



TRU Staffing Partners, Inc.

# CISO Interview Playbook



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# Preface

- This should take no more than 5 minutes.
- Introductions
- Company Overview
- CPO Search Overview



## Chapter 1

# Why Us? Why Now?

Start the interview process by understanding what drives and motivates each individual candidate and what is drawing them to your organization.

### Example Questions

- Why is now the right time to consider a career move?
- Why are you motivated to move into a CISO role?
- What interests you about moving from another security leadership role to this CISO position?
- Based on your due diligence, what are some challenges you anticipate encountering in the marketplace?
- What excites or interests you about our brand?
- Why does an organization in high-growth mode excite you?



## Chapter 2

# Why Cybersecurity?

This section of the interview process should reveal what level of knowledge the candidate has in the cybersecurity field and what subject matter expertise they have as it relates to the business.

**Example Questions**

- Why are you so passionate about cybersecurity and why did you choose a career in this field?
- Tell us about your first cybersecurity leadership position.
- What is your experience in both a technical and advisory capacity as a security leader?
- Are you involved in third-party vendor management? In what way?



## Chapter 3

# Prove Your Experience

This is the area in which you are going to dive deep and unpack the candidates resume and previous expertise.

### Example Questions

- What cross-functional expertise do you have that aids in your ability to function as a CISO?
- What do you think the challenges will be in evangelizing and standardizing a cybersecurity program internally?
- Tell us about your experience overseeing global teams. Has your oversight been more product security focused? Services? Both?
- In your recent experience, would you categorize yourself in an advisory function, delegating technical tasks, or hands-on executing?
- Do you categorize yourself as a builder, maintainer, or grower?
- As you've grown other programs, what are some of the key hires you've made, in which order, and why?
- How do you anticipate your experience will positively impact the growth of the company?



## Chapter 4

# Leadership

This is where we dive into each candidate's leadership experience and style.

**Example Questions**

- How would you describe your leadership and management style?
- How have you been successful in educating and evangelizing security throughout an organization?
- In what ways do you approach stakeholders within an organization who aren't prioritizing the importance of security?
- What would you categorize as the 3 most crucial pillars/ foundational pieces to build a successful global security program?
- What is an example of a company-wide or division-wide training implementation that you've been the architect of? What was it and why was it successful?



## Chapter 5

# Managing Up

This series of questions will help you unpack the experience and/or expectations each candidate has about how they're best managed by or reporting to a board.

**Example Questions**

- What makes for a successful relationship between the CISO and their stakeholders?
- Do you have experience securing an organization intended to be acquired? What about one going IPO?
- What is your experience reporting to a board of directors?



## Chapter 6

# Culture

This line of questioning will help you to get a “feeling” for the person and allow them to speak less to what they have done, but rather how they’ve done it.

## Example Questions

- What is your impression and understanding of our company culture?
- What are the cultural values that you hold most dear and true that you would never, under any circumstance, compromise as a CISO?
- What are some of the ways that you believe a company can create a more diverse and inclusive culture?
- As a business leader, what is the hardest decision you’ve had to make and why?
- How would you describe your approach to evangelizing culture for the organizations you’ve been a part of?
- When working in a startup, what cultural cornerstones are uniquely required?



## Chapter 7

# Fears & Weaknesses

This is the area of the interview to explore any hesitations that the candidate might have.

**Example Questions**

- What trepidations do you have about our organization or this opportunity?
- Based on what you know of the role and where it sits across the organization, what do you believe the most difficult part of this position will be?
- If there was one thing that you could get formalized training or education on prior to being in this role, what would it be?



## Chapter 8

# Questions

This is the candidate's opportunity to ask thoughtful questions at the end of the interview. Be sure to leave at least ten minutes for this section.

**What to Be Prepared For**

- Can you describe your company culture?
- What is the history of this role, and where is the cybersecurity program as it stands today?
- What is the appetite among the board and internally to adopt and prioritize cybersecurity strategies?
- What are the current plans for growth across the company, and more specifically how does this role play apart?



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