

HOW TO GET IN FRONT OF CISOs and Security Professionals Through Digital Marketing



How to Reach Security Leaders Through Digital Marketing

Reaching CISOs and security professionals through digital marketing is challenging. Security leaders are overwhelmed with vendor outreach, skeptical of marketing claims, and highly protective of their time.

Combine that with the fact that modern cybersecurity buyers conduct most of their research digitally—and long before they ever speak with a vendor. Gartner's research shows that 75% of B2B buyers prefer a rep-free buying experience, choosing to research solutions independently and buy online. Another survey found that buyers are already 61% through their sales journey before they contact sales.

So, how do you get in front of difficult-to-reach CISOs? Let's dive into the dos and don'ts of reaching these elusive buyers.

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Decoding the Digital Buyer's Journey

In our first eBook, *How to Get in Front of CISOs and Security Professionals in the Age of AI*, we explored how security leaders research and evaluate vendors and why credibility and trust matter more than ever. Now, we'll cover the **digital tactics marketers can use to reach CISOs earlier in the buying journey—and earn a place on the consideration shortlist.**

The Top Two Trends:

1 Multi-channel pre-sale digital materials are crucial.

Successful cybersecurity marketing requires a multi-channel approach. Security buyers interact across roughly 10 different engagement channels during their buying journey, including search, social media, analyst research, events, and peer communities to research potential vendors, often before they are even on your radar. It's crucial that your digital materials educate your readers and guide them on a buying journey before they enter your CRM.

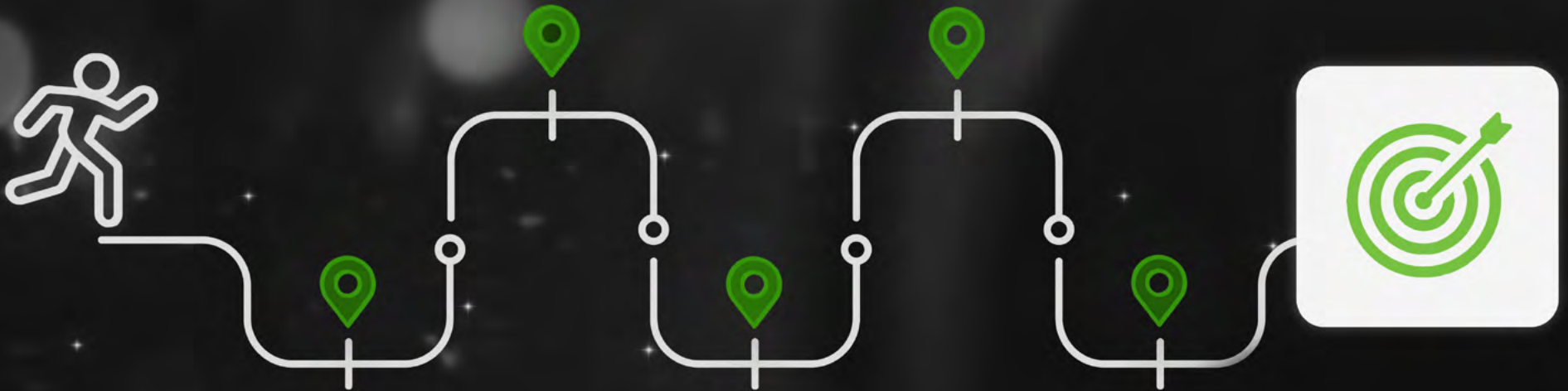
2 Ensuring successful AI search content inclusion is key for success.

Technology buyers are also harnessing the power of AI to streamline vendor research and selection. A recent survey found that about half (46%) of enterprise technology buyers now initiate vendor research with AI tools like ChatGPT and Google Gemini. Ensuring that your materials are designed and successfully incorporated into AI search results can make or break your marketing efforts.

If your brand is not visible across those channels, you may never appear in the buying conversation.

Six Digital Tactics to Reach CISOs and Security Professionals

Here are six critical checkpoints on the path to reaching and successfully marketing to CISOs.





CHECKPOINT 1

Content that Supports Digital Research

Many cybersecurity buying journeys begin with a question—not a product search.

Security leaders research threats, frameworks, and risk exposure before evaluating vendors. Educational content is often the first interaction they have with your brand. With buyers consuming AI summaries, eBooks, case studies, and more, you need to create a digital path that leads to conversions.

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- **Create educational content** that addresses security problems, not just product features
- **Focus on thought leadership** materials that demonstrate expertise and address common buyer pain points
- **Develop research reports**, benchmark studies, and technical guides
- **Optimize content** for search visibility and discoverability—AEO, GEO, and yes, still SEO
- **Repurpose long-form insights** into blogs, social posts, videos, and webinars

AVOID



- Writing content purely for AEO/GEO/SEO, always balance it for real readers
- Leading with product messaging instead of insights
- Publishing content without a distribution strategy or conversion path
- Letting research or threat intelligence become outdated



CHECKPOINT 2

Start Buyer Conversations: LinkedIn, YouTube & Professional Social Media

LinkedIn has become the primary social platform for cybersecurity professionals. Many CISOs also work with purchasing committees, so your buyer considerations must include all potential decision makers.

