

**BENCHMARK INSIGHTS**

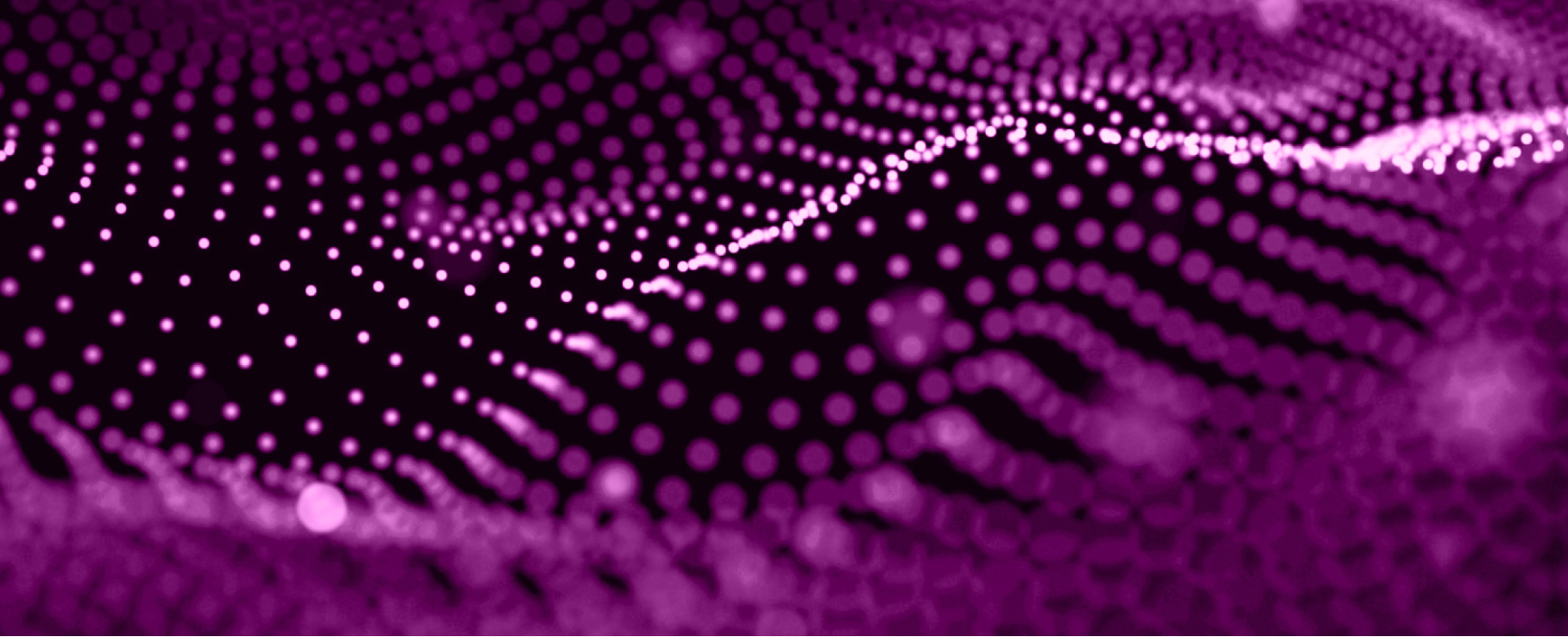
# **2021 State of the CISO Report**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
The CISO Role in Practice	4
CISOs Spend Formative Security Years Acquiring Broad Functional Experience	5
Most CISOs Still Report Into IT	5
CISO Job Satisfaction Soared vs. Last Year	6
Many More CISOs Are Open to or Actively Considering a Change	6
Find More Benchmark Study Insights	7
Methodology	7
About Us	8

This summary report provides high-level insights from our State of the CISO, 2021. The complete report is a comprehensive, 18-page breakdown that offers a more detailed set of data and is available to IANS clients through the IANS Portal or to non-clients upon request by contacting us at [IANS@iansresearch.com](mailto:IANS@iansresearch.com).



## Executive Summary

**W**ith the ongoing evolution of cybersecurity, the role of the CISO continues to transform and mature. For the top security position, no two career paths are alike. Current CISOs are keen to understand how their roles compare to those of their peers.

