

How To Decipher Your Company's Culture

These elements of company culture have the strongest impact for the CISO

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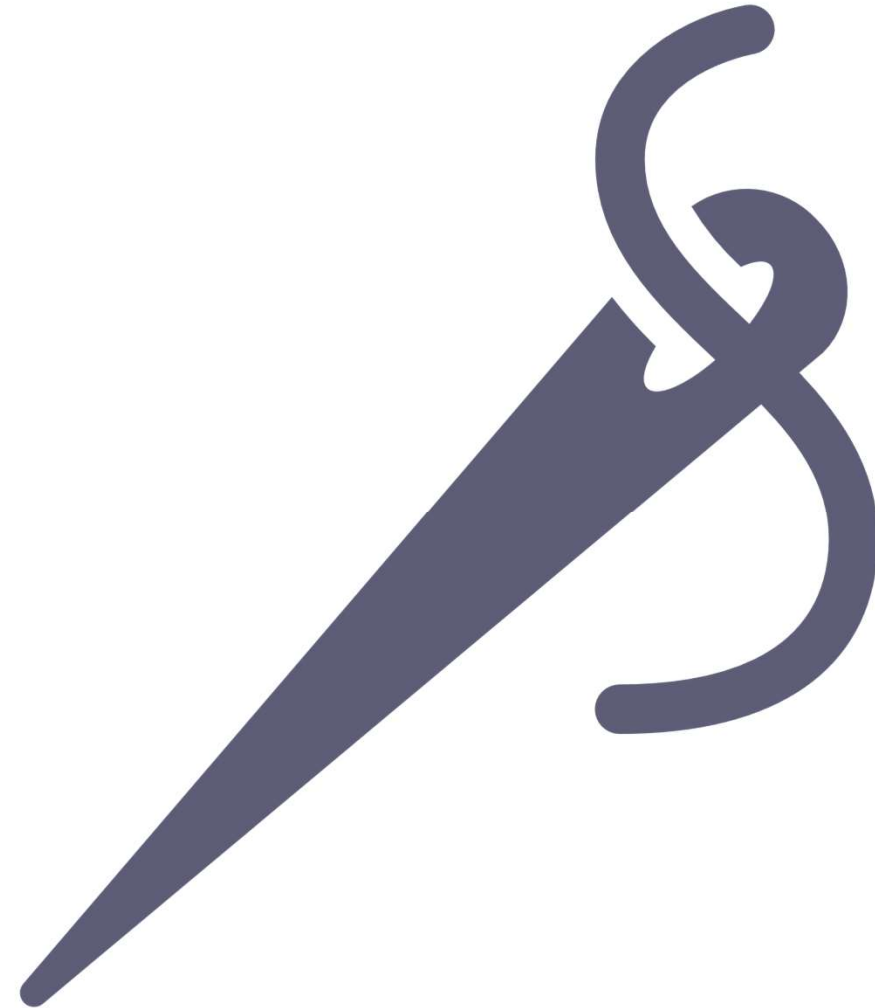
Specific 'signals' from an organization's culture can be used to:



Understand the '**scope**' of your CISO role
Prioritize security programs / initiatives

Why should you read this?

- ✓ You want to 'hack' your company's culture to drive an outcome.
- ✓ You want to find ways to be more effective in your role.
- ✓ You want to know what will land and what will be a landmine.



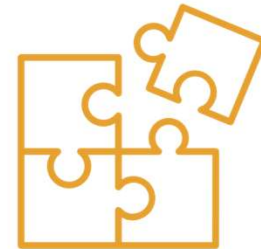
Who should read this?



You have asked yourself how to make the biggest impact at your company?

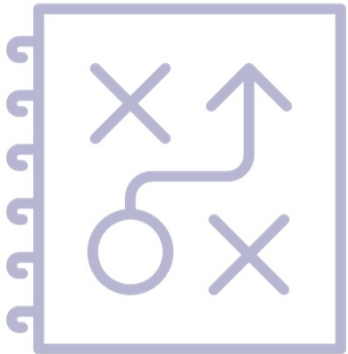


You have wondered where to focus your energy for greatest success?

