

Leadership in the Age of Cybersecurity:

How To Be Your Best And Stand Out When Your Career Depends On It



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The Paradox for Leadership in the Age of Cybersecurity

In an age where there is high technical complexity and high risk from cybersecurity issues...

technical skills are less important as a factor for getting ahead

A photograph of Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, pointing his right index finger directly at the viewer. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. The background is a blurred mix of blue and orange tones.

Five Ways To Stand Out

Communication
Influence
Persuasion

Managing in a Crisis
Addressing the Cybersecurity Talent Gap

Why should you listen to me?



Mother turkey and the polecat



Image courtesy of: <https://www.martycohenphotography.com/2013/05/31/wild-turkey-mom-and-her-poults/>



Image courtesy of: <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/polecat>

A woman with short, curly hair is looking through a telescope. She is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt. The image has a blue tint. The text is overlaid in white.

“It’s not what you said; it’s what they heard” – Communications skills for nerds

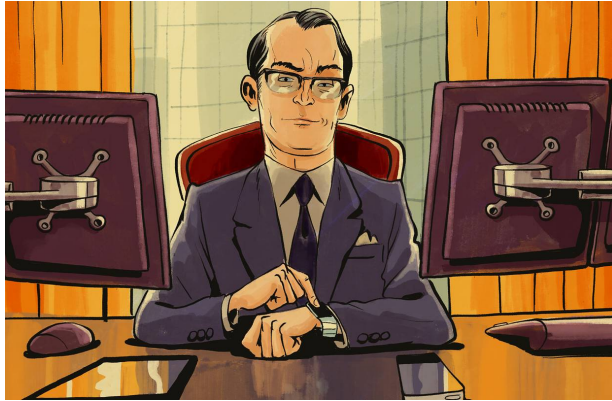
Every communication is two conversations: your words + your body language



- **Body language always trumps the spoken word.**
- ***We communicate first with gestures***

Morgan (2014)

Examples of what body language can convey



Power



Is this person friend or foe?



Is this person on my side or not?



Is this person telling the truth or lying?

Can you fake body language?



- Too much cognitive load
- Can only do it for so long (e.g. revert back, “micro-leakage”)
- Method Acting analogy – play yourself, but in a particular mood
- Invoke the feeling → body language follows

Beware of tyrannosaurus hands and penguin arms

- People tend to freeze in place when:
 - Nervous
 - Addressing someone of “superior” status vs. “lower-status”
- Remember to loosen up body language
- Gesture more fully with full arms



Be heard: develop your leadership voice

Do's

- Strong, clear, lower register
- Phrasing, inflection, pace
- Assertive
- Sense of humour/banter

Don'ts

- High pitched, shrill
- Rambling
- Breathless, trembling



Be heard: knowing what to communicate

Do's

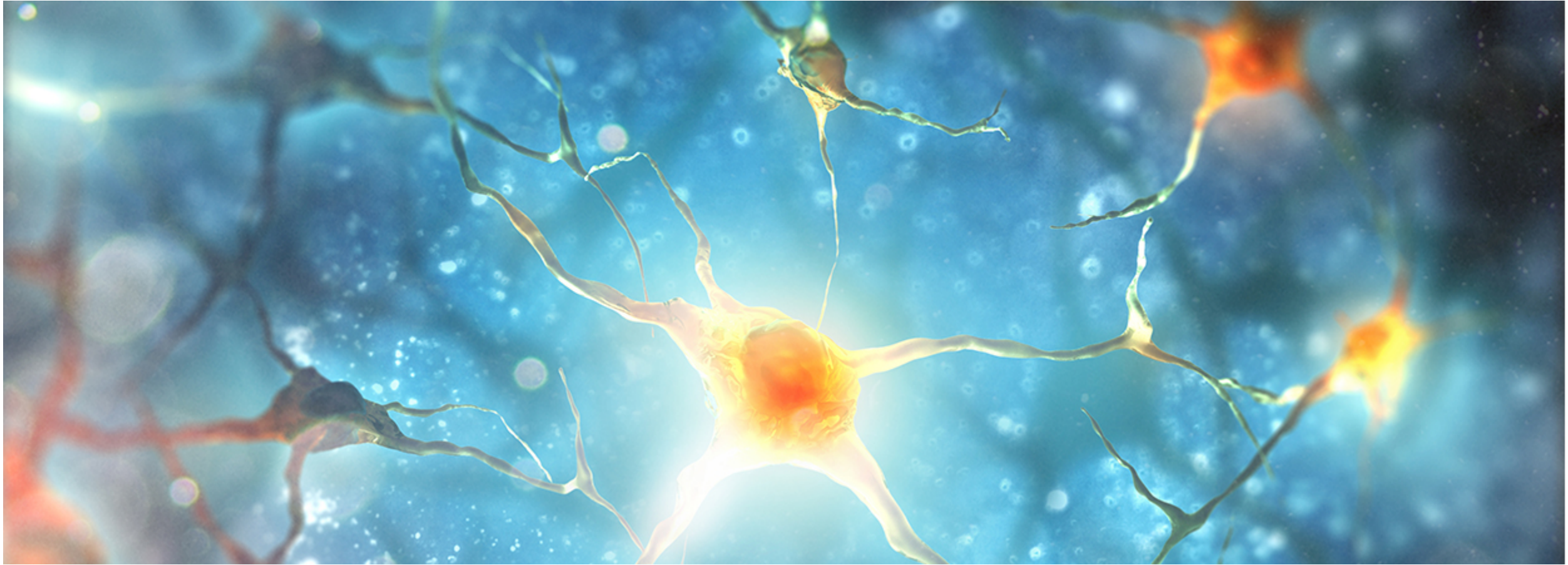
- Business context
- Know your audience
- Explain the “so what”
- Clarify what it means to the stakeholder

