BANK OF AMERICA

Be cyber secure: how to build a cyber awareness program

Your employees are the first line of defense against cyber criminals. Adopting a cyber security awareness training program will help you create a culture of security throughout your organization and prepare employees to detect potential threats and minimize the risk of a cyber breach.

Develop strong internal tools and processes

Define roles and responsibilities

Create formal cyber security policies for digital interactions of all kinds, including the use of devices and software.

Define role-based guidelines for each team, including what individual members need to know about IT security, online safety and privacy.

Build a formal security handbook that codifies these guidelines and share it with your employees.

Assign employees clear security-related responsibilities in the event that cyber threats are detected, including who has decision-making authority.

Provide formal training

Offer managers step-by-step actions they can take to educate new hires while providing ongoing training for existing employees.

Provide employees with access to educational, training and certification programs that offer knowledge of and hands-on experience with cyber threats.

Refresh employees’ knowledge of industry best practices and standards every six months.

Supplement linear sources of education, such as books, training guides and online videos, with interactive exercises and team-based activities that test employees’ skills.

Integrate learning opportunities

Transform routine cyber security challenges, such as phishing emails or social engineering attacks, into simulated real-world scenarios that employees can learn from.

Offer instructional feedback as workers tackle these challenges and help them to determine the optimal means for addressing each encounter.

Quiz employees on what they’ve learned, review the results and discuss where their actions could have been more effective.

Share the insights obtained from these exercises with the rest of the organization.

Reinforce cyber awareness

Plan and schedule regular employee engagement campaigns that promote awareness of current cyber security trends.

Reach out to employees on a routine basis, weekly, or monthly, to inform them about hot topics in the cyber security space.

Create a communications plan and workflow for dealing with IT security incidents and make sure your teams are familiar with it.

Use security issues as opportunities for employees to learn best practices.

Establish lines of communication

Identify the key person(s) accountable for cyber security within each of your organization's departments and circulate that person's contact information. Do the same for each of your partners and vendors.

Implement official communications channels, online forums or emergency email accounts, through which employees can report cyber security incidents.

Use standardized templates for threat reports and updates to help employees share information quickly.

To learn more

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