The key to a successful security programme

DIGITAL REPORT 2022

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

SpyCloud

DARKTRACE
Autonomous Cyber AI

RELIQUEST

IN ASSOCIATION WITH: Autonomous Cyber AI
THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL SECURITY PROGRAMME

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Youssef Oujdi, Chief Security Officer, Alvarez & Marsal reflects on the company’s cyber security partnerships for effective risk and threat management.

Falling into the management consultant industry quite by chance, Youssef Oujdi, Chief Security Officer, Alvarez & Marsal graduated from the University of Westminster with a degree in Business Information Systems, with a focus on information technology (IT) & Security. “After graduating I happened to find a role in IT at Alvarez & Marsal, a professional services firm which resulted in my quick introduction to the industry. And from there the rest was history,” says Oujdi.

Being a privately held organisation since its founding in 1983, Alvarez & Marsal is a global professional services firm. Delivering tangible results for corporates, boards, private equity firms, law firms and government agencies for those that face complex challenges, “Alvarez & Marsal is notable for its work in turnaround management and performance improvement, but over the last decades has expanded into multiple other service lines. One of its core missions as a business is to continue providing clients with high-quality services driven by leadership and ultimately results.”
Dealing with so many clients globally, Alvarez & Marsal handle many data types in order to serve them effectively. “As a result, we have built a robust security programme aligned to the ISO 27001 standard. This programme allows us to continuously manage our information security risk and treat it in accordance with the globally recognised standard,” says Oujdi.

**Alvarez & Marsal and its security partnerships**

When it comes to external partners Alvarez & Marsal’s approach has always been: “we’re not here to just be sold a product or a platform,” says Oujdi. “We’re here to create a relationship where we can truly embark on a journey with a chosen organisation and have input, to help develop their solutions in a way that accommodates our needs and requirements. We’re always looking for partners who are interested in our business and are truly interested in helping us solve the complex issues that we encounter.

“Working with our strategic partners has allowed us to transform our security programme to one that is aligned to various leading standards. With the help of Microsoft, Cisco, SpyCloud and many more partners we have been able to position ourselves in a way that allows us to rapidly come up with solutions to an ever-changing threat landscape in the cyber security world. We’re also in a position where we have full support from our partners and we continue to nurture those relationships.”
Youssef Oujdi serves as the Chief Security Officer with Alvarez & Marsal in London. He specialises in assessing, developing and implementing comprehensive information security programmes through a blend of team building, cutting-edge operations and visionary leadership.

With nearly a decade of cyber operations experience, Oujdi has led global information security teams in delivering robust security services to multiple business lines ranging from business restructuring, finance and banking to disputes and investigations.

Oujdi also holds a CISSP and CEH professional membership. He is a member of the Microsoft Security Advisory Council and Cisco Security Advisory Board where he has thought leadership input on developing cyber technology.

Oujdi earned a bachelor’s degree in business information systems from the University of Westminster. A British national, Oujdi is fluent in both English and Moroccan.

EXECUTIVE BIO

YOUSSEF OUJDI
TITLE: CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER
LOCATION: LONDON

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All a cyber criminal needs to access valuable data including PII, intellectual property and financial information, is one compromised password. SpyCloud proactively protects over 2 billion accounts worldwide by leveraging recaptured data from the criminal underground. Take action on exposed employee and customer credentials and make recaptured data your biggest defense against account takeover, ransomware and online fraud.
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CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER, ALVAREZ & MARSAL

SpyCloud
SpyCloud is a very interesting organisation. We came across them in their very early days. They’re a relatively small organisation and growing, based out of Austin, Texas. SpyCloud operates in the dark web space, looking at ways to help organisations secure themselves from account takeovers (ATO).

“Having access to billions of dark web records, SpyCloud can provide insights into which records belong to your organisation whether it’s usernames, passwords, or other credential type information. With this service, we were able to work alongside them on a solution that allows us to check if these types of information are still in use, and if they are, automate a password reset so that those credentials are no longer valuable to the potential buyer in the dark web,” says Oujdi.

Founded in 2016 by Ted Ross (CEO), David Endler (Chief Product Officer), and Alen Puzic (CTO), SpyCloud protects its global clients from compromised identity. SpyCloud’s solutions provide actionable information to prevent fraud and power many popular dark web monitoring and identity theft protection offerings.
DarkTrace
“DarkTrace help us with the monitoring and detection of our internal network. As we have about 65 offices globally, DarkTrace is positioned on our internal network to look at the traffic and help us to detect abnormal activity. It provides the security team with the intelligence and visibility to look into and determine whether an event is malicious or not to keep our internal network secure from any threats,” says Oujdi.
Founded in 2013 by Poppy Gustafsson (CEO), DarkTrace is a global leader in cyber security AI, protecting worldwide customers from advanced threats, such as ransomware, cloud and SaaS attacks.

ReliaQuest
“ReliaQuest, is a very important partner to us. They help us with our security operations centre. With our 24/7 SOC, ReliaQuest act as an extension of that providing us an initial first layer monitoring and analysis of our global network. They are a highly effective group of people who are on the ball when it comes to keeping up with the latest cyber trends and threats. ReliaQuest provides a robust service to monitor our network.”

“I think when it comes to cyber security it is not about building rockets and flying to Jupiter, it’s more about how can we focus on getting all the basics right and doing them well”

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Fight ransomware with AI

Darktrace is the only technology that interrupts ransomware autonomously, without causing costly shutdowns.

darktrace.com/ransomware
to effective cyber security it is not about building rockets and flying to Jupiter, it’s more about how can we focus on getting all the basics right and doing them well. If you look at any cyber breach report you will see that 90% or more of organisations experience a breach because of a lack of the basics. So if an organisation can get the basics right and can do them very well, they can significantly reduce the risk of a cyber security breach.

Reflecting on the challenges of cyber security, Oujdi explains “thinking about the foundations of a programme, there are so many vendors, there are so many solutions, and there are so many different areas within cyber security that you can sometimes get lost in the weeds. So I think one of the challenges is that organisations fail to pinpoint the specific objectives needed in order to achieve an effective security programme. A lot of organisations throughout the environment, helping us find that ‘needle in the haystack’” says Oujdi.

Founded in 2007 by Brian Murphy (CEO), ReliaQuest is a global leader in Open XDR-as-a-Service, the company’s solution ‘GreyMatter’ unifies detection, investigation, response and resilience when it comes to cyber security threats. ReliaQuest offers its 24/7/365 expertise and the power of technology to provide others with the visibility and coverage they require to make their cyber security program more effective.

The challenges of cyber security
When it comes to cyber security, Oujdi is big on the basics. “I think when it comes
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fail to do the essentials, they think if they build something amazingly intelligent it will be the key to the challenge, it’s important to start with the essentials. “Another challenge is the lack of talent and resources, it is extremely difficult to find good people in this market from a talent acquisition perspective. Additionally, these threat actors are constantly innovating in order to penetrate an organisation’s network or system, so finding the right people to help protect against

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the ever-changing threat landscape is a huge challenge.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, Oujdi sees an uptake in vulnerabilities. “As technology continuously evolves and changes so will the vulnerabilities, and I think we’ve already seen that in the past 6 to 12 months. I also believe that organisations globally will become more and more interested in how their data is being protected, both from an internal perspective and also from a supply chain perspective. Lastly, I believe that regulators will become more aggressive on how they approach cyber security and data protection across different industries to raise national standards,” concludes Oujdi.