Short of Talent? Follow Example of Baseball's 'Harvesting' Programme

A leading IT security expert suggests that healthcare organisations should follow professional baseball teams' lead and develop farm leagues to harvest talent they can ultimately employ to secure their networks.

"Even when we were in the desktop/laptop/mobile phone world, there already was a shortage of cybersecurity professionals, people trained to protect networks," said National Cybersecurity Alliance CEO Michael Kaiser.

"Now we have the next generation of technologies, which are connecting not just computers and mobile devices but, in a healthcare setting, things like medical devices, connected devices in patients' homes and web-enabled elements of physical facilities. As a result, there is a growing need for people who are trained in protecting the networks of today with all these connections, and in making good decisions about what kinds of services and software should be purchased to protect these networks."

Some 44 percent of 1,100 senior executives at large companies around the world, including healthcare organisations, say a shortage of skilled workers is a major barrier to better data security.

That's according to the "2016 Vormetric Data Threat Report," published by data security technology vendor Vormetric and IT research and consulting firm 451 Research.

"Healthcare chief information security officers know well that a highly trained, intelligent workforce is critical when trying to address the myriad cybersecurity threats today. But technology itself is working against CISOs trying to staff up," explained Bill Siwicki, Managing Editor of _Healthcare IT News_.

The explosion of connected technologies is making it more challenging for security leaders to find talent versed in this widening array of technologies and related threats, said Kaiser, whose NCA works through public/private partnerships to create and implement education and awareness efforts.

"Healthcare executives should create relationships with four-year and two-year educational institutions in their area to possibly influence the kinds of training delivered and encourage students entering the field to consider working in the healthcare industry," he said.

Executives looking for quality workers to take on cybersecurity also should look within their own organisations for people who might fit some of the bill and could be trained in other areas, Kaiser suggested.

"Find people internally who might have some of the knowledge and skills already, or have what looks like the kind of profile that would be good in cybersecurity, for instance they are really good at problem-solving, taking initiative and communicating," he said. "See if such individuals would want additional training or to be retrained to work in cybersecurity. That could be quite beneficial since they have knowledge of the healthcare industry, which is a big part of the battle."

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