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How can security product or service providers influence their customers to share metrics that demonstrate the performance quality of their offerings?

Providers create products and services for practitioners, and feedback is key to improvement. Providers should ask for the good, bad, and ugly — and they should mean it. Providers who are truly invested in receiving metrics feedback can consider offering something valuable in return — provide an extended warranty for detailed, deep-dive metrics, for example.

Providers should also make providing this information easy for the practitioner by providing a format for a product Report Card, such as:

1. How well did our product meet your requirements in the following areas?
2. True to advertised, expected performance?
3. Ease of set-up and deployment?
4. Ease of training and use?
5. Specific performance characteristics (make a list).

The common thread weaving through our entire industry is that security products and services ultimately have only one purpose, and that is to safeguard people and proprietary assets.

By sharing performance metrics with product and service providers, the end-user helps to efficiently convert the provider's resources into better products and services used to make people's lives better and safer. What better cause could there be?

When the end-user provides these metrics through a trusted third party that can share them safely with other practitioners, it creates leverage and serves as a "center of excellence," thus allowing continuous improvement.

The value proposition is to create a sustainable system for delivering world-class products and services to the customer.

A principal consideration for an end-user to share data may be anonymity. Brands are seldom excited to have their security problem publicized, even if a security risk has been substantially improved.

The Security 2020 model introduced by the Security Executive Council in 2010 enables an end-user to audition multiple solutions anonymously at cost with test and control data oversight. Resultant SEC Proven Solutions become part of a trusted community Collective Knowledge™ compendium.

In this scenario, the brand wins because it is able to work with multiple providers in a test setting to develop a stronger solution, the solution provider wins because it receives feedback and data to support product/service/solution improvement, and the security community wins.

All companies measure critical success factors with key performance indicators (KPIs). Since companies have different needs, goals and objectives, these KPIs will be different between and amongst companies that belong to the same industry.

For those in the security industry, many look at how their security applications integrate with other business systems, improve operational efficiency and ensure total cost of ownership.

It is mutually beneficial for security manufacturers and customers to discuss product functionality, features and metrics in order to develop a product roadmap.

As a manufacturer or supplier, we have a key role in ensuring that products meet growing demands. Customers that work closely with manufacturers and suppliers to provide feedback on metrics and system performance will only help to achieve their goals and KPIs.

What can security product and service providers do to show the true value of their offerings at a Board of Directors level?

For more information about the Security Executive Council, please visit www.securityexecutivecouncil.com/?sourceCode=std.
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