

New CISO Stress Research: Causes, Consequences and Conversation

Hosted by

Stuart Reed - *VP, Product & Marketing, Nominet Cyber*

Tom Field - *Senior Vice President - Editorial, ISMG*

Agenda

6:00pm - Registration, Networking

7:00pm - Introductions and Opening Remarks

7:15pm - Roundtable Discussion

8:45pm - Closing Remarks

9:00pm - Program Concludes



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Introduction

Stress. At a time when cyberthreats are heightened, defenses are struggling to keep up and boards are demanding more answers, CISOs globally are reporting higher levels of stress. This stress manifests as burnout in the workplace. In many cases, boards are aware of these pressures, but they still continue to demand more from the CISO.

What can be done to recognize and ease the sources of stress? How can CISOs achieve a better work/life balance? Can smart technology choices alleviate stress?

To discuss these important questions, join us at an exclusive executive roundtable on **New CISO Stress Research: Causes, Consequences and Conversation**.

Guided by insights from Stuart Reed, vice president of product and marketing at event sponsor Nominet Cyber, this invitation-only dinner will also draw upon Nominet's new research on the topic, as well as first-hand stress management experiences of the attendees. Among the discussion topics:

- How have CISO stress levels changed in the past year?
- What is the impact on career burnout, mental health and family relationships?
- What are the drivers of CISO stress, and what role does the board play in alleviating the sources of tension?

You'll have the opportunity to discuss the topic with a handful of senior executives and market leaders in an informal, closed-door setting, from which you will emerge with new strategies you can immediately put to work.

Discussion Points

Among the questions to be presented for open discourse:

- How would you describe your stress level today: high, moderate or low?
- How have these stress levels changed in the past year?
- What are your biggest sources of stress?
- What impacts do you see on career burnout, mental health and family relationships?
- What role do senior management or the board play in alleviating the sources of tension?
- What do you believe would help alleviate CISO stress?
- What are the barriers to relieving stress?
- What investments will you make in the next year to help reduce your own stress?

About the Expert

Joining our discussion today to share the latest insights and case studies:



Stuart Reed

Vice President of Product & Marketing, Nominet Cyber

Reed is a highly skilled and motivated professional in technology, having spent the past 10 years focused on cybersecurity. With more than 15 years' experience in roles across world-class brands, he has built a strong reputation as a thought leader in various areas, including managed and professional services, risk management, cybersecurity and the cloud. He is directly responsible for driving Nominet's cybersecurity roadmap both from a strategic and delivery perspective. Before joining Nominet, he led his own consultancy and worked for global brands such as Sony, Symantec and NTT.

About Nominet

Nominet has been at the forefront of innovation for 20 years through its internet registry solutions, cybersecurity services and dynamic spectrum management. Driven by a commitment to use technology to improve connectivity, security and inclusivity online, Nominet is a “profit with a purpose” company supporting initiatives that contribute to a vibrant digital future. For more information, please visit www.nominet.uk

About the Moderator

Leading our discussion today is:



Tom Field

Senior Vice President - Editorial, ISMG

Field is an award-winning journalist with over 30 years of experience in newspapers, magazines, books, events and electronic media. A veteran community journalist with extensive business/technology and international reporting experience, Field joined ISMG in 2007 and currently oversees the editorial operations for all of ISMG's global media properties. An accomplished public speaker, Field has developed and moderated scores of podcasts, webcasts, roundtables and conferences and has appeared at the RSA conference and on various C-SPAN, The History Channel and Travel Channel television programs.

About ISMG

Information Security Media Group (ISMG) is the world's largest media organization devoted solely to information security and risk management. Each of our 28 media properties provides education, research and news that is specifically tailored to key vertical sectors including banking, healthcare and the public sector; geographies from the North America to Southeast Asia; and topics such as data breach prevention, cyber risk assessment and fraud. Our annual global summit series connects senior security professionals with industry thought leaders to find actionable solutions for pressing cybersecurity challenges.

New CISO Stress Research: Causes, Consequences and Conversation

In advance of this event, ISMG's Tom Field spoke about CISO stress management with **Stuart Reed**. Here are excerpts of that conversation.



Stuart Reed

*Vice President of Product
& Marketing, Nominet Cyber*



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Benchmarking Stress

TOM FIELD: Are CISOs becoming more stressed?

STUART REED: Over the past year, the level of stress among CISOs has remained high, with nine out of 10 reporting some level of stress. What has changed significantly, however, is the impact of this stress. This year, 48 percent of CISOs believed that workplace stress was impacting their mental health, up from 27 percent a year ago.

FIELD: Why do you think this is?

REED: The stress felt by CISOs seems to be a result of a combination of external and internal factors.

The urgency of today's threat landscape is a pressing challenge for all CISOs. However, it is when this is combined with a need to communicate risk and defense strategies to the board that stress can quickly build up. The dual nature of the CISO role, of both technical expert and a board level consultant, also means that they are being pulled in many different directions. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that the role of the CISO is actually relatively new and evolving.

Impact of Stress

FIELD: What impact is this having on the CISO?

REED: Not only is the mental health of CISOs at risk, but workplace stress is also having an impact on their home lives. Forty percent of CISOs said that their stress levels had affected their relationships with their partners or children, and nearly one-third said that stress levels had repercussions on their marriage or romantic relationships.

How to Achieve Balance

FIELD: You looked at what the CISO is willing to give up financially for a better work/life balance. Is this telling?

REED: It is worrying that almost all CISOs would take a pay cut for an improved work/life balance. On average, CISOs would be willing to give up nearly \$10,000 per year, which is even more significant when you consider that they're currently giving away more than \$30,000 in extra time to their organizations.

Business Impact

FIELD: What impact could CISO stress have on the business?

REED: Businesses suffer a huge amount from stressed-out CISOs. Not only does stress in the workplace make for a poor and often fractious working environment, but also in terms of the operation of the business. Nearly a third of CISOs believed that stress had affected their ability to do their job, ultimately meaning that the business is less secure if it has a stressed out CISO.

It was also interesting to note that the average tenure of a CISO was just over two years. Potentially, this could be an indication of burnout as a result of stress.

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Cyber

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Senior Management’s Responsibility

FIELD: What is senior management’s responsibility to correct stress being felt by CISOs?

REED: There should be an obligation on senior management to create a working environment that is designed to alleviate stress – whether this means training managers on spotting signs of stress, encouraging social engagement or incentives to help employees live a healthier lifestyle.

Threats as Stressors

FIELD: What sorts of cyber threats are causing the most stress?

REED: CISOs are likely to be worrying over different types of threats, depending on where they believe they might have vulnerabilities and the transitions their business is going through. During cloud migration projects for example, the types of threats causing stress may be different than those during a merger.

Available Resources

FIELD: Is there any way we can alleviate CISO stress through resources?

REED: Additional funding for more security solutions or headcount to expand the cyber team will go a long way to correct the poor work/life balance of the CISO and potentially alleviate stress.

With the right technology, CISOs may also be able to prove their worth more easily, which could go some way to addressing the issue that 97 percent of the C-level executives believe that security teams could deliver more value.

FIELD: Is there a skills gap issue?

REED: The skills gap could also be making the lives of CISOs more stressful and could be another reason why, on average, they work 10 hours extra every week.

Role of Technology

FIELD: Could better technology choices alleviate stress?

REED: IT infrastructures are changing, and as more organizations move to the cloud, they will only become more complex. This makes integration and interoperability critical for a CISO to ensure the entire IT estate works together, rather than opening holes within the cyber defense. ■

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