Don'ts

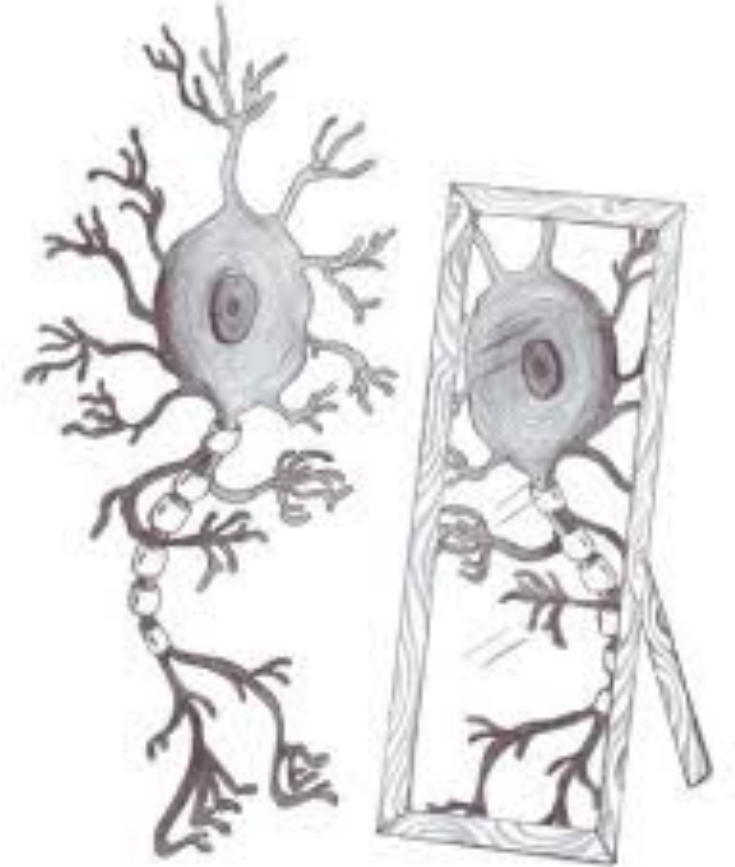
- No techno-babble
- TLDR




Mirror neurons, monkey brains, and decisions in the workplace



Mirror neurons and your big moment: emotions are contagious



A close-up photograph of a cooked steak, likely a tri-tip, resting on a dark surface. The steak is covered in a thick, reddish-brown seasoning. A fresh green herb sprig, possibly rosemary, is placed next to the steak. The entire image has a dark blue overlay.

