



From operational leader to strategic business enabler

A handbook for the modern CSO



Foreword

Security has evolved, and so has the role of the Chief Security Officer (CSO). No longer confined to physical security or operational concerns, CSOs now tackle challenges like geopolitical instability, advanced cyber threats, and the impacts of climate change. Our mission goes beyond protecting assets - we drive resilience, ensure continuity, and serve as strategic partners to our organizations.

Throughout my career, I've learned that effective leadership isn't about maintaining the status quo. It's about adapting, anticipating challenges, and inspiring others to rise to the occasion. This handbook is designed for CSOs navigating today's complex landscape, offering strategies to translate risks into business outcomes, foster collaboration, and build organizational resilience.

Security today is about creating clarity and confidence in uncertainty. It's no longer a siloed function but thrives on partnerships across teams, regions, and industries. Building trust with your teams, stakeholders, and peers is essential to success. Embracing innovation is equally critical - the right tools and mindset can transform challenges into opportunities, allowing us to act faster and think smarter.

Every organization faces unique security challenges shaped by cultural, economic, and environmental factors, but our shared responsibility is to embed resilience at every level. My hope is that this handbook will help refine your strategies, enhance your leadership, and prepare your organization for the future.

As CSOs, we have the opportunity to redefine leadership in uncertain times. Together, we can not only safeguard today but build a stronger, more resilient tomorrow.

Here's to navigating the complexities of our world, together.