Further, CISOs want to know how their satisfaction levels compare to those of their peers and what improvements contribute to an increase in satisfaction.

This summary report dives into the CISO role, satisfaction with the role and other relevant factors. It offers objective and comprehensive data from 458 CISOs across the U.S. and Canada who completed the second annual CISO Compensation and Budget Survey administered by IANS and Artico Search.

The report further includes insights from executive recruiters at Artico Search, in particular Matt Comyns, co-founder and president, and Steve Martano, partner in Artico Search's cyber practice.

This is the final publication in a series of four reports that covers CISO compensation, security budgets, key security staff compensation and a deep dive into the role of the CISO.

## The CISO Role in Practice

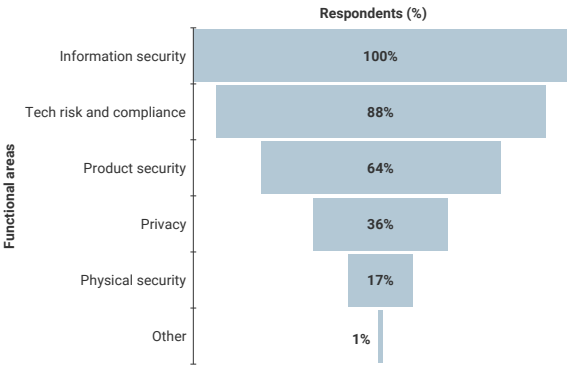
### Most CISOs oversee more than just information security

Most respondents indicate their security ownership currently includes multiple functions. A waterfall chart shows the most common combinations (see FIGURE 1). Besides information security, 88% of CISOs are also

responsible for technical risk and compliance. In addition to infosec and tech risk and compliance, 64% also oversees product security and 36% has privacy as an added responsibility.

FIGURE 1  
**Besides Infosec, 88% Of CISOs Also Oversee Tech Risk and Compliance**

What is included in your security ownership (multiple answers accepted)?



n = 458

## CISOs Spend Formative Security Years Acquiring Broad Functional Experience

We asked respondents about the functional areas in their formative security years, prior to becoming CISOs. The two most common functions reported are SecOps and governance, risk management and compliance (GRC), cited by 62% and 54% of respondents, respectively. Product security is less-customary in CISOs' formative years—only 28% list this domain (see FIGURE 2).

This data indicates CISOs have broad experience across multiple information security functions.

## Most CISOs Still Report Into IT

In the 2020 Compensation and Budget Survey, 66% of respondents said they report to a technical function—a CIO, CTO. This share grew slightly year-over-year to 69%. Eighteen percent reports to the CEO or chief operating officer (COO) and only a small share has a chief risk officer (CRO), chief financial officer (CFO) or general counsel as their solid line manager (see FIGURE 3).

According to Steve Martano, this trend is remarkable:

Because there can be an inherent conflict of interest between security and IT, for several years we have heard from organizations that security would break out of IT and become a separate function reporting to

FIGURE 2

### SecOps and GRC Are Most Common Functions Leading up to CISO Role

In which functional areas were your formative security years, prior to becoming a CISO (multiple answers accepted)?

