

# COVID-19 leads to unprecedented demand for cybersecurity skills

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has led to a huge surge in demand for cybersecurity skills as the number of people working remotely and via the cloud continues to soar.

Employees all over the world no longer have a daily commute to contend with as they're working from their spare rooms, sofas and kitchen tables in an attempt to limit the spread of the virus. With more people adjusting to working remotely, it's business as usual for hackers who are preying on companies in the hope online defenses won't be as secure as usual. Scammers are also trying to exploit companies' concerns about COVID-19 through a range of attacks such as phishing and social engineering. The Federal Trade Commission has urged businesses to be on their guard as a result.

## How can organizations access cybersecurity skills?

Cybersecurity skills shortages are prevalent in almost two-thirds (65%) of organizations. Professionals with this skillset are driven by the opportunity to learn more than compensation. And they want to be able to make a real difference. Suggestions to overcome the skills shortages include:

- Attracting new talent with ongoing learning and development programs. Cybersecurity is evolving fast, so these candidates will appreciate the learning opportunities and certifications you may offer. It will allow them to stay up to date on the latest trends in their space. Use your employment brand to showcase such initiatives.
- Transition contractors and consultants into full-time roles. This is easier said than done but you should cater your employment brand to showcase the innovative projects and company mission that might convert freelancers. Perks and benefits may be appealing and should be part of the conversation, but nothing weighs as heavily as a meaningful opportunity.
- Tapping into emerging talent with comprehensive graduate talent schemes and early career programs. Partner with educational institutes to get cybersecurity employees involved in mentorship programs that may lead to a pipeline of talent.
- Developing talent communities and keep engagement levels high with personalized content. This will provide the opportunity to showcase your employment brand and the type of work to expect.
- Cross-training existing IT professionals so they have the skills to pivot into cybersecurity roles.

## Predictions for the months ahead

We predict the demand for cybersecurity professionals will continue to rise. For example, companies in the healthcare industry, including pharmaceuticals and biotech, will see an increased demand. Many companies in this sector have fast-tracked internet-driven services/products following the outbreak. Patients have turned to online platforms in their droves when seeking medical advice and many companies in this sector have prioritized their digitization projects as a result. This means cybersecurity efforts will take center stage to ensure health records and sensitive information is protected from hackers.

The COVID-19 outbreak has highlighted the need for companies to better defend themselves from cyber-attacks. Organizations must act now to secure top cybersecurity talent or they risk being left behind in a market that's long faced skills shortages.