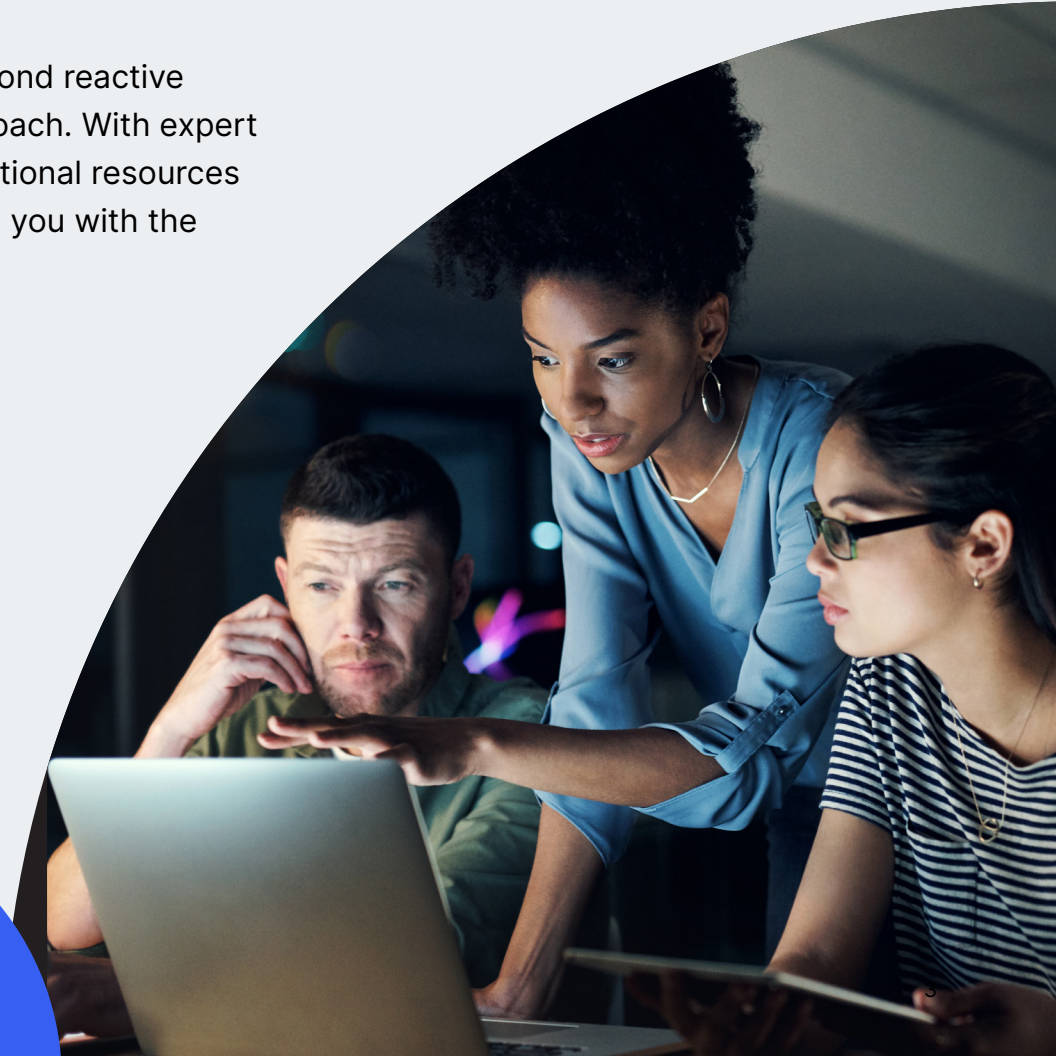


Tracy Reinhold
Chief Security Officer, Everbridge

Introduction

Organizations today face a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex risk landscape, known as “the expanding risk zone.” Tasked with navigating this challenging environment, CSOs play a pivotal role in protecting day-to-day operations while ensuring the long-term resilience and stability of their organizations.

This handbook provides guidance for CSOs seeking to go beyond reactive measures and adopt a more strategic, leadership-driven approach. With expert insights from Everbridge CSO, Tracy Reinhold, along with additional resources to deepen your understanding, this guide is designed to equip you with the tools needed to excel in this pivotal role.



1. Speak the language of business

If you want to be taken seriously at the executive table, speak the language of those who sit there.

Tips:

- **Frame your proposals** in terms of revenue protection, brand stability, and customer retention
- **Get to know the balance sheet** so you understand where the business is most vulnerable, and what levers matter to a CFO or CEO
- Translate risk into **business impact**, not alerts or technical jargon



For more on this topic, hear Tracy Reinhold share his insights in this short video:

“Overcoming challenges in tech investment and budget approval.”



“You can’t speak security. You have to speak results.”

Additional resource:

Uncover the business value a critical event management platform can bring to your organization with the Forrester checklist. Beyond safeguarding your people, it ensures seamless business operations.

[Download the checklist](#)

2. Know the C-Suite's priorities

Executives are focused on outcomes. Your job is to connect what you do to what they care about.

Tips:

- Show how your work **reduces disruption**, shortens downtime, and protects the customer experience
- Prepare **clear, quantifiable impact examples** when requesting investment in tools like High Velocity CEM or Purpose-built AI
- Avoid making it about security for security's sake – **make it about business continuity and performance**



Hear Tracy explain how security leaders can better align with executive goals: **"How CSOs can build stronger relationships with CEOs."**



"CEOs care about revenue generation, brand reputation, and shareholder value."

Additional resource:

From planning and monitoring to responding and improving, discover practical strategies to ensure operational continuity, protect growth, and transform potential risks into valuable opportunities.

[Access the white paper now](#)

3. Become a tech evangelist

You don't need a technical background, but you do need to believe in the value of the right tools.

Tips:

- **Invest in platforms** that automate critical event response and provide real-time visibility
- Don't wait for a crisis to test your tools – **build in automation, intelligence, and visibility**
- Be able to explain how technology such as **Purpose-built AI** helps you act faster and smarter



Tracy talks about the importance of purpose-built tools and technology in this short video: **"Leveraging technology to minimize disruptions."**



"Technology is the great equalizer."

Additional resource:

Learn how AI improves crisis management with strategies to tackle cyber threats, geopolitical risks, and extreme weather while enhancing resilience, operations, and compliance.

[Download the eBook now](#)

4. Make your case with ROI, not fear

Executives don't respond to "what ifs." They respond to data.

Tips:

- Quantify **how much downtime costs** and how quickly your team can recover from disruption
- Show how a **faster response reduces churn**, protects revenue, and preserves brand value
- **Track metrics** such as time to resolution, avoided losses, and employee retention after major incidents



Hear how Tracy frames security value in terms of business outcomes: **"How to build a business case for High Velocity CEM: Tips for CSOs."**



"Transform your department from a cost center to a value center."

