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# People: Qualities of a Modern CISO

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## Transcript

hello and welcome back i am brian lepidus and we're talking about the next generation security organization with franklin donahue ceo of lynx technology partners when we think about building organizational capability we usually talk about the mix of people process and technology that's really fit to a specific purpose so let's dive into this really into the people aspect here and talk about the qualities of a modern ciso a modern chief information security officer so franklin if you were out and you were advising someone on hiring a ciso today what are the qualities that that organization should look for in their new hire yeah you know that that's a that's a that's a complex question um there there are it's a great question it's a complex question there's a lot of things that a ciso needs to be today than what they we've been in the past and part of the challenge is and i think one of the main challenges is to be able to speak to the specific industry or business more and more cisos are being asked to to interpret security risks and threats and then help make business decisions and quickly right so understanding the business uh is important they have to be a 360 leader they have to be one that uh understands the cio or cto's role

um sympathize with that or the cdo's  
role the digital officer  
officer's role or the cro you have to  
understand so much about what other  
people are doing and be sympathetic or  
almost even empathetic to them  
as well one of the things that i like to  
look for is you know is have they been  
in another part of the organization  
and um are they a person that  
understands  
a lot about security um and happens to  
be a business leader as well  
all right so i'm going to challenge you  
a little bit here because in your career  
right you are the  
you're the cso for costco wholesale so  
big box retailer and then you went from  
there to milan pharmaceuticals  
different different everything right  
different technology levels different  
output different market different  
everything  
how i guess how did you make that  
transformation that transition yourself  
yeah and so before that i i was uh at  
t-mobile and i had some business and  
fraud risk and  
and physical security you know i i  
you have to be i think a well-rounded  
person and i think you have to be  
willing as as just a  
any person in security uh one of the  
best qualities that we say that we have  
in in an employee in security is  
curiosity  
really diving into and studying and  
talking to partners working across the  
organization getting getting coaching  
from business leaders and listening  
to what it is that  
that their objectives are because you're  
serving the business security is a  
service organization  
um as much or more than it is an it  
organization  
um it enables the business to to operate  
its objectives securely  
so is it fair to say that your ideal  
ciso would be  
a business person who happens to have  
security expertise  
yes absolutely you know that's that's a  
that's extremely important um  
but you know that technical acumen  
uh  
still has to be there it's a like i said  
it's a 360 it's a 360 leader where you  
you are a service organization and a  
service leader as well  
so this may be a little bit redundant  
but so that last question was if you're  
on the outside looking in to hire  
somebody but now if you're inside and  
either you are a ciso and you want to

improve or you're on the track is there anything specific that you would say to somebody in order to help gain those skill sets and and move into the role to move into the role yeah so i i would i would say learn more than security um be deep in security and then uh stretch your your learning and curiosity uh into uh some of the the different organizations and and be become become an influencer right i don't want to use an instagram word but uh term but but look you do need to be an influencer because influencers by by proxy are sort of trusted people and it is about trust it's about building trust it's a and one thing one way of building trust i think is operating from a place of understanding so um on a on a different level you know you do need coaching and mentoring to to move through uh security and understand even if you want to be an individual contributor uh like a principal engineer or architect or if you if you want to to be in management because some people concentrate on that cso role but that's not the only role within security that's a really important point right if you are if you're the cso and you're thinking about yourself or you're thinking about your team it sounds like you have to allow the different career paths for people who want to be the specialist who want to be maybe the relationship and the influencer and have that leader-to-leader connection and maybe someone else who is the oversight role like you you have to have the organizational structure and career paths that allow for that for everybody yes and and that goes to you know really understanding what the organization should look like right so in the future in in developing your people and having those job families and career paths that uh that are necessary to grow the organization hiring from within and promoting from within is is absolutely important because those people who have years of experience with the company understand the company they've made uh they've made the relationships in in other parts of the organization to influence and they built up trust as well right that's a great that's a great

summary right that you've given us  
the idea that you need to have people  
who move around you need to have the  
different lines the different  
connections  
what would you say are the most  
important relationships to have  
outside of the security organization  
well i would say the business or you  
know business leaders who are front line  
leaders if you're you know if you're in  
a retail company just for instance or  
health care you know you want to  
talk to doctors and health care you want  
to talk to nurses people who on the  
front lines who are interacting with  
your clients and customers who are  
delivering the services  
um  
and also other key parts of the  
organization  
that are revenue generating and then  
revenue enabling right that support uh  
the  
the people who are helping to generate  
uh revenue directly so if it's a sales  
organization uh if it's driven by sales  
talk to the salespeople develop those  
relationships understand what they need  
and the information that they're working  
with  
um  
and they're touching that's sensitive to  
our to our customers and making sure  
that we are secure and here's the here's  
really the challenge  
making sure that the company is secured  
without getting in the way of business  
uh because that's sometimes the the  
knock on security is that well it just  
gets in the way of what i need to do  
each and every day right i've heard that  
i can lock this down and be secure but  
you won't be able to run your business  
and reach the customer but you'll be  
secure  
that's right that's right and so that's  
where we have to be creative and  
innovative and think of and work with  
our technology vendors and partners to  
come up with the right solutions that  
help our business  
well this has been a great conversation  
and a focus on the people and the  
qualities required uh keep an eye out  
for more content and more thought  
leadership from franklin and from lynx  
technology partners thank you franklin  
thank you brian thank you brian thanks