







## STEAL THIS



## It is rare that we ask you to steal, but you may want to make off with some of the ideas that John M. Hampson, Director Global Security at Kearney & Co. put into action this year...

John began: Although "Security Week" is a standard activity at Kearney & Company each year, May 10-14, 2021, was different. Attendance at this year's virtual event designed to serve our almost 1000 employees, far exceeded expectations and topped last year's event by a huge margin.

We used a 'max' teleworking approach and some new training tools. However, there were added stresses with almost all of us working from home because of the pandemic. There was also burnout from too many virtual meetings, and there'd been very little social interaction [on the part of many of our employees]. So, this was not an easy endeavor.

Our theme was: Rumors or Reality: How Threat Actors Have Exploited the COVID Pandemic. Since Kearney is a busy medium-sized accounting/technology firm focusing exclusively on the U.S. Government, the topic was relevant and timely.

We have a small, dedicated security team and putting together a full 5-days, 25-event program was an extraordinary challenge. So, here is a summary of what happened during our May event this year:

First, full support from Kearney executives was critical to the program's success. Brian Kearney, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Kearney, was fully onboard with this Security Week, especially the

virtual and 24-hour access to a majority of our training events. Mr. Kearney filmed a brief introduction to Security Week 2021 that was sent out to all employees nationwide.

Additionally, I personally called and requested Executive Vice Presidents and Senior Partners support this year's training program and for them to encourage their team members to participate. I tried to keep it a polite, professional request for help, or "strong arming with a smile," and I think this went a long way, mainly because of the personal touch of the phone call vs. the easier but less effective e-mail requests for help.

Senior Kearney leadership followed through, communicating the importance of Security Week down to their Senior Managers and staff. They also made great efforts to support our proposed



Brian Kearney, Chief Operating Officer of Kearney.

schedules, review and suggest relevant topics, and make recommendations for specific training (i.e., to utilize internal Kearney Subject Matter Experts [SME] for certain presentations). In short, leadership buy-in is critical to any successful security training program.

Next, Kearney's Security team advertised strategically throughout the company. With the understanding that Kearney employees are busy, we knew that they were not focusing on security every work hour. The team had to find ways to spark and maintain their interest with new and dynamic messaging.

Our direct and "eye-catching" methods seemed to pay off. We used internal e-mails, internal Teams messaging, other internal messaging platforms, and a short video to increase attendance.

Timing the messages was critical; each message served a specific purpose. We did not want employees to become annoyed or dismissive with the messaging, but instead to remember Security Week events. We e-mailed weekly messages prior to Security Week and increased the messaging as the dates came closer to the actual events.

Once Security Week kicked off that Monday morning, we sent early morning daily e-mail informational messages as reminders to all employees, that discussed the upcoming events and speakers.

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BCLD GROUP We also e-mailed a daily invitation that stated, "You have been signed up for the XX training video today," and attached the videos or simply advised employees where they could locate the video on our Microsoft QUICK Help platform.

We even used an old standby communications tool: sending a Kearney Security postcard that arrived the Friday before Security Week to every employee's residence. This was a personal touch, as the postcard was delivered to everyone's home address, which, due to the pandemic, is also their current Kearney office address.

We also used one last new training tool: a "micro training animated video" announcing our event. This was a fun, brief "not-in-your face" video, produced locally that the Security Team distributed to each employee. Our micro-video producer (a former police officer) and the Kearney Security team did a great job putting the script and cartoon characters together. The goal of this animated message was to get employees excited about Security Week. The intent of our messaging was to advertise the events as being interesting and that participation was not just a chore or directive that "must" be followed.

As noted, attendance at these virtual events far exceeded expectations

Our Security team leveraged a fairly impressive "black book" to call business associates and former colleagues with years of experience to populate the events as relevant speakers. Being able to liaise with numerous three-and four-letter-U.S. Government agencies and private sector SMEs, we had an exceptional group of cyber, investigative, international,

lifesaving, and security-related speakers to peak employee interest.

This was coupled with topics that focused on what has happened in the U.S. and world recently and how the pandemic has amplified security threats. Once the theme title and topics were solidified, we scheduled our speakers to fill the week's timetable. Each SME was provided a due date to pre-record their messages for a one-hour time slot. It was critical to give SMEs as much time as possible to prepare and record their presentations.

Our Security team understood and often reiterated the fact that the SMEs did not work for us, so we had to be flexible and respectful of their time. Extra time for receipt of recorded presentations was paramount in our preparation because there are glitches, no matter how hard you prepare.

Finally, some U.S. Government SMEs did not wish to provide pre-recorded presentations, so they presented live, which worked well but required additional coordination. The only drawback was that employees could not watch these presentations after normal business hours. Finally, it was fortunate that we were able to coordinate a back-up presentation on very short notice since we had one unanticipated cancellation.

Our in-house Information Technology (IT) Security Analyst also researched and chose five (5) KnowB4 short burst training videos, ranging from three minutes to one hour. The team also sent invitations to all employees daily to review these quick "micro-security animated videos."

To bring a live "feel" for each daily SME presentation, we

decided that a live Question and Answer (Q &A) session at the end of each day's events would allow for employees to participate real-time to pose relevant question to the SMEs on Microsoft Teams. Two SMEs presented at each live Q&A, where possible, and we supplemented, as needed with a Kearney Security staff "commentator," who managed the questions and facilitated the conversation. Our security team members were also present for these Q&A sessions and prepared several questions in the event employees did not have any.

Our "rapid fire" quizzes each afternoon were popular with staff. At the end of each day, during the Q&A sessions, the winner was announced and received a Kearney gift card.

We rounded out the week by reviewing attendance statistics and identified 14 employees who attended all or most of the week's 25 events. They received special recognition and acknowledgement throughout the company, reinforcing participation and our appreciation for their involvement. Finally, we made sure our SMEs were thanked as well.

Ensuring that Kearney has securitysmart employees is a corporate goal. And making our week-long security program interesting as well as informative was a considerable effort. Definitely worth it!

Hopefully, others will consider instituting a "Security Week" or at least a "Security Day" at their companies. Of course, any questions readers have can be directed to me:

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