

THE SafeHarbor® BRIEF

 **Gnostech Inc.** Maritime Cybersecurity Newsletter - December 2018

A TRAINING PLAN *What is it and Do I Need One?*

In our previous newsletters, we discussed policies, plans, and high-level documentation to establish and maintain a security program for your company. We also discussed elements that your organization is encouraged to adopt as a part of your security measures. Such elements included intrusion detection and continuous monitoring, remote access, physical security, auditing, incident response, and risk assessment policies. ***This month, we will focus on training plans.*** You will learn what the components for an effective training plan are and how your organization should approach creating one.

At one time or another, organizations and employees have been asked to develop, contribute to, or comply with a training plan. There are several plan types and formats depending on the training's purpose or the industry, from a simple email or word document to online databases. The first question to

ask is what is your organization trying to accomplish with a training plan? For example, an organization may need to ensure that certain mandated training requirements are met or acquire new skills for future work. The reasons are infinite.

Training Basics

On a high-level, a training program is defined as a significant long-term training activity comprising of a series of courses, and usually has a flexible time and cost budget.

Training is further defined in National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication 800-16 as follows:

The "training" level of the learning continuum strives to produce relevant and needed security skills and competencies by practitioners

of functional specialties other than information technology (IT) security (e.g., management, systems design and development, acquisition, auditing).

When a person seeks or is assigned training, it is to gain a new or updated skill to better perform their job or potentially move to a new position. Training, as a progression from previous instruction, helps to reinforce initial learning objectives and add expanded function, knowledge, and new capabilities. You can think of an operation system, database, test tool or auditing in the same way. Training is advantageous for any organization to improve business performance, profit, and staff morale.

Performing an assessment of a current training program is always a good starting point for both an organization and its employees. You can ultimately determine what you have and what you

Ineffective Training is Expensive

The total loss to a business from ineffective training is \$13.5 million per year, per 1,000 employees.

- Grovo



79% of companies do not provide a formal training program for their employees.

- Accenture



need. A company-wide training plan can be utilized as a living plan to determine the status of an organization's overall training posture year after year. For an employee, it can be viewed and used as an ongoing record to help define career progression, such as certificates, certifications, or degrees.

Next, we will discuss some considerations for your organization's training plan:

Updating Skills

In today's ever quickening pace of technological change, skills need to be updated almost continuously. The once formal training path of college and university is now being supplemented and, in some areas, replaced with short targeted training and certifications. Time away from work is a factor to consider when choosing which training path to follow. Having multiple employees trained in a critical skill can be beneficial for any organization. For instance, some organizations use matrix teams for certain projects. With more employees able to perform similar tasks, more matrix teams can be utilized at the same time.

Providing Value

At times, training can be less than exciting. In order to improve employees' attentiveness, an interactive training environment automatically encourages employee involvement and training response. Tying training to current real-world events is important, too. With jobs becoming more and more specialized in

today's world, it is harder for employees to see where their contributions fit in the big picture. Real-world scenarios provide tangible examples of how employees contribute and add value to their organization.

Repeatable

A training plan for any organization should be structured to be repeatable and thus scalable. This allows for a more consistent outcome, a foundation for future training, and periodical employee spot quizzing. With repeated training, employees and management have a clearer expectation of training results and outcomes. Management can then measure training progression and results, as they compare to industry standards, year after year.

With mandated training, one is more constrained to the options that will satisfy requirements. Skills to acquire or update may be driven by new/current market entry or emerging technology needs. Depending on the size and type of your organization, providing training based on employees' interests may not be possible or of value to the organization.

Training can be acquired through different platforms, time frames and cost: in-house from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) (hours to days), a vendor brought in-house (days to weeks), online (hours to days), or formal college/university (months to years). Each platform has different benefits depending on what the organization's desired outcome is.

Training plans can provide information beyond the physical training itself. If training is optional, how many employees are actively participating? What training is most accessed and by which groups? What type of feedback is being provided? Is the provided training in line with organizational and industry needs? The number of employees trained or compliant provide data points for potential teaming partners and can show maturity of employee training.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction can be hard to measure when training is concerned. Employees that are encouraged to train are more willing to take advantage of the opportunity when they can see its value to the organization and themselves. When employees do not have direct training opportunities from their organization, they tend to be less engaged and find it harder to see a positive correlation and outcome for themselves and the organization. On the other hand, some employees will always be active in their training, lifelong learning and self-investment. All in all, it is important to ensure that employees are satisfied with their training.

About Gnostech Inc.

Gnostech Inc. is an engineering and security consulting company focused on the defense and maritime industries. We have over 35 years of developing products and solutions to address the technology and security needs of our customers and clients. To learn more, visit www.gnostech.com.