

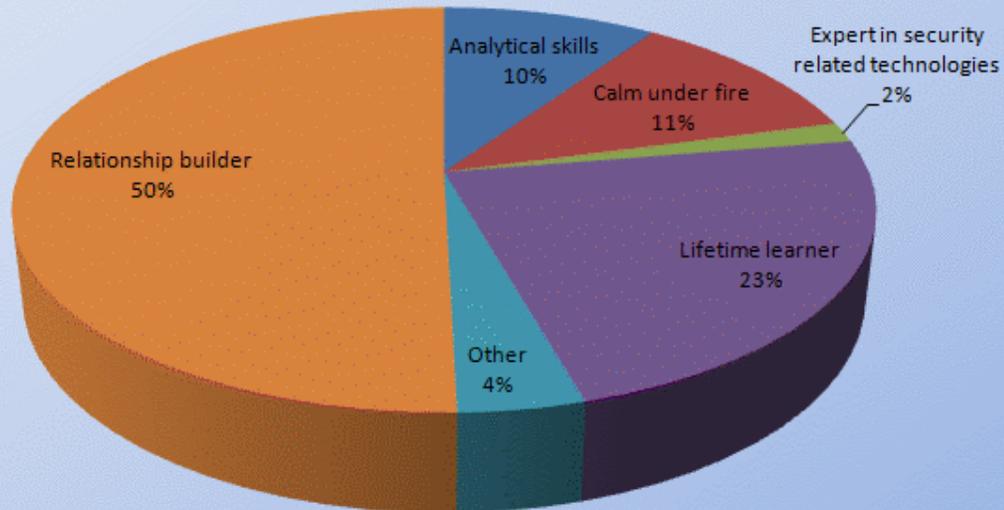
Security Leadership > Development >

What is the Most Important Characteristic of an Outstanding CSO/CISO?

Created by the Security Executive Council

The following chart shows the results of this question asked in a 2013 informal Security Barometer quick poll:

What is the Most Important Characteristic of an Outstanding CSO/CISO?



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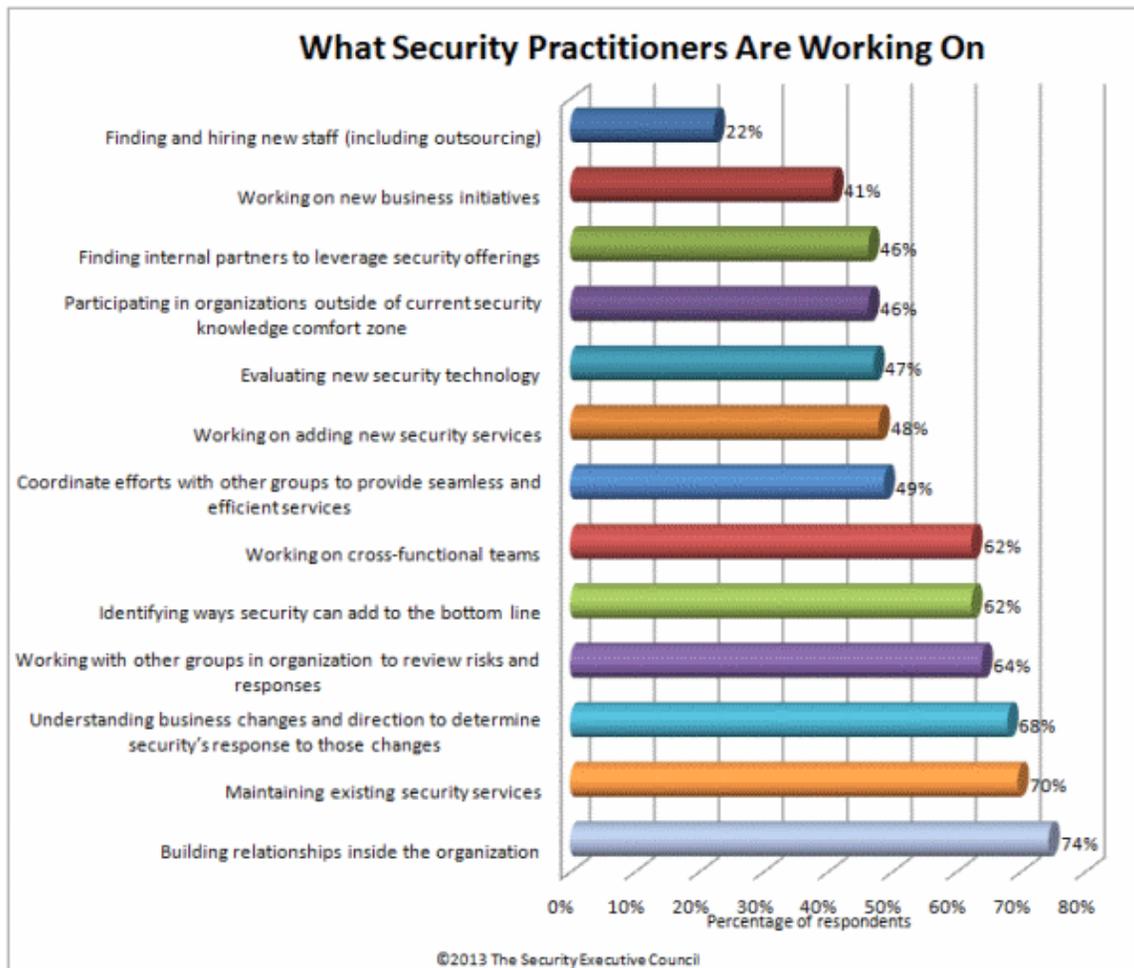
It may be no surprise that "relationship building" was selected as the most important characteristic of an outstanding CSO/CISO. Strong relationships assist in many ways, from promoting ideas and learning from others to building bonds that become beneficial when crises emerge. Relationship building is crucial to being able to work efficiently within an organization. In [a Faculty Advisor blog](#), Security Executive Council emeritus faculty member David Quilter pointed out that when it comes to gaining knowledge about the business, "...[the] focus has to be on building relationships with your leaders."

