

[Technology Live: News and gadgets from our network of reporters](#)

[Coffee Break: States target texting drivers; Google-China clash](#)

Jan 25, 2010

Former Bear Stearns exec pens security guide

11:17 AM

Share
Comment

Recommend

Corporate executives concerned about hackers [stealing](#) their company's intellectual property have a new guide that can help boost their security.

In *Enterprise Security for the Executive: Setting the Tone From The Top*, Jennifer Bayuk, former chief information security officer at Bear Stearns, argues Internet-enabled attacks are putting valuable corporate assets at risk, and those risks should be measured, monitored and mitigated.

She delivers to her target audience — senior executives, whom she dubs CXOs — rationale for assessing cyber threats and setting in place a flexible framework for dealing with them.

Written in a breezy conversational style, the book provides a baseline understanding that anyone responsible for the security of sensitive data in our digital economy should have. Bayuk answered a few questions for Technology Live.

TL: Why did you decide to write a book that's essentially a guide for how senior executives should view security?

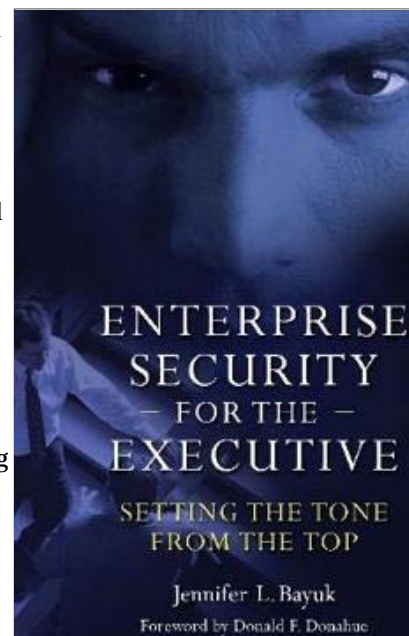
Bayuk: When I started consulting after Bear Stearns died, I realized that the people who were CISOs like me were not looking for help from someone with my background. They did their own strategy and were only looking for people who could do jobs they already had well-defined. However, the people who really needed someone with my skill set were their bosses. These are the people who hire CISOs because they do not know how to deal with security issues at all. So I wrote this book for them.

TL: Early in your book, you make the point the senior executives need to lead by example, and get their direct reports to do the same. Why is this so important?

Bayuk: People understand where their paychecks come from. It is important that executives display a positive attitude about security because people get cues about what is important to their own jobs by getting feedback from their bosses. If a boss thinks that security procedures can be sacrificed, then the staff will sacrifice them, no matter how many documents Human Resources may make them sign that state the contrary.

TL: How many top execs at big companies, say those with more than 500 employees, actually are doing this? Is it much more than say, 5 years ago?

Bayuk: Historically, very few top executives at big companies have done this. But I have been fortunate to work for some who have. For example, when I was at Bell Labs in the mid-1990s, the Chairman of AT&T said something like, "The quality of our security is indistinguishable from the quality of our products."



CAPTION
Courtesy Greenwood
Publishing Group

We in the security group latched onto that soundbyte and published it everywhere. Whatever else AT&T may have suffered in the past twenty years, it is still way ahead of most global firms when it comes systems security.

TL: Is there potentially a broad, societal benefit that could result from senior execs at big corporations making security a higher priority?

Bayuk: Yes, most certainly. One point I made in the book is that when individual companies secure their own environs, everyone who does business with them may benefit. When you think about the level of risk many corporations have due to lack of control over their own assets, and then think how easy it would be to protect them, you realize that, with very little individual corporate effort, our entire society could be cloaked in a much higher level of security than we have today.


I am not advocating any one big brother, just multiple simultaneous watchdogs that would be able to coordinate efforts in a crisis because they each individually understand how genuinely valuable their own security is to them.

By Byron Acohido

Previous [Coffee Break: States target texting drivers](#); [Google-China clash](#)

To report corrections and clarifications, contact Reader Editor [Brent Jones](#). For publication consideration in the newspaper, send comments to letters@usatoday.com. Include name, phone number, city and state for verification. To view our corrections, go to corrections.usatoday.com.

Guidelines: You share in the USA TODAY community, so please keep your comments smart and civil. Don't attack other readers personally, and keep your language decent. Use the "Report Abuse" button to make a difference. [Read more](#). You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Log in](#) | [Register](#)

Submit  Post this comment to Facebook?

Comments: (0) Showing: [Newest first](#) [New: Most recommended!](#)