Welcome to Trusted Impact's quarterly newsletter for the third quarter in 2009. We appreciate you taking the time to read it and hope it provides you with some value in return!

The economy continues to spark debate ranging from optimism to pessimism. Irrespective of the opinions, from our perspective we're seeing a few simple but consistent themes and business trends that are worthy of highlighting this quarter.

First, the overall 'landscape of business risk' relating to information security has changed. At recent Australian Institute of Company Director functions, we've observed a healthy level of appreciation for business risk at the Board level, but a surprising lack of awareness of the risk of information security to a large number of enterprises who rely on the flow and integrity of information as a vital part of their business.

Different industries have different information security risks, but information security at the Board level needs to be put on the agenda. Directors have a personal liability to demonstrate they've applied a duty of care and there too many glaring examples to reasonably avoid the topic. You can find more information here.

The second trend is somewhat obvious to see, but often difficult to address. In today's tight economic environment, organisations are seeking creative ways to address information security, but minimise their investment. The "80/20 rule" still applies. With the right approach, it's reasonable to expect an organisation to reduce both their risk *and* their spend. Some ideas include:

Keep it simple… leverage lessons learned

The main perpetrator behind the world's largest breaches of credit and debit card data was indicted this month. Information gained from this indictment, plus a recently released SANS report provide some embarrassingly simple observations.

The loss of 150 million cards which has impacted more than 670 financial institutions was ***neither rocket science, nor would have taken significant investment to protect against it.***

The approach taken (SQL Injection) was further reinforced by the SAN observation that "…most website owners fail to scan effectively for the common flaws and become unwitting tools used by criminals to infect the visitors that trust those sites to provide a safe web experience".

Some of the key lessons are:

- Perform a Vulnerability Assessment if the internet is at all relevant to your business. In today's connected world, it's a 'no-brainer, basic' to at least give you a barometer on your position.

- Don't just focus on your transactional systems – vulnerabilities in closely related systems are understood to have led to the above loss.
- Keep your applications patched (or updated if custom built) – SANS found that most organisations are lax about updating applications, yet this is the greatest target.

Consider a different 'model'

Your IT team is busy keeping things running. And you often can't afford an experienced, full-time security professional, yet recognise there are risks that you hope won't come to surface. Perhaps a way to get decades of experience at a part time cost, is our "Part-time Security Mentor©" model? Leverage a team-based model where focused, full time professionals, complement your local IT resources on your time and at your pace. Full-time value - part-time cost.

Delivering value – it's an attitude – expect it

Do your partners go out of their way to deliver value? Do they have formal mechanisms to ensure they are listening to your business needs? Do they try to learn about your business or industry so that they can add even greater value? Ask if they have formal quality programs in place to measure how they are doing against your expectations.

In the last two and a half years, we've been quite fortunate to have now crossed the milestone of over 100 successful projects. As we do this, gaining insight to our clients' business and industry issues is crucial (for example, see our growing Health Industry Qualifications).

We're also adamant about receiving formal feedback on all projects, no matter how small. We're proud to announce that our 'overall quality score' for these projects is maintaining a strong **4.6** average (scale 1 to 5 – 5 is highest). "Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution" (W. Foster). Expect or require your suppliers to demonstrate they add value as a trusted resource - don't put up with mediocrity in today's business climate.

Kind Regards,

TrustedImpact

We help enterprises understand, prioritise, and secure sensitive information.

we're **independent** consultants – it's about **your** business and **your** success
with a **singular focus** – information security is all we think about
leveraging **experienced** professionals – credentials, not checklists
and its **guaranteed** – we will deliver, full stop.

Please forward this to any friends or colleagues who may find it useful.