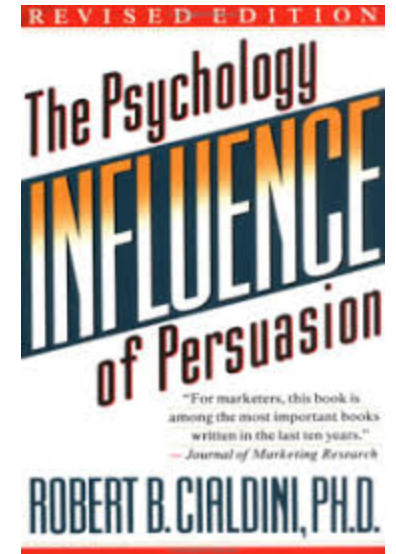
**“Put a little sizzle on your steak” –
Influence and persuasion in the workplace**

**“How am I supposed to
influence senior leaders
when I can’t even get
my own kid to eat
vegetables?”
#thestruggleisreal**



Six weapons of influence

- Reciprocity
- Commitment and Consistency
- Social Proof
- Liking
 - Physical appearance
 - Similarity
 - Praise
 - Familiarity
 - Association
- Authority
- Scarcity



Use four zones of space to connect

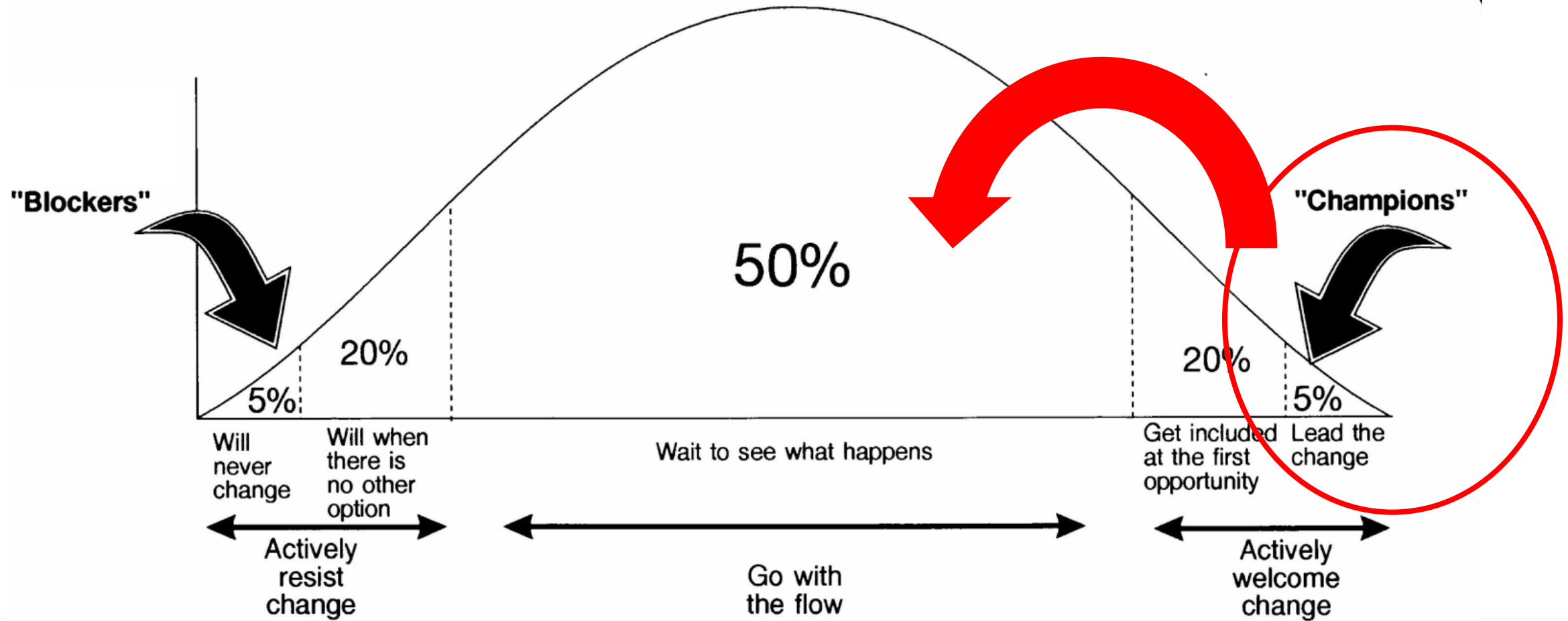
- **Public Zone** – 12 ft or more
- **Social Zone** – 4 ft to 12 ft
- **Personal Space** – 1 ½ ft to 4 ft
 - *Persuasion happens in this space*
- **Intimate Space** – 0 ft to 1 ½ ft → Don't go here at work!

Persuasion

- “The purpose of persuasion is not to conquer but to unite.”

