Metrics > Employee Awareness Program >

Create a Security Awareness Dashboard

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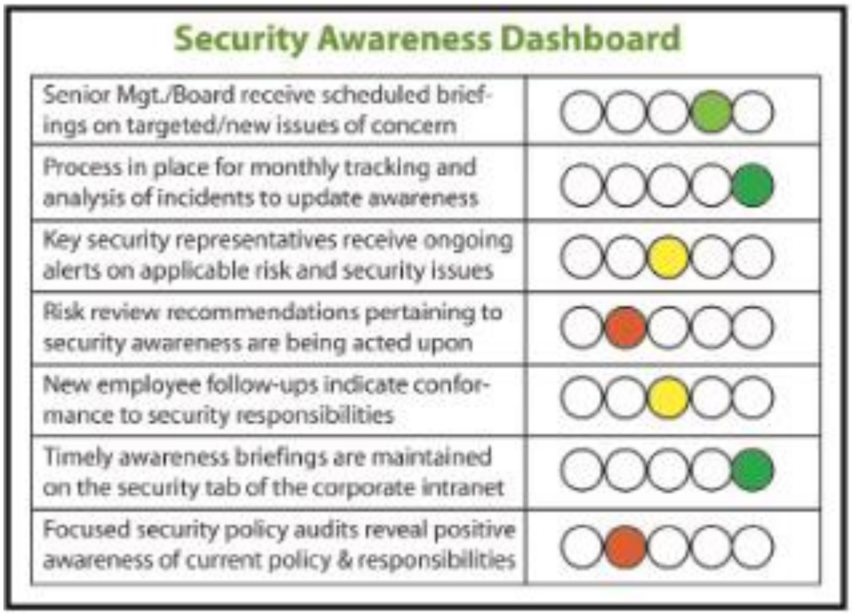

Security Awareness Dashboard

Senior Mgt./Board receive scheduled briefings on targeted/new issues of concern	○○○🟢○
Process in place for monthly tracking and analysis of incidents to update awareness	○○○○🟢
Key security representatives receive ongoing alerts on applicable risk and security issues	○○🟡○○
Risk review recommendations pertaining to security awareness are being acted upon	○🔴○○○
New employee follow-ups indicate conformance to security responsibilities	○○🟡○○
Timely awareness briefings are maintained on the security tab of the corporate intranet	○○○○🟢
Focused security policy audits reveal positive awareness of current policy & responsibilities	○🔴○○○

One of the fundamental obligations we have in corporate security is to understand the potential for “what if” and communicate our knowledge and concerns both to those who could be affected and to those who have accountability for protecting the assets of the enterprise.

We view the security risk landscape from a unique perspective, and this provides us with knowledge that is essential to assigning accountability throughout the business — to ourselves and to others.

The sample chart above communicates seven fairly obvious checkpoints for a basic security awareness program. They involve and reflect a few key management principles:

• Management needs to communicate their expectations to employees. New employees are made aware of their security responsibilities, and there is a process in place to affirm their ongoing awareness. We know that when employees are first hired, the messages they receive in the sea of signing forms, learning about benefits and listening to speeches are too soon lost in the transition. This post-orientation process is essential to ensure that security-related responsibilities are understood and fulfilled.

• There are processes in place to proactively identify areas of risk and their root causes. Security management has established a process for monthly tracking and analysis of incidents to update awareness. Are you just storing your workload and investigative data, or are you routinely using it to enhance your understanding of risk dynamics and the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of your security programs?

Risk is a moving target. If we are to depend on people in the business to share the responsibility for asset protection, we must keep them up to speed with timely risk assessments. Where risk assessments indicate a lack of security awareness or understanding of responsibilities, there is a process to resolve these gaps and confirm the responsiveness of appropriate individuals or groups. We know that proactive risk assessments combined with incident post-mortems often find that a lack of employee awareness or apparent ignorance of policy or procedure directly contributes to or exacerbates incidents. In our example, the data shows that appropriate corrective actions are likely not being taken.

• Responsive actions are taken when risks are reported. In the sample dashboard above, we see that senior management and the Board are routinely briefed on emerging areas of risk and the effectiveness of programs calculated to mitigate risks targeted for action. Regardless of where the security function is placed in the organization or what piece of the risk management mission it serves, it should be routinely informing and advising senior management on selected areas of risk and brand protection. Accountability can only be ensured when selected individuals within business functions — your key security representatives — receive actionable information and alerts on risk and security issues appropriate to their responsibilities. Timely awareness messages or short briefings can be maintained on a "security" tab of the corporate intranet. This is another way to keep employees engaged and ensure that appropriate awareness messages are out there. Messages need not be flashy and should not be lengthy but should eliminate plausible denial.

• There are internal controls and checks to confirm that accountable parties are fulfilling their responsibilities. Focused security policy audits reveal positive awareness of current policy and responsibilities. Just as an incident post-mortem can reveal a vulnerability related to the lack of awareness or knowledge, so the internal audit program should incorporate reviews of employee awareness of security policy and procedure.

A simple dashboard can convey the Security manager's status report to his boss on a few key security awareness indicators. What story would you tell if this were the assessment of security awareness in your company?

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The SEC is the leading research and advisory firm focused on corporate security risk mitigation solutions. Having worked with hundreds of companies and organizations we have witnessed the proven practices that produce the most positive transformation. Our subject matter experts have deep expertise in all aspects of security risk mitigation strategy; they collaborate with security leaders to transform security programs into more capable and valued centers of excellence. Watch our 3-minute video to learn more**.**

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