

ETPrime

How an unlikely tech leader emerged as millions of people shifted to work from home



Synopsis

The CISO now is a part of most boardroom discussions, whether related to internal or customer related matters, something that was not the case earlier. He cites the instance of a leading financial services firm the company had been in discussions with, to improve their security infrastructure, but the initiative did not progress.

Pune: Over March and April, as Indian enterprises across sectors enabled their employees to work remotely, an unlikely leader emerged with organisations – the **chief information security officer**.

The **CISO** is a relatively new position, one that is shadowed by the Chief Information Officer in most firms and doesn't even exist in several others. Yet, as the pandemic hit, the CISO was at the front and centre of all decisions being taken.

"In addition to the acceptance of this role as a mainstream one, the requirement of a CISO to be strong leader, technically competent and influencer has also emerged. The focus shifted from meeting the basic essentials & contractual requirements to proactive engagements," said Amit Dhawan, CISO at **midsize IT firm Birlasoft**. He jokes that from being responsible for a few physical offices, the responsibility has now increased to over 10,000 home offices while ensuring the company's and its customers' data stayed secure.

This shift to working from anywhere has meant that security is no longer an IT issue but a board issue. "The potential attack surface expands significantly, as every employee home is now "inside". CISOs have to now assume a larger role, integrating security in every aspect of the business," said Pradeep Nair, managing director, VMware India.

The CISO now is a part of most boardroom discussions, whether related to internal or customer related matters, something that was not the case earlier. He cites the instance of a leading financial services firm the company had been in discussions with, to improve their security infrastructure, but the initiative did not progress. By April, with the majority of their employees working remotely combined with news of data breaches, the CISO was finally given the authority and budget to take action and protect 3000 endpoints.

From being someone who kept an eye out for security risks, the role changed overnight to a business enabler. The recent EY Global Information Security Survey found that CISOs needed to form much closer relationships with business functions to understand the company's commercial imperatives and anticipate evolving cyber threats. "With Covid driving digital, the CISO will become a real digital enabler. Enterprises are starting to recognise that security can be a revenue influencer, especially in sectors like banking," said Murali Rao, **Cyber Security Leader**, EY India.

Going ahead, it is expected that the CISO will play an important role in all business decisions, driving new initiatives and greater collaboration within the workplace.

At Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, the CISO was earlier tasked with ensuring that digital processes are done in a particular way. "From a control and risk function, the role is now that of a business enabler – more proactive than reactive," said Goutam Datta, chief information and digital officer, Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance. Now, with digital becoming an even bigger part of all functions for an enterprise, whether internal or customer facing, the CISO will need to evolve further to drive change and transformation initiatives.

"As we move ahead from this situation, I expect the focus on security to not only continue but get sharper. There is a need for greater visibility and context about infrastructure, applications, and data to effectively improve security," said VMware's Nair. The EY report suggests that CISOs will need a new mindset and skills in the areas of communication, negotiation, and collaboration to work more effectively. Some more changes are needed though. At present, a majority of the CISOs report to the CIO, and this will need to change if they are to help drive business decisions. Direct access to the CEO and board members will be important factors if the person is expected to play a role in business decisions going forward.

ADD COMMENT

POPULAR WITH READERS



Bank of Baroda to appoint consultants to help revamp structure

4 mins read • By Saloni Shukla & Sachin Dave



Telecom gear vendors, tower companies expect better prospects after AGR clarity

5 mins read • By Kalyan Parbat



WORKLIFE
Rebooting 101: How this founder rolled up his sleeves and got down to work

3 mins read • By Clynda Alves



Route Mobile IPO: Should you subscribe?

4 mins read • By Saikat Das



BROWSE COMPANIES:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Trending Now

- AstraZeneca Vaccine Trial
- Kerala Rains
- Delhi Rains
- Investment Ideas During Coronavirus
- Coronavirus Impact on Pharma Industry
- Coronavirus Impact on Healthcare Sector
- Coronavirus Impact on Tourism
- Coronavirus Impact on Business
- Sputnik V Vaccine
- Chennai Rains
- Mumbai Rains
- Oxford Covid Vaccine
- Coronavirus Impact on Auto Industry
- Coronavirus Impact on World Economy
- Coronavirus Impact on India
- Glassdoor

Hot On Web

- Route Mobile IPO
- US elections Impact on stock market
- Latest news LIVE
- Gold rate today
- Best value funds to invest in 2020
- YES Bank share price
- Sensex Live
- Infosys share price
- Aadhaar Card
- Sensex today
- Coronavirus news LIVE
- What are balanced funds
- Global markets
- Breaking news
- SGX Nifty
- IRCTC share price
- Rupee

ET Verticals

- Auto News
- Health News
- Energy News
- Real Estate News
- Technology News
- IT Security News
- Retail News
- Telecom News
- IT News
- Marketing & Advertising News
- CFO News

Other Useful Links

- About Us
- Book your Newspaper Subscription
- Advertise with Us
- Privacy policy
- RSS
- Subscribe to ET Prime
- Create Your Own Ad
- Terms of Use & Grievance Redressal
- Contact Us

Popular Categories

- News Live!
- Stock Screener
- ITR guide
- Sunday ET
- Markets Live!
- MF Screener
- Candlestick Screener
- Covid Updates

In Case You Missed It

- AstraZeneca vaccine trial updates
- Coronavirus Vaccines
- Russia Vaccine
- Oxford Vaccine
- Coronavirus Impact on Real Estate
- Coronavirus Impact on Global Economy
- Kashmir News
- Bangalore Rains
- COVID-19 Vaccine
- Coronavirus Impact on IT Sector
- Coronavirus Impact on Indian Economy
- Coronavirus Impact on Sartups
- TSRTC
- LinkedIn

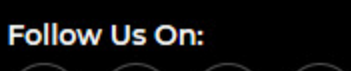
More From Our Network

- दुर्नामिक टाइम्स
- Bangalore Mirror
- Education Times
- Times Now
- Go Green
- Eisamay
- Times of India
- Miss Kyrá
- MX Player
- Colombia
- MX ShareKaro App
- ପ୍ରବୀନମିତ୍ର ଟାଇମ୍ସ
- Ahmedabad Mirror
- Brand Capital
- Indiatimes
- IGN India
- Samayam Tamil
- Bombay Times
- Newspaper Subscription
- NBT Gold Podcast
- MX TakaTak App
- Pune Mirror
- ItsMyAscend
- Mumbai Mirror
- महाराष्ट्र टाइम्स
- IamCujarat
- Samayam Telugu
- Filmipop
- Times Prime
- Ei Samay Gold Podcast

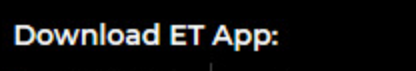
Services

- Longwalks App

Follow Us On:



Download ET App:



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

ETPrime BECOME A MEMBER