Improving cybersecurity is not just a technical exercise – it’s about changing behaviour, and changing how we work.

- Mobilize people for awareness
- Change policy
- Get endorsement for project or investment



<https://ianjseath.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/change-normal-curve.jpg>

How do you persuade someone with an opposing view?

- Focus on the vision or goal
- Don't say "No"; say "*Let's try this...*"
- Disagree by saying Yes to the concept and disagreeing with the details
- Create safety and acceptance before the other person will be open to being persuaded
- Use social proof and numbers to back your story



How do you persuade someone with an opposing view?

- Recognize their reality
- Find something to like about them
- Use advocates and champions to help support the story; give them talking points
- Make it about Fairness, Choice and Accountability



A hand is shown holding a black plastic bag, which is crumpled and appears to contain waste. The background is blurred, showing a person in a blue shirt and a green field. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**“You can’t polish a turd” - How to
communicate and manage during a crisis**

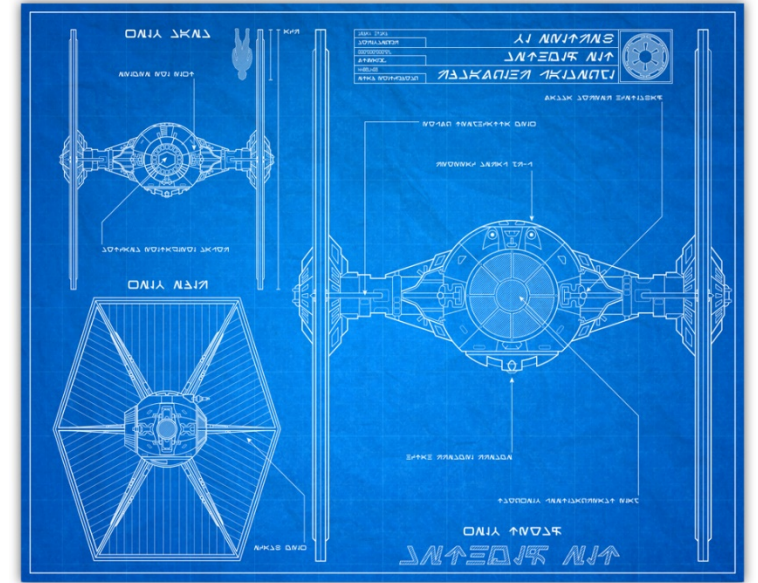
Basic rules for communicating during a crisis

- ***If you are the leader, this is your most important job***
- Golden Rule for bad news: **give bad news quickly and all at once**
- If there are unknowns, say so
 - *“The worst scenario is....the best case is... We will do more investigation and let you know by _____.”*



Basic rules for communicating during a crisis

- Use a template or blueprint for communicating
- Five ways to explain: **Reasons, Ways, Situation & Response, Chronological, Present Results/Future Prospects**
- Your verbal messages have to be just as strong as your written messages



Things to remember while leading a crisis

- Own your crisis
- Use your existing incident/crisis plan
- Establish a new normal
- Clarify the overall mission
- Manage the message
- Take care of the boss & team
- Know when to seek help and advice
- Establish decision protocols
- Keep good records



