

Where Do I Begin With My Insider Threat Mitigation Strategy?



I have often been asked by many individuals “***Where do I start in the process of mitigating insider threats?***”

Usually, I would point them to the Insider Threat Program as the critical framework of their thinking and strategy. But that is not the answer they are looking for in the short term.

What they were expecting from me, is to briefly describe a security software program like a “band-aid” program that will solve the majority if not all of their insider risk concerns. Unfortunately, there is no such thing.

The risk from people is dynamic, which leads me on to say, that one of the best actions that an organisation should consider in reducing their insider threat is first in its hiring process.

Let me state this again..... An organisation is a collection of people that work towards shared goals, mission, and vision. Without such employees, the organisation does not exist. So, it is fair to say that our thinking and strategy for reducing insider threat needs to focus on people in its chief purpose. If that is the case, then we must then ensure that organisations hire the right people. Failure to hire the right people is catastrophic.

For example:

An organisation employed a contractor to perform system administration duties. Soon afterward, the contractor compromised the organisation systems and obtained confidential data on millions of its customers. Though the contractor company had told the hiring organisation that it had completed a background check, the investigation revealed that the contractor had a past criminal history of illegally accessing protected computers that would have been detected with a proper background check.

The organisation, in this case, failed to:

- Verify the employee credentials before hiring them;
- Relied on the contractor to perform on the background check;
- Implement proper account management policies and procedures;

The organisation might have avoided this situation ultimately had it conducted its own investigation, including verifying whether this individual character, values, and beliefs are aligned with the corporate organisation values, beliefs, mission, and vision.

Many candidates typically go to a job interview with the same strategy. Show your strength, prove your worth, exude confidence, and tie your experience to the needs and qualifications spelled out in the job description. This is usually all it takes to make it as an employee if you are the chosen candidate.

On the other side of the equation (from the employer side), the hiring process usually starts with a needs assessment possibly facilitated by HR. A formal job description is the likely product of the needs assessment, which can then be used in structuring candidates for the job.

Competency-based evaluation and interviewing can be an excellent way to solicit and verify candidate qualifications, including technical skills and capabilities. Then a good employee match with the job description should ensure the persons to fulfill the job responsibilities.

Here is the problem

If after all, due diligence and process of verifying their references, skills, capabilities, and trustworthiness, how would you know whether this person is the right person and the right fit?

The harsh reality is sometimes the person you offered the job isn't the same person who ends up working for you.

But how can you tell if you've made a hiring mistake?

The answer lies in a single critical fundamental element that most organisations rarely ever take into considerations – **TRUST**.

Trust is a function of two variables (taken from Stephen Covey book – “The Speed of Trust”)

1. **Character** is based on integrity, motives, value, beliefs, and intent and
2. **Competence** is based on skills, capabilities, references, and results.

The chances are that when you finally did employ that fantastic candidate, you only assessed their capability, but not their character.

The chances are that if you do have an employee who's not fitting into your workforce, it's probably because your employee's values and principles are misaligned with the corporate values, mission, and goals. Such a case would require the person to be respectfully but expeditiously ushered out of the organisation.



What Can You Do?

Here are some suggested recommended steps to minimise the potential of misalignment between your corporate and your potential employees.

- Recognise that every candidate and employee is unique;
- Recognise that every candidate and employee have different behaviours, values, beliefs, aspirations, and motivations;
- Develop a character evaluation program that assesses the alignment of values between the candidate and your business;
- Develop an ongoing process for an ever-higher employee engagement program within your company.

Every business wants a dedicated and productive workforce. Interestingly, 75% of USA workers do not align their values with their respective companies. According to Gallup, part of the reason was that there's a disconnect between the company

culture executive leaders and their employees. Executives say their company stands for innovation, customer satisfaction, and employee empowerment, but the way employees work makes them feel like this couldn't be further from the truth. This could be for a whole host of reasons – for example, a lack of engagement, not having the proper tools or not having the structure and goals necessary to guide employees.

How Can We Help You?

On a scale from 1 to 10, how balanced do you think are the employees' values aligned to corporate values?

If you want to improve your alignment and get clear and actionable strategies that will help you break through employee-employer disengagement, CommsNet Group is offering you a **FREE employee-employer value assessment** that will provide you with the visibility and understanding of what drives behaviour within your organisation.

To register your interest, please reach out to [CommsNet Group](#), specially Peter, who will help you with the process.

Contact Us

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