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Cyber Security Top Tip 1

A Security Framework



Following on in our series of Cyber Security top tips, we wanted to discuss the merits of adopting an Information Security Framework.

Firstly it is fair to say that knowing where to begin in adopting a framework can be overwhelming. There are quite a few options out there and which is most appropriate for your organisation depends on a few factors.

► Let's take a look at some of the options:

1. **Payment Card Industry/Data Security Standard (PCI/DSS)** – This framework was pulled together by the major credit card companies as a way of ensuring that all organisations that handle and process credit card data are managing it appropriately. So this will only apply if you handle credit cards, not just over the internet but over the phone as well. It does lay down basic good practice for general security as well as specific points relating to credit card data.
2. **ISO 27001** – This is the International Standard for managing an Information Security management system. This is all encompassing and covers not only your technical controls but also your people processes. The framework is readily available and allows enough flexibility to cherry pick which controls are the most appropriate for your organisation. You only need to be audited against this standard if you intend to obtain a certification to demonstrate to others how good your security is.
3. **COBIT 5** – from ISACA, the Information Systems Audit & Control Association, is another framework. Interestingly it also pulls in details from other standards to offer a wide set of controls and guidance for across the organisation.

You have most likely already implemented controls from these frameworks, even if your IT or security team weren't following one. However, performing a gap analysis against these could help to highlight other valuable controls or processes which will address risks to your business and that have perhaps been overlooked or not previously considered.

There are other frameworks out there some of which are very specific e.g. for health data or country specific so you might have to consider these depending on the nature of your business or where you operate.

Regardless of which framework you feel is most appropriate this has to be driven by your senior management team. This has to form part of your security strategy otherwise it is destined to fail. So what does the executive team do to drive Cyber Security through your organisation? Or is it left to IT or others?

One final point – it is not reasonable to expect that adopting a framework will prevent all issues from impacting your business as no control can ever provide 100% assurance that a risk will not crystallise.

Failing to shore up your defenses can, at best, be costly and, at worst, threaten the very survival of your company, but bear in mind that effective Cyber Security is a journey not a destination. Where businesses are implementing cybersecurity strategies, the number one driver cited is client/customer demand (44%). 42% of businesses have implemented a strategy because of an increased use of automation and other emerging technologies which could leave them exposed.

Minimise the threat of cyber attacks to your organisation.

Call Matthew Parker for a consultation.



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