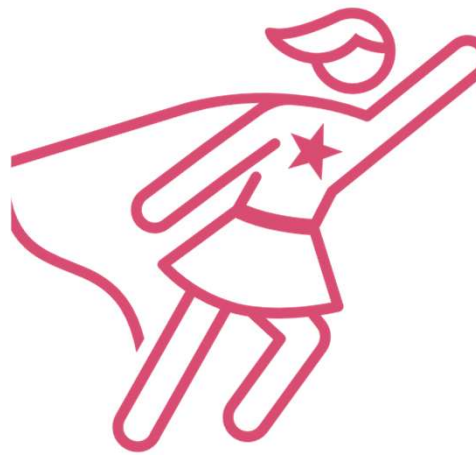


You are new to an organization and trying to figure out what things matter?

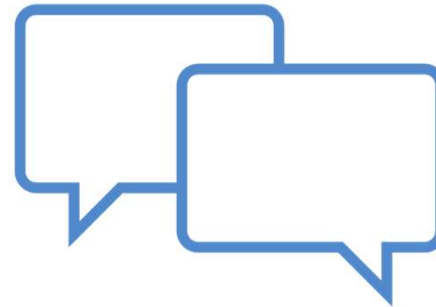
Four Key Elements of Corporate Culture



Decision Making



Recognition



Communication



Governance

Decision Making



To understand the “type” of CISO the company is expecting you to be consider how praise and criticism are attributed.

Observe the patterns and thresholds.

Investigate everything about how “important” decisions get made at the company to figure out how to position and frame any program or change or decision

Business case structure

When you understand the power dynamic of decisions, and each person’s role, you will bring the right content to the right person at the right time.

How are decisions contemplated?

Being credible and effective is essential when presenting an idea that requires budget, resources, or buy in.

Success begins with getting your program approved.

Who are the deciders?

This is the easy one. Every company has a ‘process’ for business cases.



Ask for a few successful examples and make them your template.



Remember, credibility is established by having a track record of success.

Recognition



To understand the “type” of CISO the company is expecting you to be consider how praise and criticism are attributed.

Recognition defines employee motivation.

Knowing how people and projects are recognized and praised tells you about the kinds of people that ‘thrive’ in the organization.

*Is it different for successes vs losses?
Is it different for individuals vs teams?*

How are individuals praised?

Whether a company calls out individual names, project teams, or departments in their communications gives you a hint about the resentment that may be building or the competitive juices that may be festering.

How are projects recognized?

Not all projects succeed. A company that showcases their failed projects as learning opportunities or worthwhile experiments demonstrates confidence and gives you a peek into their values.



Successful projects naturally breed future projects and benefit from investments.



Engage your stakeholders with the knowledge of their motivations.

Communication



The way that a company plans, organizes and delivers messages tells the CISO what will be expected of them and their program.

What we say matters.

By the same token, how we say it, when we choose to say it, and where we say it also matter.

Not only does it inform our stakeholders, it also reflects our values and principles.

When are messages shared with which audience?

CISOs are required to balance transparency with imperfect information. Further, they know when to protect the message with legal privilege.

Are different types of messages communicated differently?

Every company defines their communication threshold differently. A company that tunes their communication to their audience indicates maturity and situational awareness.

Strive to understand your audience & their expectations, and reflect them in your communication approach.

Governance & Accountability



How a company approaches governance and defines accountability is an indicator of how security priorities and investments will be set.

Effective security requires a collective defense.

What is the current governance framework?

The discipline of governance may exist because of regulation or a prior incident. Regardless of the why, understanding the way that it operates and its influence will inform the available leverage points and priorities of a control function.

How is accountability practiced?

Inherently, people prioritize the behaviors that they are rewarded and compensated for. A culture of accountability is set at the top - but only if it is a priority.

How the organization defines who owns the risk and who is responsible for the controls will guide how the CISO has risk conversations.



Understand who owns the risk and who is accountable for keeping risk within tolerance.

So, where do we go from here?

- Invest time to **observe, analyze, assess** your company's culture.
- This will enable you to **optimize** your efforts and resources on the programs that will drive **greatest impact** and give you the '*operating manual*' for how to **succeed** in your role at this company.

