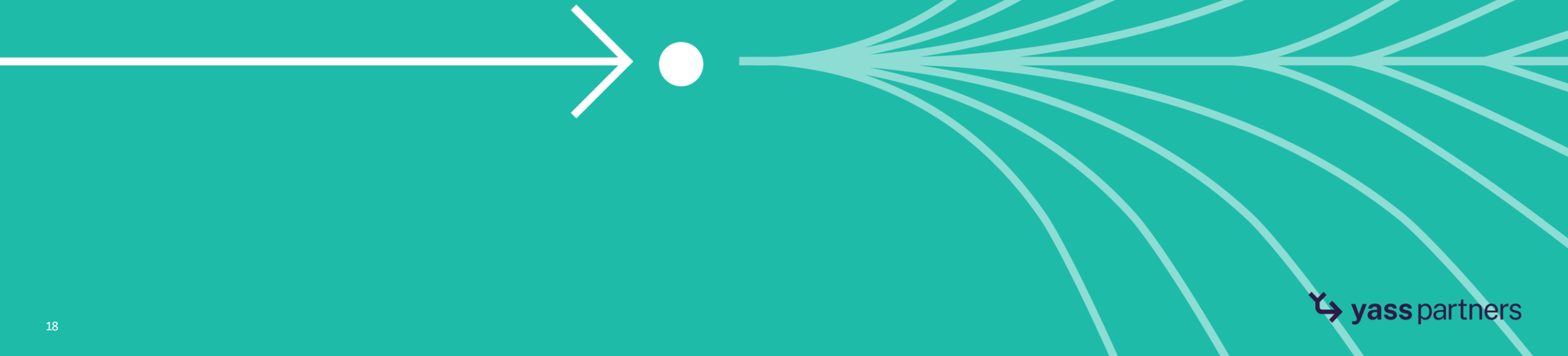
- 1 It's **easy** to work with you
- 2 You know how to **get things done**, in their environment
- 3 You **won't embarrass** or cause harm
- 4 You'll **represent** the brand and company
- 5 You'll **deliver** measurable progress

You cannot force chemistry

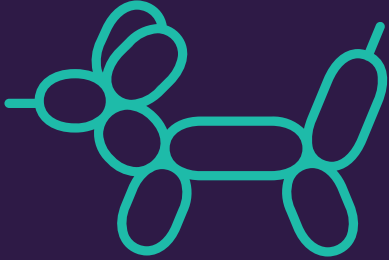


And you don't get hired without a feeling of 'chemistry'

Putting it into practice



The Awkward Truths No One Tells You About CISO Interviews



You explain to THEM what you'll do and how



Sometimes you need to answer a slightly different question



They only know what you tell them and what you show them

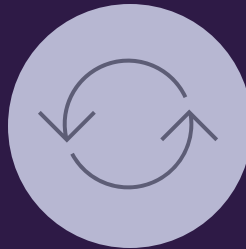
Shift How You Engage During an Interview!



Assume you have the job
And 'start' figuring the things out you'll want to know.
Work together.



Show them clearly
Succinct examples.
What you know, why you're passionate and how you'll be additive.



Repeat back what you heard
Demonstrate understanding and your ability to process and reflect.



Engage them
Ask questions.
Learn from them by asking about decisions.

The Non-Negotiables

Come Prepared



**Show up on time,
professionally**



Thank You



You'll Progress If

You evidence that you're 'qualified' for the job that they need in their current environment.

Demonstrating these 3 elements will likely result in your progression...

You understand them

+

You're likeable
(and fit in)

+

They can
imagine you as
a colleague

**You'll know if you're a fit.
You'll just 'feel it.'**



It's ok to assume a fit and behave confidently.

Some Reminders



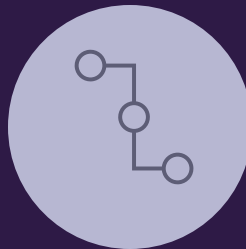
They only know what you share

And what you show them. So you can tell them more or less, and you can choose the context it's presented.



They read your resume....

Through THEIR lens.
Understand their bias.



Connect the dots of their question

Given who they are, what they'd be interested, what they've asked, "You're asking me about frameworks, is that because...?"



Stop yourself when you're done!

This is hard. We're inclined to fill the space. Think about the answer, give the answer then pause. Leaders know this.

Doesn't mean you're **right**
for THIS job. That's ok.

Wanting the job
and being able to
do the job...



Thank You.

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