Should You Call a Business or Technology Consultant for Cybersecurity?

Increasingly sophisticated cyber-attacks, combined with a hybrid workforce and constantly evolving privacy regulations, create a complex risk environment. As a result, many organizations have turned to consultants to tighten their cybersecurity posture. But technology skills alone prove insufficient when choosing a consultant for cybersecurity.

For instance, an MSP may offer multiple cybersecurity certifications and a tool bag of cutting-edge tools. However, if they do not understand your industry and the business processes involved, the solutions they implement may not provide the protection you need. And a consultant with a business background can provide added benefits.

Risk Assessment Needs to Include the Whole Picture

An important first step in developing a solid security program involves conducting a risk assessment. In many cases this offers an early introduction to a potential cybersecurity consultant. The auditor reviews business practices and policies, as well as current security controls. The resulting report will highlight potential vulnerabilities and suggest a plan of action.

When conducted simply to satisfy a compliance checklist, cybersecurity audits deliver little real value. However, an auditor who brings a business eye as well as security expertise will look at the whole picture, beyond just the technical controls.

A thorough auditor will look at the office environment. For instance, do employees have confidential information displayed on their screens, visible to anyone who walks by? Likewise, does the business post detailed information online that hackers can then reverse engineer to create successful spearfishing campaigns?

Cybersecurity Strategies Can Deliver Additional Business Opportunities

Cybersecurity costs money, and that sometimes proves a hard sell for reluctant executives. However, when organizations build security into the business organically, with the guidance of a business-minded security consultant, the process can yield benefits beyond security.

For instance, implementing data governance processes that clearly locate and classify data assets can help businesses uncover data value. Similarly, automating email policies and other security controls results in smoother processes that require less oversight. Also, reducing the security risk eliminates the stiff penalties and lost revenue that often result from a breach.

Business and Technology Background Both Key When Choosing a Consultant for Cybersecurity

When choosing a cybersecurity consultant, organizations may wonder whether to call a business consultant or a technology expert. According to Jonnie Bacan, President and CTO of BizEdge, the answer is both.

"Too often, a tech consultant will focus on computers and servers and break fixes, and they fail to look at the business as a whole," she explains. "Most often, data loss situations can be prevented with good systems, good controls and good processes."

Those processes should cover such items as regulatory compliance requirements and supply chain management. Additionally, a security consultant that balances business and technical expertise will address the human element, beginning with security awareness training, email filtering and automated ePolicies.

Questions to Ask a Potential Consultant for Cybersecurity

In security consulting, as in financial advising, the "one size fits all" principle does not apply. When choosing a consultant for cybersecurity, be sure to ask the right questions to find the right fit for your organization.

For instance, ask potential security partners how long they have been providing security services and what types of industries they serve. A consultant with a customer base comprised primarily of healthcare organizations likely will not understand the security challenges facing a manufacturing organization.

Additionally, ask specifically about the background of the people who will work closely with your organization. A network engineer might not be the best fit to conduct a security audit, for example. On the other hand, a security team that includes a blend of business and technical backgrounds will prove beneficial.

The business technology consultants at Messaging Architects bring proven expertise in information governance and data security, serving a variety of industries. Contact us today to schedule a risk assessment and get started on building a solid cybersecurity strategy.