

# How to Sell Information Security to Upper Management

**By Kevin Beaver, CISSP**

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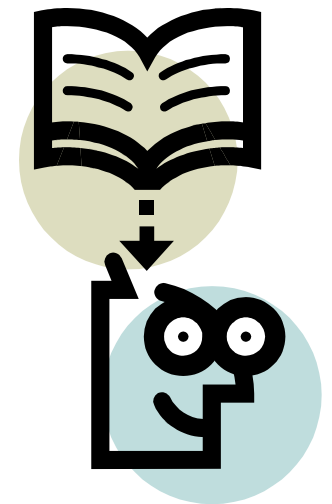
[www.principlelogic.com](http://www.principlelogic.com)

# About Your Presenter – Kevin Beaver

- **Independent information security consultant, author and trainer**
- **16+ years experience in IT and specializes in information security assessments and incident response**
- **Author of the new book [Hacking For Dummies](#) (Wiley Publishing)**
- **Author of the *free* ebook [The Definitive Guide to Email Management and Security](#) (Realtimepublishers.com)**
- **Co-author of the new book [The Practical Guide to HIPAA Privacy and Security Compliance](#) (Auerbach Publications)**
- **Regular columnist and information security advisor for [SearchNetworking.com](#), [SearchSecurity.com](#), [SearchExchange.com](#), [SearchWindowsSecurity.com](#), and [SearchSmallBizIT.com](#)**
- **Bachelor's in Computer Engineering Technology from Southern Poly & Master's in Management of Technology from Georgia Tech**
- **Holds CISSP, MCSE, MCNE, and IT Project+ certifications**

# What We'll Talk About Today

- **How information security is perceived**
- **Common mistakes when pushing security**
- **Thoughts on ROI and risk**
- **Selling points**
- **Three critical elements for success**



In your organization, does upper management:

- C) Wholeheartedly support information security
- D) Realize that security is *becoming* an issue
- E) Talk a lot but not much action
- F) Couldn't spell security if they had to



# Food for Thought...



**“Many executives are insulated from reality and consequently don’t know what the hell is going on.”**

**– James Champy**

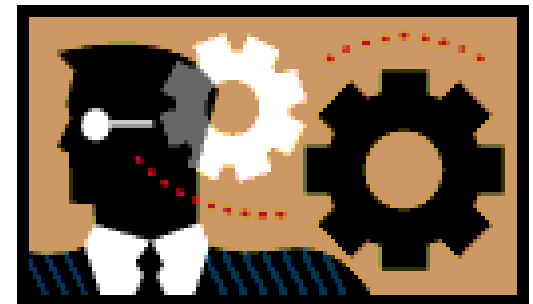
## Past Way of Thinking About Security

- **My information is not at risk!**
- **Information is not really a company resource**
- **We don't have anything a hacker would want**
- **Security is too expensive**
- **Security creates inconvenience**
- **There's no incentive**



# Current Way of Thinking About Security

- **My information is not at risk!**
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# There are Two Main Types of Managers

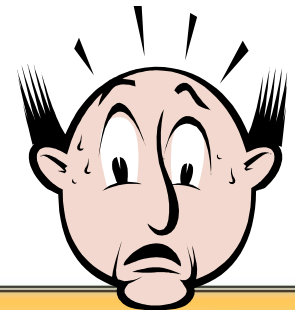
- **Some are driven by expenses**
  - How much will it cost?
  - What can we cut to reduce our expenditures?
- **Others are driven by investments**
  - What are we trying to protect?
  - What are our returns on this?
  - What are our long-term goals here?





# Focus Less on ROI and Risk

- **Proving information security ROI is tough!**
  - The value of an asset is not as important as dependence on that asset
- **Quantifying risk can be even tougher...**
- **The questioning/doubts tend to stop when a security breach occurs**
- **Risk happens**
  - A lot of risk is accepted anyway
  - Why not focus on minimizing the impact of security incidents?
- **Many people give up here – big mistake!**



# Selling Points Good-F.U.D. Vewy Vewy Bad

- **Consider outlining some of the benefits of information security**
- **Mention some key threats and vulnerabilities**

