Four Tips for Communicating Cyber Risk to a Business Audience

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Who am I? …Why should you listen to me about this?

- I work at Black Kite, a **Third-Party Risk Intelligence** Platform
- I am an evangelist - I think about ‘stuff’ and talk about the ‘stuff’ I think about
- 15-year Gartner veteran
- I’ve advised and spoken to 50,000+ people about cybersecurity and IT risk management
- I’ve run planning workshops for hundreds of organizations
- I’ve briefed hundreds of CISOs on how to engage business stakeholders on IT Risk topics
- I’ve briefed over 200 board of directors on cybersecurity and IT Risk
The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.

Sydney J Harris
Perception Does Not Always Equal Reality

SRM leaders that think they communicate effectively

Business leaders who think their SRM leaders communicate effectively

SRM leaders that are effective communicators
Four Tips for Better Communication

1. Learn to Speak Business
2. Create and Tell Stories
3. Focus on Emotions
4. Understand Risk Appetite
Speak the Language of your Business
What You Should Do

- Take Business Classes
- Pilot Your Message
- Ask Your Audience
- Check Your Sources
- Pause
Become a Storyteller
Create and Tell Powerful Stories

Conveying Events in Words and Images Using Improvisation or Embellishment

In order to

Inform and Educate  Influence a Decision  Change Behavior
What You Should Do

- Watch Movies (Easy!)
- Develop Analogies
- Create Your Story and a One Pager
- Practice, Practice, Practice
Feelings ≠ Facts
Focus on Emotions vs. Details

Data may persuade people, but doesn't inspire action;
wrap your vision in a story that fires the imagination and stirs the soul.

They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Carl W. Buehner
What You Should Do

- Be careful about data
- Know your audience's triggers
- Pilot messages
- Watch for hot buttons
- Scenario planning to ID trends
How Much Risk is Too Much?
Understand Your Business’ Appetite for Risk

“Risk appetite is a general statement about how much risk your organization seeks”

This is a Delicate Balancing Act

Security and Risk Management Is the Fulcrum
Five Steps to Developing a Technology Risk Appetite Statement

1. Understand the organization’s strategic goals and objectives
2. Develop a risk appetite scale
3. Engage with senior leadership
4. Utilize common language to develop a risk appetite statement
5. Develop prioritization processes and tools
What You Should Do

1. Evaluate your organizational need for risk appetite(s)
2. Identify and involve stakeholders early
3. Carefully define terminology and taxonomy
4. Link technology risk appetite to enterprise objectives
Recommendations

• Learn the language of your business stakeholders; don’t expect them to learn yours
• Leverage storytelling as a powerful vector for communicating
• Take a step back from facts, data, and figures and think about emotions
• Work with business leaders to understand their risk appetites(s)
Contact Me

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