

Tammy Moskites, Accenture

Your Network is the Key to Your Success

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:02] So, I have with me today on the podcast, Tammy Moskites. Is that how you pronounce it?

Tammy Moskites: [00:00:07] Tammy Moskites.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:08] Moskites! I knew I got something wrong.

Tammy Moskites: [00:00:13] That's ok, everybody calls me that.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:14] So, Tammy has a really interesting background. You've been a CISO of really large organizations, and now you're a CISO and CIO.

Tammy Moskites: [00:00:24] I was in my last role prior to joining Accenture.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:28] Got it. OK. So, you've seen the vendor side at Venafi, and now at Accenture you're seeing a different side of things.

Tammy Moskites: [00:00:35] I am.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:36] So, as we talked about right before the podcast, you have a really unique perspective given you've seen three sides; you've seen the vendor side, you've seen the practitioner side, and on the consulting side, specifically for vendors, what should they be doing differently? Number one. And number two is, do you have any examples of how they could still rise above the noise, because there is a lot of noise, so just telling them, "Hey stop doing

what you're doing," isn't going to cut it. Any practical advice you have for a vendor that they could start doing differently?

Tammy Moskites: [00:01:10] I have two sides to that. For being a career CISO, because that's what I've done my whole life, prior to joining my last role at Venafi. My eye-opening event for me at Venafi was how hard the vendors work. It's like nothing that a CISO could ever imagine that hadn't sat on the other side of the table. You have the sales professionals, you have the leadership team of the vendors that are going in and trying to sell something, whether it's technology, whether it's consulting, whether it's a partnership. And what's happening from the CISO is, that when the CISO is listening to them there's so much noise, as you refer to it, because they're hearing a lot of the same messages over and over and over again.

But when a vendor comes in, the advice for a vendor is to listen to the market, understand what solutions you're bringing to the table, to the chief security officer or to the security leader, and not only sell what you're selling, but sell them a partnership, something that you can expand on to help them grow their security. How does your product, how does your service expand on my ability to be a better CISO? I know I can come in there and sell you whatever product in the world, but it's not going to do any good if I can't understand how it relates to the business. How will it enable my business to be more successful?

And then you have the CISO side that wants the vendors to come in and they're trying to decide who to listen to. The challenge there is that a lot of times we as CISOs don't take the call. So depending on, I always call it the annoyance level of the vendors that used to come in at me, I used to have an 'H. No' list. My admin didn't swear, and I used to call it the 'Hell, no' list then we changed it to the 'H. No' list. But when they called though those were people that never made it through to my office. And we did have those because we get calls all day long. So it's really about building relationships.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:03:25] You touched upon the fact that you have this 'H. No' list, but for the vendor to actually start building relationships and trust they need an opening. So how do they get the in?

Tammy Moskites: [00:03:40] That's a darn good question. There's two pieces of it, a big piece of it is networking, being able to find a trusted adviser that knows you. So, as a CISO, I was very fortunate going to a vendor because I know all the CISOs. I've been in this world for a long time and I have an amazing network. But for those that don't have that amazing network it's easier to leverage a CISO you know or leverage an executive you know to help build that relationship or do that in a soft introduction. The other piece of it is just being able to make a name for yourself in the market. I think that technology consulting, security vendors, any vendor, as a whole the larger their name in the market, it's more top of mind. It's like, you hear Accenture, I'm going to take the call because I know them, but if you hear Joe's cybersecurity company, I'm probably not going to answer the call. It's really just reputation, it's being able to deliver the best of the best services, but a lot of it is network based.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:04:54] One conversation I had earlier today that I wanted to bounce that off you was, given 6,500 cybersecurity companies and growing there's a lot of venture investment going in, is there an obligation for venture capitalists to step up their game? If it's not just a cool technology or a serial entrepreneur who can actually bring in the goods again, it is actually double-clicking and seeing whether it's actually solving a customer problem. Is that something that you subscribe to as well, or is the onus solely on the entrepreneurs to make sure that it's not just a technical challenge it's also a business problem.