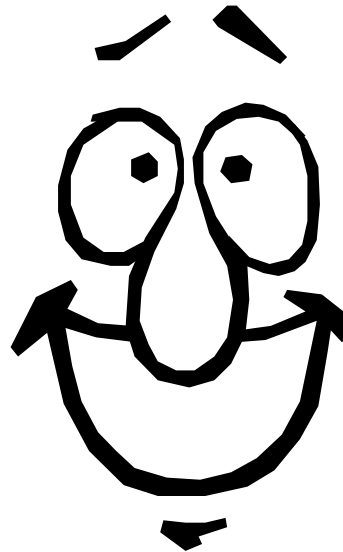


# What *Really* Works

# Golden Rule of Sales

***"People don't like to be sold, but they love to buy."***

***- Jeffrey Gitomer***



# The 1<sup>st</sup> Key to Success

## **GET INVOLVED**

- **Information security is involved in every aspect of the business – we should be too**
- **Understand the business**
  - **How it operates**
  - **Key players**
  - **Politics**

# The 2<sup>nd</sup> Key to Success

## **ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY**

- **Attitude**
- **Empathy**
- **Trustworthiness**
- **Interest**

# More on The 2<sup>nd</sup> Key to Success

## **ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY**

- **Speak on their level**
  - **Show results of a risk assessment**
  - **Give them hard facts on information threats & vulnerabilities**
  - **Develop a clear message based on what they need to hear**

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Key to Success

## **SHOW VALUE AND PROVE RESULTS**

- **Make information security a high value yet low risk proposition**
- **Make a good case**
  - **Show why security is needed and its benefits**
  - **Show how technology supports the business**
- **Document involvement**
- **Get feedback and be a good listener**



## More on The 3<sup>rd</sup> Key to Success

### **SHOW VALUE AND PROVE RESULTS**

- **Show what losses have cost other organizations**
- **Show tangible results for all purchases**
- ***Prove* that information security is better than the alternative**

Regarding selling information security to upper management, do you think we as IT professionals:

- C) Will make it happen sooner than later
- D) Can sell, but it'll be a long, hard road
- E) May get lucky one day with some managers
- F) Not a snowball's chance

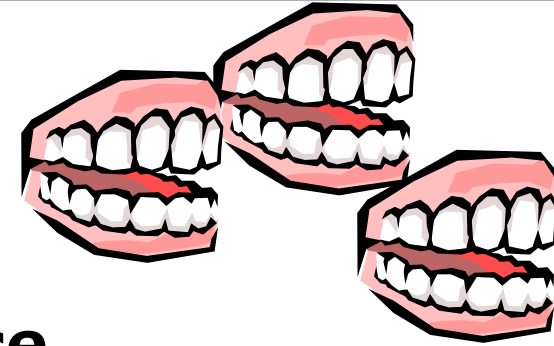


## Stuff to Chew On



- **Have a security mission statement**
- **Outline specific goals**
  - Define the when and how *and* metrics to measure achievement
- **Be flexible and adaptable**
  - Focus on long term growth
- **Ask for what you know you can get**
  - Don't increase your wishes just to end up where you wanted
- **Don't go at this alone**

## ...More Stuff to Chew On



- **Be vigilant and encourage vigilance**
- **Don't be obsessed though**
  - That only tires people out!
- **Irrational fears blow stuff out of proportion – people see right through it**
  - Rational fears proportional to the threat are OK
- **Education sells – focus on that**

# Recap

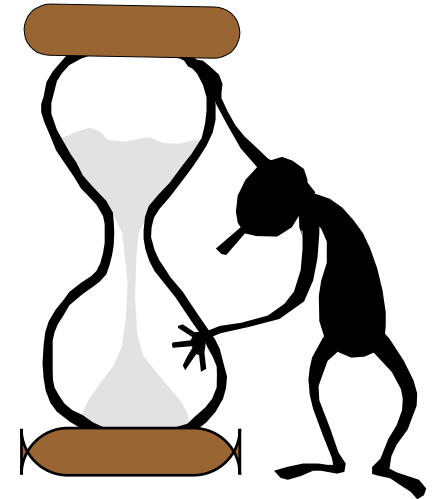
- **Three keys to success**



1. 2. 3.

# Encourage Long-Term Thinking

- **Technology is not *the* solution**
- **Long term costs are much lower than restoring customer confidence or being forced out of business altogether**
- **Security is everyone's issue**
  - Management must get *and* stay involved
  - Lead by example



*Thanks for joining me!*

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