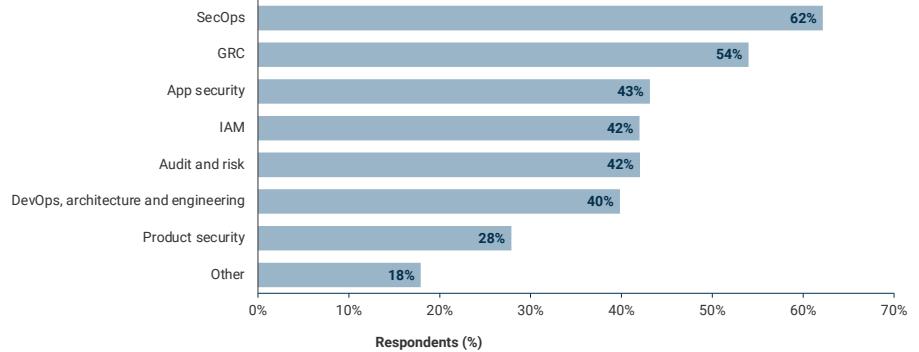
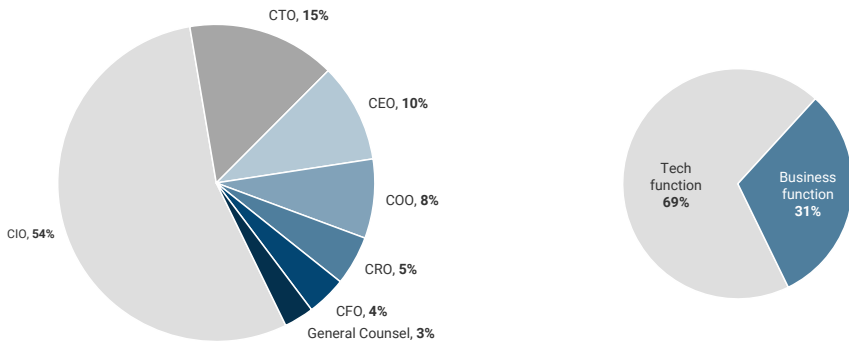


FIGURE 3

### 69% Of CISOs Reports to a Tech Function

Who is your solid line manager?



a business executive, but that has not really come to fruition yet.

For now, the CISO predominantly reports into the tech group, but we have seen it work in a variety of ways, depending on the organization and individual leaders in other functions.

## CISO Job Satisfaction Soared vs. Last Year

The share of CISOs who indicate they are satisfied in their job shot up from 45% in 2020 to 69% in 2021. They are mostly CISOs who moved from the “neutral” category to somewhat or strongly satisfied. Roughly one in five respondents is dissatisfied with their role and company (see FIGURE 4).

Steve Martano connects this data to larger trends in the market:

*In 2021, companies were again reminded of the importance of robust information security programs and the leaders who run them. Increased visibility of the function amidst endpoint challenges due to employees working from home and the continued publicity of security breaches caused firms to make more of an effort to gauge CISO satisfaction, providing proactive salary increases, bonus increases and retention packages.*

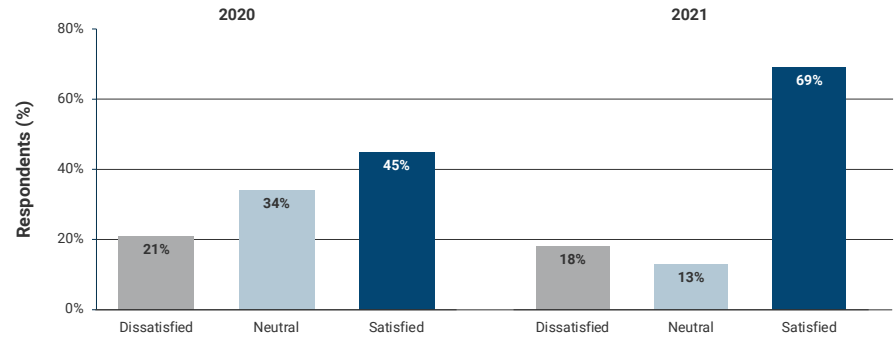
## Many More CISOs Are Open to or Actively Considering a Change

A quarter of CISOs strongly agree with the question, “Are you considering a job change in the next 12 months?” Another 22% agree somewhat and 20% are neutral (see FIGURE 5).

FIGURE 4

### 69% Of CISOs Are Satisfied With Their Jobs—A 53% Increase Over Last Year

How satisfied are you in your current position and company?



n = 458

FIGURE 5

### Satisfaction Climbs After Changing Companies, Then Drops Again

How satisfied are you with key aspects of your job?