Tammy Moskites: [00:05:37] For me and the experience I've had, and I'm not sure it's across the board, but the experience I've had, it's really important to work with a good venture cap that's actually going to partner with you because you're in this together. You're both in it to be successful. I found it very successful in my past to leverage my venture capital partners and help open doors and

relationships, because I'm not their only investment. So I can help leverage investments that they've made with potentially other types of cybersecurity companies, in addition to those relationships and being able to grow them. So, maybe hosting a dinner or something like that and getting other people to the table. The venture caps can actually help them build their portfolio.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:06:29] Let's switch gears to the marketing side of things. There's been a lot of things the marketing department has gotta rap for, especially for security companies. But if you are a CMO or VP of Marketing in a small company, if you don't use the buzzwords you don't get the SEO or rise above the noise. So is it a given that there's no other way to do it, or have you seen in your CISO world what vendors are actually got through to you by their marketing followed by the product?

Tammy Moskites: [00:07:00] I look at marketing as a critical success factor. Any small company, medium company, large company, doesn't matter, the quality of your marketing will determine a big piece of your success. I feel that, that's my own opinion. And the reason why I feel that is that it's just like large companies, it's about brand recognition. You start getting your brand out there a little bit more, people become more aware like, "Hey, I've seen that." One such example, and I usually don't throw out company names, but when Cylance did a really big campaign, before people really knew who they were, every single airport I went through I saw this sign, Cylance. I looked and then I realized I knew the CISO there, so as a security professional it was instant brand recognition. My husband had no idea what it was because he's in retail. I look at the difference of saying, "Wow, I have brand recognition." When somebody sees an Accenture brand they instantly know what it is. There's no doubt about who Accenture is. But a few years back, who would have known what they were. But that was one example for me, that I noticed so much marketing and they're very successful.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:08:26] In a conference like Black Hat, which we're at right now, how much does a vendor's presence here or lack of it matter? Again

putting your CISO hat back on, there's always this debate, and the company saying, "Hey what's my ROI, just scanning badges and getting leads?" So that's always a question. You mentioned the airport and the brand recognition, is being here also a necessity for a vendor?

Tammy Moskites: [00:08:54] It is, you have to be at the key things that your target market is at. Things like, Black Hat and RSA, and other large events, you have to be on the floor. Because if you're not on the floor, people are going to ask why. You know that's truly it. When I go to events as a CISO, or as my teams in the past have gone, there's been comments, "Oh, you know blah, blah, blah, last year they had a huge booth; this year we could barely find them." They recognize some of that, we wouldn't really think they would, but they do. And the other thing is you have to make sure that if you're spending marketing dollars to come to an event like this or RSA or others that are very, very expensive then you have to make sure you have a marketing niche. You have to bring people to the booth. You can't just be handing out pens all day because that's just not enough.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:09:50] T-shirts too.

Tammy Moskites: [00:09:50] T-shirts! I was in an elevator, like literally on my way here, and the kid next to me said, "I had such a good day, I collected 15 t-shirts and some of them were high quality!" I started laughing, so t-shirts I guess are still OK, considering that's probably half of these people's wardrobe every day. But yeah, I think you have to bring something exciting, something that's very unique in nature if you're not a brand-recognized name. If you're trying to increase your brand, you have to draw somebody in to hear the message.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:10:27] So you're touching on something else, that is actually getting through the message. There's been a renewed awareness of storytelling from a vendor's perspective. And the traditional marketing has been less about storytelling. It's about, I'm going to elevate what my CTO or my CPO tells me and be able to talk about that. Is that one way for vendors to rise above the

noise, back to your point about understanding the CISOs role and what their job looks like, is storytelling something that is making a comeback or should make a comeback?.

Tammy Moskites: [00:11:03] Not necessarily storytelling but more of an elevator pitch. I don't want to sit there necessarily, if I'm going to talk to you, I'm going to look at it for 30 minutes - about what you do. But if you think about Venafi, they had an elevator pitch, and it was so effective because it was 30 seconds of two actors on a network. You had people use usernames and passwords, machines use certificates, keys and certificates. It's a message you don't forget, so you're able to correlate something really quickly. People use usernames and passwords. What do machines use then? They use keys and certificates. Oh well, that makes sense. You need to secure and protect those. There was more of a pitch around it but you get the idea.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:11:54] That's absolutely right, and that brings up the topic of analogies. Having been in the vendor space myself for a long time, we used to come out feeling we had had a great meeting. But now I'm sitting on the other side, it's was that meeting great a day later, was that meeting great a week later? And what did you leave behind that actually resonates with the customer? Going back to your point about usernames, passwords, and certificates, are vendors understanding that or saying, "How do I relate to something that is in your life?" It could be your kid's school, it could be your vehicle, it could be anything.