Other tools and approaches

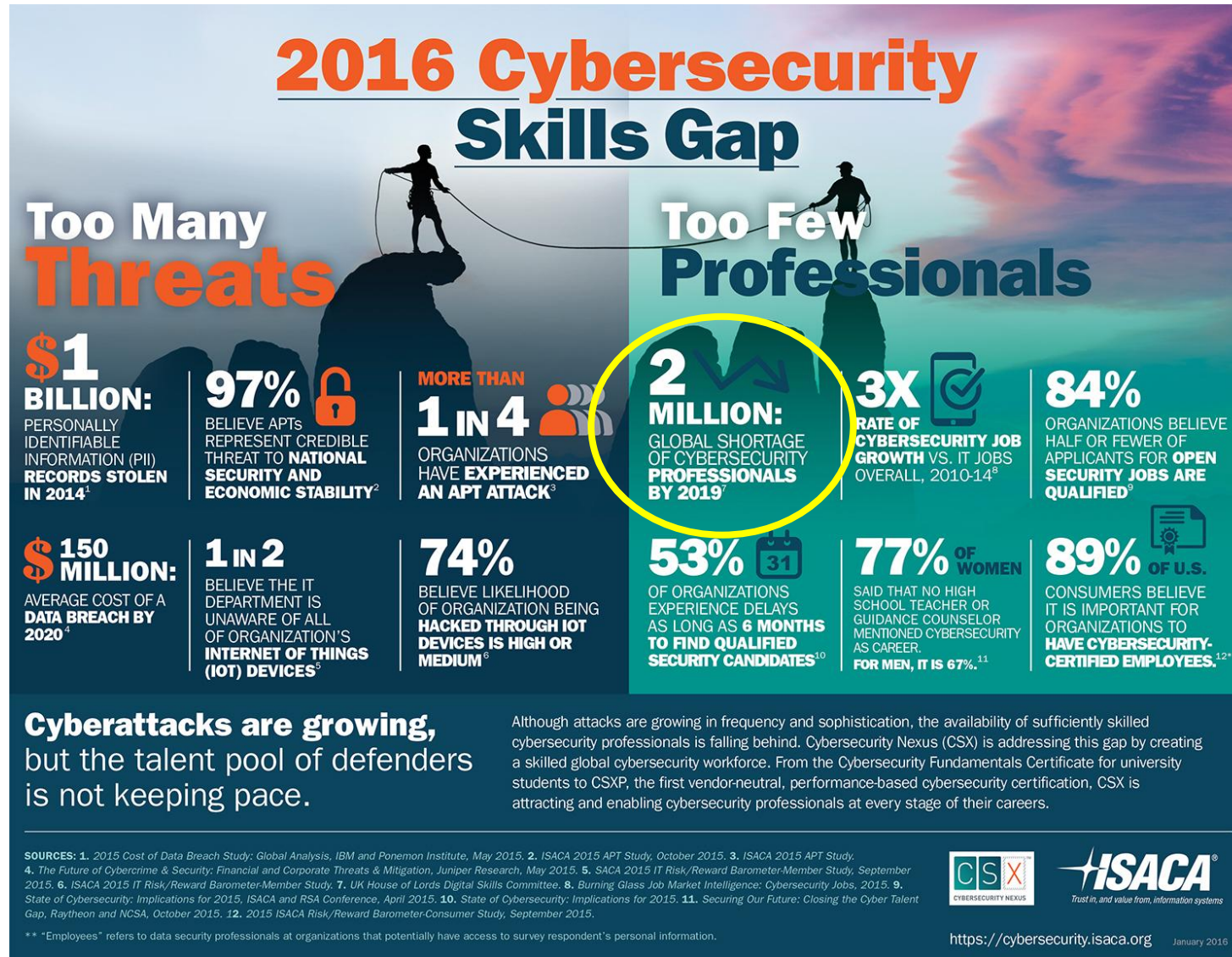
- Trusted friend/advisor
- Personal touch with your stakeholders
- Leadership script for your key messages
- Make friends with your media relations person





“Leaders don’t create followers...they create other leaders” – Addressing the cybersecurity talent gap

Addressing the cybersecurity talent gap



Cybersecurity talent gap

- Grow the next generation of cybersecurity leaders
- Encourage diversity – including neurodiversity
- Encourage introverts
- Hire and grow young talent from your school
- Recognize and utilize sources of cybersecurity talent within your organizations and campus IT
- Create a ‘coalition of the willing’



Growing talent

- Communicate the big picture – people need context
- ***Share the stage***
- Encourage leadership at all levels
- Training wheels
- Coach and mentor
- Clarify roles & break down silos



Cultivate adjacent skills/capabilities that enhance cybersecurity

Communication

Communicate risks, impacts, and options to decision makers. Develop reports, performance dashboards.

Business Analysis

Business analysts develop effective process design, design role-based access.



Vendor Management

Manage outsourced services to ensure the right security provisions are in place and effectively manage these obligations.

Process Management

e.g. Deprovisioning access, Incident Management

Also:
Project Management

A person is running on a blue track, seen from behind. They are wearing a teal tank top, black shorts, and a black armband. The background shows a blurred landscape with trees and a fence. The text "Putting it into practice" is overlaid in white.

Putting it into practice

How can you apply these techniques to cybersecurity?

- Executive presentations on Cybersecurity
- Mentor and coach a rising star
- Lead a major cybersecurity incident response process
- Design and implement new processes needed to improve cybersecurity
- Influence a department to stop doing something/change practices that creates risk for your school

What's your killer app?

**People
skills are
the killer
app**



Questions?