	Have you changed companies in the past year?		
	No	Yes, in the last 6 months	Yes, in the last 6 to 12 months
Compensation	3.38	4.09	3.58
Security budget	3.42	3.24	3.24
Career development	3.63	4.00	4.09
Executive visibility	3.73	3.96	3.91
Organizational support	3.78	3.98	3.70
Overall	3.73	4.27	3.74

1.00 – 2.99   3.00 – 3.49   3.50 – 3.74   3.75 – 3.99   4.00 – 4.24   4.25 – 5.00

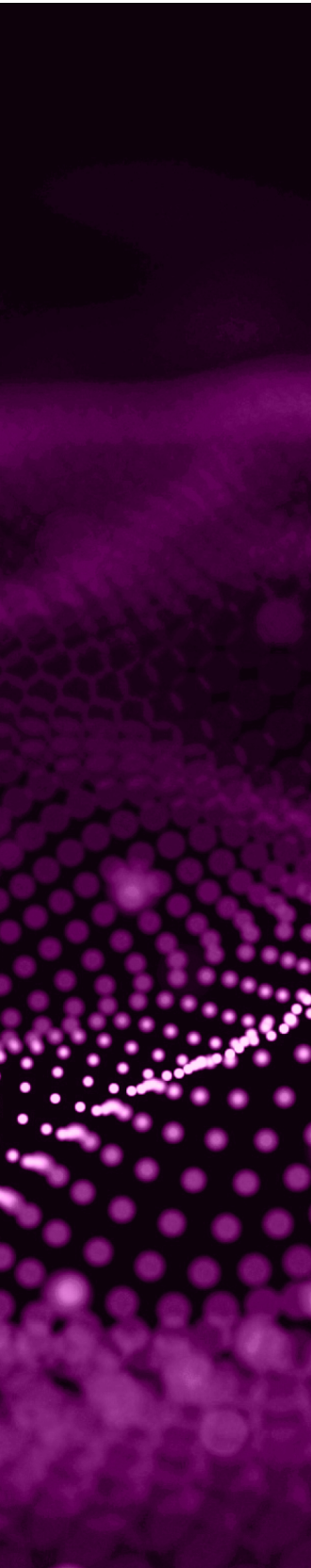
n = 458

Satisfaction rating (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

For Steve Martano, these CISOs can all be enticed with a compelling story and an increase in compensation:

*The notion that two-thirds of CISOs—many of whom say they are satisfied in their current role—are willing to change jobs is staggering. Generally, though,*

*CISOs are not willing to entertain a change in jobs for less than a 15% to 20%-plus increase in total comp.*



## Find More Benchmark Study Insights

This is the fourth publication in a series of four reports that covers CISO compensation, security budgets, CISO job satisfaction and key security staff compensation.

### Methodology

IANS Research and Artico Search fielded its second annual CISO Compensation and Budget survey in March 2021. Between March and August, we received survey responses from 458 CISOs from a diverse set of companies by size, location and industry.

A third of respondents are from companies with revenues less than \$1 billion; a quarter are from firms with revenues between \$1 billion and \$5 billion; and the remaining 31% with revenues of \$5 billion or more, including 14% from companies with more than \$25 billion in annual returns.

The majority of CISOs we surveyed have their primary workplace in the U.S., of which 43% is in the Northeast, 24% is in the Southeast, 21% works in the Central region and 12% in the West. Seven percent of respondents work in Canada. The remaining respondents work outside North America.

Respondents show further diversity by sector. Eight sectors make up 80% of respondents. They are financial services, tech, healthcare, manufacturing, business services, transportation, retail and government. The remaining 20% has a long tail of 20-plus industries.

## About Us

### Contact Details

Thank you for your interest in our annual Benchmark Study.

To request a version of the complete report or to participate in our 2022 CISO Benchmark survey, please contact us at [IANS@iansresearch.com](mailto:IANS@iansresearch.com).

### Artico Search

[articosearch.com](http://articosearch.com)

Founded in 2021, Artico Search's team of executive recruiters focuses on a "grow and protect" model, recruiting senior go-to-market and security executives in growth venture, private equity and public companies. Artico's dedicated security practice delivers CISOs and other senior-level information security professionals for a diverse set of clients.



### IANS Research

[iansresearch.com](http://iansresearch.com)

For the security practitioner caught between rapidly evolving threats and demanding executives, IANS Research is a clear-headed resource for making decisions and articulating risk. We provide experience-based security insights for chief information security officers and their teams. The core of our value comes from the IANS Faculty, a network of seasoned practitioners. We support client decisions and executive communications with Ask-an-Expert inquiries, our peer community, deployment-focused reports, tools and templates, and consulting.

