

Mitigating Vendor & Human Risks in Privacy and Cybersecurity

ADDRESSING KEY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RISK FACTORS

Two-thirds of all data breaches are a result of human error or third-party vendors. Identifying vulnerabilities in these risk areas is an essential part of any risk management strategy. The following are practical steps to protect your company against human error and vendor risks.

HUMAN RISK MANAGEMENT

- **IDENTIFY EXISTING POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS.** Determine what policies and directives are in place, if they are current, how frequently they are reviewed and updated, and the methods used to disseminate this information.
- **EVALUATE COMMUNICATION & TRAINING.** Identify how mid-level managers communicate policies and train their staff. Gather information about training procedures. Assess compliance with policies. Determine if, how, and how often compliance is audited.
- **ASSESS DAILY OPERATIONS & COMPLIANCE.** Determine employees' level of awareness of and training on established policies and directives. Inspect process compliance. Map how employees access, transmit, and store sensitive data. Assess their understanding of appropriate responses to threats like social engineering and phishing.
- **EXAMINE DISCREPANCIES.** Analyze information to identify gaps between policy and day-to-day operations. In doing so, your greatest vulnerabilities are identified for mitigation.
- **REGULARLY MONITOR.** Create a process for routine monitoring of human risk factors. As processes change, new staff is hired, or new technology is implemented, new risks are created. Periodic evaluation is critical.

VENDOR RISK MANAGEMENT

- **REGULARLY ASSESS & MONITOR ALL VENDORS.** All vendors should be thoroughly assessed periodically. Time and time again, small, seemingly non-critical vendors are the source of major data breaches. Regular, comprehensive assessment of vendors minimizes the great legal and financial risk associated with highly publicized breaches.
- **AUTOMATE OBJECTIVE REPORTING.** Objective reporting enables your company to immediately identify vendor risks while eliminating the time, cost, and subjectivity associated with human-dependent processes. Automation ensures that all vendors are assessed in the same manner producing accurate and objective reporting with minimal internal effort.
- **FOCUS ON CRITICAL RISKS.** While all data gathered through vendor risk assessments are necessary for defensibility and compliance with regulations, certain "hot" issues warrant immediate attention. Tagging critical problems ensures that the most dangerous risks are addressed first.
- **ENABLE ENTERPRISE-WIDE VISIBILITY.** The status of vendor compliance is critical to multiple stakeholders within your enterprise including accounts payable, legal, financial, and regulatory staff. Ensuring that these business areas have quick access to vendor compliance status increases efficiency and eliminates business disruption.

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