Today, social media often plays a central role in reaching B2B buyers, with research from Forrester showing it is impactful across the entire purchase journey—and with 71% of buyers now Millennials and Gen Z, these digital-first decision-makers increasingly rely on social platforms for research, validation, and vendor selection.

High-performing social content includes research insights, videos, practitioner perspectives, and real-world security lessons.

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- **Share insights** from threat research, reports, and webinars
- **Amplify practitioner voices and security leaders** inside your company
- **Combine organic content with targeted ads**
- **Promote content** that educates rather than sells

AVOID



- Posting purely promotional content
- Treating LinkedIn as a broadcast channel instead of a conversation
- Ignoring engagement and comments from security professionals
- Over-automating outreach or messages



CHECKPOINT 3

Use Insightful Content in Digital Ads

CISOs are notoriously difficult to reach through digital ads—but you can effectively reach and influence their buying group (security engineers, architects, IT leaders, etc.) who shape decisions. The key is leading with credible, expert-driven value that earns attention and builds trust across the committee.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- **Use proof points that resonate with CISOs** (data, frameworks, real-world scenarios—not hype) in your ads
- **Target the broader buying group** with role-specific pain point and outcome messaging
- **Use retargeting to stay visible** across buying cycles and multiple stakeholders
- **Ensure your message and tone are aligned** with the platform and audience—Reddit, Google, and LinkedIn ad copy are very different
- **Align campaigns** to current threats, vulnerabilities, or news to increase urgency and relevance

AVOID

- Over-targeting only CISO titles and missing the broader buying committee
- Featuring marketers instead of credible technical voices
- Leaning too heavily on any one platform—ad performance is changing rapidly



CHECKPOINT 4

Build Credibility With Third-Party and Peer Validation

Security leaders rarely rely on vendor claims, so you need to build trust through multiple sources of third-party validation. From analyst and media coverage to peer review platforms and testimonials, CISOs want to hear insights about your product from independent sources.

This makes review platforms, analyst coverage, and practitioner advocacy essential components of digital marketing.

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- **Encourage satisfied customers** to share reviews on trusted platforms
- **Develop case studies** that highlight measurable outcomes
- **Participate in analyst briefings** and industry research
- **Elevate thought leaders** who share insights through contributed or placement articles
- **Amplify third-party validation** in your marketing programs

AVOID



- Overly scripted customer testimonials
- Treating analyst relations as one-time events
- Ignoring vertical and niche security publications and communities

CHECKPOINT 5

Personalized Outreach for Lifetime Value and Account-Based Marketing (ABM) Validation

You can increase your sales by maximizing customer lifetime value. Treating your current customers well and supporting them with value-added products and services leads to stronger relationships and revenue growth.

For new prospects, one of the best ways to cut through the noise is by personalizing the conversations. ABM campaigns that target individual people at specific companies can be time-consuming, but very successful.

The average B2B buying group includes **around 13 stakeholders**, including CISOs, security architects, IT leaders, and compliance teams. Today's buyers now expect a higher level of personalized communications that reflect their unique challenges.

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- **Develop role-specific content** for different stakeholders and targeted messaging for each account or industry – take advantage of segmentation and automations in your tools, our favorite is HubSpot
- **Align sales and marketing outreach** to priority organizations—group communication by industry or persona, when possible, to streamline your processes, and use AI and intent enrichment for better targeting and branching
- **Use social selling techniques and track engagement** across multiple contacts in each account
- **Leverage internal SMEs and execs where possible.** They often see better traction.

AVOID



- Sending the same message to every stakeholder
- Treating ABM as a short-term campaign instead of a strategy
- Cookie-cutter messages that undermine the point of personalization



CHECKPOINT 6

Deliver Interactive Expert-Led Insights Validation

Security professionals value practical insights from peers and practitioners.

Interactive formats like webinars, podcasts, and AI-driven chat extend your content into two-way conversations and help buyers engage on their terms.

These digital assets are more conversational and round out your multichannel digital asset mix, as well as open up new search sources.

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- **Provide digital resources** that answer buyer questions quickly and direct them to additional information and experts, especially about hot security topics in the news
- **Create educational webinars** or podcasts with subject matter experts, analysts, or security leaders to deliver digital conversations that focus on solving problems
- **Maximize your ROI** from content creation by creating smaller pieces from large content assets (videos, blogs, clips)
- **Encourage and support interactive discussions** in multiple formats: chatbots, webinars, and social posts to focus on creating conversations and connections

AVOID



- Using marketing or sales instead of technical experts
- Low-value content of chat support that does not address buyer questions quickly or does not lead to more information – bad chatbots are worse than no chatbot
- Events that lack clear, actionable takeaways

Making the Connection

With tens of thousands of security products competing for attention, cybersecurity marketing has become one of the most competitive areas in technology. **Successfully reaching CISOs is a lot like corporate cybersecurity—you need a holistic plan, or your efforts will likely miss the mark.**

To make the sale, you need to **earn trust during the research phase, long before the sales conversation begins.**

The companies that successfully reach CISOs digitally are those that show up early, often, and credibly across all the channels security leaders trust most.

And in cybersecurity marketing, **making the shortlist is where the real opportunity begins.**

If you'd like to optimize your marketing program with supplemental or outsourced fractional marketing experts, let's connect.

[Contact us to start the conversation](#)



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