

Building a Culture of Compliance

Information security is becoming increasingly important (and more difficult to maintain) as more data is stored electronically, as businesses and individuals become more dependent on electronic data for daily functions, and as thieves become better at breaking into systems.

No matter the security standard for your industry, a common theme runs throughout -- ***building a Culture of Compliance in your organization***. This means that all employees, at all levels, understand and appreciate the importance of information security, and work to safeguard your company data.

Important steps to take:

- ➔ Recognize that security compliance is not a one-time event but rather a continuous process.
- ➔ Policies and procedures must be established and consistently followed.
- ➔ Employees should receive regular training on security policies and procedures. Without employee "buy-in," the most sophisticated security controls can and will be bypassed.
- ➔ Social engineering is still just as dangerous as hacking. Employees need to be trained in the most common forms and how to respond.
- ➔ Physical security is as important as virtual or network security.

- ➔ No business is "too small" -- Symantec recently reported that "[d]uring 2012, 31% of targeted attacks were aimed at small and mid-sized businesses; a 42% increase over 2011."
- ➔ "Security through Obscurity" (trying to stay off the criminal radar) was only marginally successful prior to the advent of the Internet -- now it's completely ineffective.
- ➔ Pay attention to details. Every single item on your network -- computers, software, printers, cameras, thumb drives, phones, tablets, temperature monitoring systems, vending machines, multifunction machines, CNC equipment, security systems, telephone systems -- all must be configured with security in mind.
- ➔ Clearly define employee duties and responsibilities and limit employee access to data based on the "need to know" for their particular job.
- ➔ Be prepared: screen employees prior to hire, and have an incident response plan in place.

The Net Effect, L.L.C. is a consortium of consultants and programmers experienced in providing information management services to a variety of industries. The company was founded in Mobile, Alabama in 1996 and has worked with businesses across the US, in Canada and in Europe.

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