The second most often selected characteristic was "lifetime learner." Given our ever-changing operating environment, it is obvious that the ability to continually learn from and adjust to new conditions is crucial. As one respondent succinctly put it, "...as a lifetime learner you are constantly growing and evolving to meet the new challenges of today and tomorrow while utilizing past experience as foundation."

Some selected responses to the most important characteristic question in the "other" category were "reliability [and] presence," "business acumen," and "vision and the ability to articulate that vision."

What Are Security Practitioners Working On?

We thought you would be interested to know the results of the additional poll question "Which of the following tasks do you spend time working on?"



It would be incorrect to suggest these results highlight a right or wrong use of time. However, we all need to periodically reassess where we are spending our time to ensure we are focusing on the most productive and valuable tasks. Sometimes we fall into a pattern or work on particular tasks out of habit more than necessity or priority. Make sure to ask yourself, "Is this the right task for me to work on right now?" Is there someone else on your staff that could develop some new skills performing this task with you?

Over the past ten years the Security Executive Council has been performing research to understand the needs of the managers of security and risk management programs. Our analysis has helped to identify key elements that not only make leaders and programs successful but also what makes them truly stand out from the crowd.

Two findings to note here are:

- 1) There are certain characteristics that help make outstanding leaders in the industry (see the [Nine Practices of the Successful Security Leader](#)).

2) There are certain approaches toward building and operating security programs that tend to produce better results for the organization. Refer to the research report [14](#) *[Effective Solutions for Creating Successful Security Programs](#)*.

Not all environments have the resources and culture necessary to support or encourage world-class risk management programs. However, we have identified ways to help get your programs out of the weeds and reset you and the program on the right track.

Visit the Security Executive Council website for other resources in the [Security Leadership > Development](#) series.

About the Security Executive Council

The SEC is the leading research and advisory firm focused on corporate security risk mitigation solutions. Having worked with hundreds of companies and organizations we have witnessed the proven practices that produce the most positive transformation. Our subject matter experts have deep expertise in all aspects of security risk mitigation strategy; they collaborate with security leaders to transform security programs into more capable and valued centers of excellence. Watch our [3-minute video](#) to learn more.

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