A Manager's Guide to Safeguarding Sensitive Information Properly

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12 Keys Every Manager Should Know

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Safeguard Sensitive Information Properly

SSIP Rules

Rules expressed in this guide are a starting point for managers to follow in the safeguarding of sensitive information at their company. Each manager should be aware of their company's policies, standards, baselines and guidelines for conducting business and the safeguarding of sensitive information properly.

Each company has their own unique issues when it comes to safeguarding sensitive information properly. This guide was designed not to conflict with your company's guidance. Where it may differ, managers should follow their company's policies, and other established safeguarding sensitive information procedures.

Also by Sean G. Lowther

Techno Security's Guide to Securing SCADA: A Comprehensive Handbook on Protecting the Critical Infrastructure

Low Tech Hacking: Street Smarts for Security Professionals

An Employee' Guide to Safeguarding Sensitive Information Properly

Holding the Moon in the Palm of Your Hand

A Manager's Guide to Safeguarding Sensitive Information Properly

By

Sean G. Lowther

DEDICATION

To all those who understand that safeguarding sensitive information properly is an imperative to securing not only our personal information, but that of the customers we serve, the employees we work with, the intellectual and sensitive information of the company we work for, the businesses we support, and vendors who support the mission of our company to provide exceptional products and services, and by exhibiting the trust they place in us to safeguard sensitive information properly.

Introduction

Not all companies recognize the importance of information security awareness training and the associated risks to the company. The customers you serve expect you will protect their personal information. Imagine that your company has just received a subpoena. The plaintiff, a customer of your company, is suing because their identity has been stolen and used to perpetrate fraud against them. The loss of their sensitive information can be linked back to your company. A representative of your company may be deposed. During the deposition one of the questions likely to be asked is, "Do you train your employees with regard to protecting sensitive information properly and how do you do it?" You may respond, "We have fire walls, honest employees and we try to do our best". This just isn't going to be enough to satisfy anyone!

Substantive training in safeguarding customer and employee sensitive information may have avoided any legal involvement. It may have stopped the data theft in the example above, thereby not putting you and your company in an awkward position or financial risk. At minimum, having awareness training reflects a corporate attitude that it takes safeguarding sensitive information properly (**SSIP**) not by its words, but rather by actions taken to educate employees on right **SSIP** behaviors.

In addition to compromising customer information, the theft of corporate sensitive information is a huge risk.

"A Manager's Guide to Safeguarding Sensitive Information Properly" (**SSIP**) is an important tool for managers on how to enhance employee awareness. Are employees exhibiting the right **SSIP** behaviors as provided in "An Employee's Guide to Safeguarding Sensitive Information Properly," or other company guidelines? Sometimes good solid information security practices are ignored or compromised in order to achieve short-term goals that may lead to disastrous consequences. All the good work, the great products or services your company is known for, may be tarnished because sound information security principles were not followed. In some cases, information security violations or incidents have led to the demise of the company.

Employees represent the greatest risk to a company's sensitive information. They are on the inside and in a position to know what's going on. It's a team effort to effectively protect the information of customers, employees and corporate sensitive information. It is not up to one department or one individual, but rather a collective effort of guidance and application. It is a value proposition that everyone at the company you work for understands that safeguarding sensitive information properly starts with them. However, the key responsibility of raising awareness rests with YOU, the manager.

It's your responsibility as a manager or supervisor to ensure employees are exhibiting the right **SSIP** behaviors. It is part of your management responsibilities. This **SSIP** Manager's Guide is designed to provide you with some common sense practices of managing people and the sensitive information they touch.

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SSIP Rule No. 1

Are you hiring the right people?

It's the age-old question. Hiring the right people at the right price. I am sure that over the years you have developed your own hiring skills, or your company has strict guidelines to follow. Depending on the entry level and skills you are looking for, here are a few ideas that hopefully will help you in the process.

Attitude vs. skills

I once heard a senior executive say: "I'll hire attitude before I hire skills." Hiring attitude over skills is what makes a winning team. Skills are important, but can be learned. Having the right attitude is like the "It Factor." ***I know it when I see it!*** That can make all the difference in your company. "If I had two candidates to consider for one position, I would hire the one with similar or lesser skills if they had the better attitude," said one senior leader. "It just makes sense if you want to build a winning team."

Hire people who are better than you are

Another senior executive indicated that his key to success was hiring people better than he was. It has always worked out and never failed him.

Building a winning team

If a new hire is going to be inserted into a team or group, let the team or group have the opportunity to