Tammy Moskites: [00:12:33] Right, and the thing is that no, they're not doing such a good job of that. I think back over the years, the vendors that I bought from, the vendors that I've partnered with were ones that took a unique interest, and not just in my organization, but in me and how they can help me be more successful, because that's what people gravitate to. I want to have a partner that not only understands me, my people, but also my organization. Who has some kind of connection to how they're going to make my company successful

and help security make a name for itself within the organization and not the office of No.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:13:12] Again, this conversation could go on forever. So, I was having this conversation at RSA with another CISO, Giovanni at Lastline, and what he told me just stuck in my head - the CISO's job is like a goalie in soccer. If the score is 0-0 you're not going to get feted as a hero. The score is 0-2 against you, you're the villain. Right? So, with the score being 0-0, how are you as a vendor helping me project that the 0-0 took a lot of effort, and to keep things at 0-0 is going to take more investment and more cooperation from other businesses? This stuck in my head, because as a vendor I never thought like that.

Tammy Moskites: [00:13:52] Yeah, it's funny that you mention a soccer analogy, I'm a huge soccer fan. So, when you think of what we call football in my house, and the score is 0-0 or nil-nil, you have to think, "How am I going to make sure it stays that way?" But in soccer it doesn't necessarily stay that way, right? You think about it, it goes into penalty kicks. People are still shooting balls at your head. That's how it works. So if you think about it that way, there's always things coming at you and you still have to block and tackle. So I might jump left at that penalty kick, but you know what, there's a good chance they're going to kick it to the right. So when you're communicating this to the business, I mean you're communicating this with partners, with your vendors and others, you have to make sure that everyone realizes that it's not a guarantee win. It's just a guaranteed, "Hey, we did damn well today."

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:14:44] Correct. And then tomorrow. So, switching back to the vendor side of the house, is it even plausible for vendors to get into the CISO's shoes of every industry they're targeting and understand what their daily life, what their budget looks like, what their organization looks like.

Tammy Moskites: [00:15:04] You can, and a great way to do that is to build a customer advisory but more to the executive level. What I've done in the past is I had different advisers, CISO advisers from multiple industries, and what we did

on a regular basis, we met in person twice a year, on the phone twice a year. And what we talked about is, what are you seeing in your market? How are things being successful? What are your challenges? What things do you see that would help us be more successful as a vendor? And that is a very successful way of getting to know your market, but then you can also leverage those advisers as partners to help you build your business.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:15:47] And that may have it. I mean you had a unfair advantage of having the CISO network event coming to Venafi.

Tammy Moskites: [00:15:54] I did.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:15:55] What can an average vendor who doesn't have that, back to your point...

Tammy Moskites: [00:15:58] All you need is one, one champion. But the other part of it is, as we talked about earlier, most of these startups don't start up on their own pocket change. They start out with the VC, so you have to leverage your VC. Like I said earlier, you're not the only person they're throwing money at to help grow and hopefully become very, very successful. They have other companies that were very, very successful, most likely. I'm sure they have the CISO relationships. Like I said, you build a couple, Company A talks to Company B by the same VC, they both want the same message, they want to be successful, and they bring them in as a partner or they make an introduction. As I said before, that will help but you have to have that 'in'. For me I was fortunate, I have a lot of connections.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:16:49] Not many vendors have that advantage. If you were to look at one of the most understated but critical security issues that is under-reported, under-hyped, what would that be?

Tammy Moskites: [00:17:03] That's a tough one because if you think about the things that people don't look at and they forget about - just the security

foundational basics, asset inventory, secure and protect. You can't secure and protect what you don't know you have. You need to know your hardware, and you need to know your software. Those are things that people just don't think about, the foundation, the very basics of making sure that you're securing and protecting the crown jewels of your organization. If you look at the critical security controls, the top 20, and I know you're familiar with those, the only two that have never changed order, I think, were number one and that's the asset of hardware, and number two, the asset of software. So you know it's important, those are important pieces and are really underlooked as a whole. There's not a lot of hype around, "Hey we need to know where everything is."