Additional resource:

Evaluate your organization's resilience with the Everbridge Best in Resilience™ Self-Assessment. Receive tailored benchmarks, expert insights, and recommendations to strengthen your CEM business case with data-driven results.

[Start the online assessment now](#)

5. Build relationships before the crisis hits

You don't want your first conversation with the CEO to be during a crisis.

Tips:

- Schedule regular, informal **check-ins with executive stakeholders**
- **Share small wins and updates** to show momentum and transparency
- Position yourself as a **trusted advisor**, not just a responder



In this clip, Tracy shares his thoughts on building trust, and pre-crisis collaboration: **“How CSOs can align with C-suite priorities to drive success.”**



“The best time to build trust is before the storm.”

Additional resource:

Everbridge Chief Trust Officer, Jeremy Capell, explores building trust through transparency, fostering candor, and managing critical events with honesty to strengthen bonds with employees, customers, and stakeholders.

[Watch the video now](#)

6. Rethink headcount and budget

Resources are shrinking. Your influence doesn't have to.

Tips:

- Make a strong business case for **investments that reduce long-term cost** or boost efficiency
- Show how **smarter tech** reduces reliance on manual labor or duplicated efforts
- Prioritize **cross-functional collaboration** to stretch what you already have



In this video, Tracy shares his personal insights on how to make the business case for investment: **"How CSOs can drive resilience and secure budget approval."**



"Headcount and budget are diminishing."

Additional resource:

Demonstrate the value of CEM with Forrester's Total Economic Impact™ checklist. Build a custom ROI assessment in seven steps to present clear business benefits to leaders or boards.

[Download the checklist now](#)

7. Connect local threats to global impacts

What happens in one region affects your entire organization.

Tips:

- Use **decision-ready intelligence** to understand how one disruption could ripple outward
- Bring situational awareness to the executive team - not just updates, but **meaningful context**
- Focus on **interdependence** across teams, functions, and geographies



Tracy explores how security leaders can effectively convey risk on a global scale in his discussion: “**The evolving role of the CSO.**”



“It’s no longer just a local issue. It’s a global issue.”

Additional resource:

The Everbridge “Global Risk and Resilience Outlook” provides expert insights on geopolitical unrest, cyber threats, climate risks, and compliance. Stay prepared and protect your organization against emerging global challenges.

[Download the report today](#)

8. Champion high velocity resilience

Modern threats move fast. Your strategy has to move faster.

Tips:

- Invest in tools that help your organization **know earlier, respond faster, and improve continuously** when dealing with critical events
- Test and **refine your playbooks** after every incident
- Focus on **clarity, speed, and repeatability**



Hear Tracy outline why speed and clarity are central to modern security leadership in this final clip: **“How CSOs deliver significant business outcomes through forward-thinking strategies.”**



“Everything else is how we do it. Our job is to enable the business.”

Additional resource:

Learn how High Velocity CEM helps your organization respond rapidly, minimizing risks and protecting shareholder value with speed, precision, and confidence.

[Watch the on-demand webinar](#)

Final word

The role of the CSO has never been more critical, or more dynamic. Modern threats demand more than reactive measures - they require proactive leadership that safeguards assets, reputation, revenue, and long-term growth. Today's CSOs aren't just crisis managers - they are architects of resilience, enablers of progress, and champions of security as a strategic advantage.

To succeed, CSOs must align with C-suite priorities, communicate in the language of business, and leverage advanced, purpose-built technologies. When security shifts from being seen as a cost center to a strategic driver, it not only earns a seat at the executive table but builds trust and credibility long before the next disruption arises.

Platforms like Everbridge High Velocity Critical Event Management™ (CEM) revolutionize how organizations prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises. With real-time visibility, automated decision-making, and actionable insights, High Velocity CEM empowers leaders to act faster, plan smarter, and inspire confidence.

Speak with an Everbridge expert, and discover how to turn security into a competitive advantage.

[Request a demo today](#)



Everbridge delivers a business resilience advantage with High Velocity CEM™, powered by Purpose-built AI and decision-ready intelligence to accelerate response, reduce downtime, and protect what matters most.

Request a demo at everbridge.com/demo or call +1 (888) 366-4911.