

Risk Mitigation: An Ongoing Requirement for Financial Services

Financial institutions continue to fall victim to cyber security attacks, with Forbes reporting recently, that “the typical American financial services firm is attacked a staggering 1 billion times per year.”

“The financial services industry experiences 35% of all data breaches, earning it the unflattering title of the most-breached sector.”

Forbes Insights, January 2019

If we consider the nature of data held by financial institutions and the profitability of the attacks, it’s not surprising that they are one of the most at-risk sectors. Given the increase in numbers and sophistication of attacks, combined with ever-increasing regulatory requirements, financial institutions have no choice but to step up their data security & information protection efforts significantly, if they are to keep up with the current threat landscape.

Addressing threat head-on, requires financial organizations to revisit existing processes, and identify gaps to mitigate risk. Additionally, financial institutions deal with highly sensitive information, that needs to be managed securely and in accordance with the regulations that are being imposed and do so in a way that doesn’t impede the flow of business.

Attacks and breaches are inevitable, more focus is needed on understanding data risk and implementing better data protection; not cybersecurity defenses, but protection of the data itself. Key is understanding risk associated with sensitive data.

Within your organization, is there a process for the assignment of risk? Does the organization know who owns the risk for data loss? Does your organization understand where sensitive data resides, and how it’s being accessed and shared? Does your organization have a prioritized list of risks? Does your organization have plan to address risk?

There are a lot of questions to answer however, an understanding of each of these, enables an organization to recalibrate the data loss conversation.

The ability to measure risk against a known security framework and achieve the goal of New York Department of Financial Services NYCRR 500 is a critical first step – specifically as it pertains to data loss. Understanding how risk is being measured, enables an organization to be able to do something with that risk, by choosing to accept, transfer, mitigate or remediate it.

Having answers to those questions will help to close the gap with respect to data loss.

Freezing risk levels by implementing compensating or validating existing controls, allows organizations to accept risk. Implementing or revamping a vendor management



“From January to August of 2018, financial services firms experienced nearly three times as many breaches as they did over the same time frame in 2016.”

– Bitglass 2018 Financial Services Report

program supports the transference of risk. While either implementing or strengthening existing policies, processes and technologies, enables organizations to remediate risk.

The ability to close these data loss gaps is foundational to understanding what an organization needs to do next. Taking stock of existing processes and solutions will help the organization to understanding where from here. Is there a new technology that’s going to be required, or is there an existing technology that simply needs to be modified? Is there a need for new policies or processes to be implemented, or are the current

programs enough? Would the organization benefit from data loss prevention awareness training? Does the organization perform annual risk assessments to identify new areas for improvement?

There are many things that need to be considered, however the key takeaway is to proactively protect the organization from data loss by identifying, assigning ownership, measuring, and addressing risk. Putting the necessary investment in these foundational activities will mean the difference between effective risk mitigation and the repercussions of an unwanted headline.

data security by ConnectWise is partnering with Informatca, leveraging the Informatca Data Privacy solution, to help financial services organizations mitigate the risk associated with data loss. Please visit our website [Data Security Services by ConnectWise](#) to find out more about our solutions. Please visit Informatca at [Informatca Data Governance and Compliance](#) to find out more.