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:18:00] Going back to the CISO, if you were to go to your executive team saying, "Hey, what were you doing for the last three months?" "Well I'm doing asset inventory of my hardware and software." You don't get a lot of kudos versus talking about Blockchain. I'm not saying you have to have dual personalities but in some sense you have to be a marketing officer when you present the board, and you have to not get caught up in the hype when you deal with the actual day to day, is that true?

Tammy Moskites: [00:18:29] When you're talking with your board or when you're talking with your executive teams, when you come in and say, "Oh well, I'm only doing asset inventory," - you're not going to come in with that approach, right? You can just say, "Well, I'm really getting a good understanding about critical assets in my organization and what it will do is improve our other opportunities. I'm doing vulnerability management, patch management, and the other security controls to ensure that we're securing and protecting our critical infrastructure." All right, so way back in the beginning when we're talking about that elevator pitch, it's kind of that piece of it. You have to make sure that you're going in with, this is what we're doing, this is why we're doing it, this is the value that it's going to bring.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:19:12] So the last piece is, is the technology-minded CISO now turning into a business-minded CISO? If people are not able to bridge that gap are they in the wrong job?

Tammy Moskites: [00:19:27] If you are not business focused you're not going to succeed in today's world. For me, it's really unique because I started in business. If I go back, way back, put the Way-Back Machine on, I started off as a senior trend analyst doing trend analysis, medical trend analysis, and underwriting analysis for the average likelihood of an event to occur. You need to increase your underwriting scores. Now I'm like, the average likelihood of an event or breach, we need to make sure we get insurance or whatever. But when you look at it from that light, when you don't have a business hat on and you don't ensure that you're enabling the business to make sure that they're actually able to deliver what the company is there to do, that's a problem. And when I see some CISOs that are so technical in nature that they end up hitting a wall if they don't become, kumbaya-tic is not the right word, but you really do have to hold hands and sing Kumbaya some time with the business to make sure that you're listening. I utilized security liaisons for years, so I had security-focused individuals that partnered with the business, they went to their staff meetings, they understood their project portfolios, and on a regular basis we were able to take that information, and me as the CISO, while we were doing projects internally, said, "Well hey, you know online banking is going to have an issue with this," or merchandising, or whatever company I was at, I was able to actually make sure that I had the right people engage. Business focus is not a nice-to-have it's a must-have.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:21:11] You're probably one of the few CISOs I've talked to who talk about them in such obvious terms, about having your security liaisons in the business's. Are you seeing that in the CISO community, is that awareness growing?

Tammy Moskites: [00:21:23] I've been educating it for years, speaking about it for years, but I'm starting to see it happen more and more. The question is

whether they utilize professionals within the business to partner into security, or the security professionals that partner out. I've seen it done more successfully security professionals reaching out, but they have to be it. You don't have to hire a business information security officer. A lot of people use the BISO title, and I was a business information security officer in one of my positions, but you don't need that title. What you need is somebody that has a very strong business sense, has a really good understanding of security program management, and is able to bring the right people to the table. So, I'm going to kick off a project portfolio project in my business that automatically, Tammy security person, security liaison says, "Hey, you need to worry about this, this, and this during the discovery," and this way projects don't get hung up in the security stuff later on. And it's very successful when you do it right.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:22:25] I can imagine. So, I can't forget security Kumbaya, any final words for vendors? One take away that you want to leave them with?

Tammy Moskites: [00:22:40] One take away for vendors, stay away from fear, uncertainty and doubt. FUD is horrible. It will never get you back in the door again. Trust me it won't. Always come in with a good message. CISOs want a partnership. They want a trusted adviser. They want people that are going to take the ride with them and not just, you know, give them a check and you never hear from them again. It has to be a partnership. And if I advise anybody anything more than that, it's truly just be a partner and be honest.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:23:14] Very good. Thanks for your time, very good chatting with you.

Tammy Moskites: [00:23:17] Thanks.

Main discussion topics:

01:56 Advice for vendors: it's all about the relationship.

03:44 The importance of networking and branding

05:54 Leverage your venture capitalist

11:03 How to get across your message and rise above the noise

12:33 What CISOs really want from vendors

14:08 The usefulness of a customer advisory team

17:03 The most critical, but understated security issue? Basic security
foundationals - asset inventory, secure and protect

20:20 CISOs need to sing Kumbaya

21:23 Are successful CISOs business-oriented tech professionals or tech-oriented
business professionals?