



Podcast Transcript

Risk Never Sleeps

Episode 43

Trevor Brown

Ed Gaudet: Welcome to the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, in which we learn about the people that are on the front lines, delivering and protecting patient care. I'm Ed Gaudet the host, and today I am pleased to be joined by Trevor Brown, the deputy CISO at Yale. Trevor, welcome.

Trevor Brown: Yeah, nice to be here.

Ed Gaudet: Nice to see you, yeah. So tell us a little bit about your current role in your organization.

Trevor Brown: Yeah. So interesting. So I'm the deputy CISO for Yale New Haven Health, and we are the teaching hospital for Yale University. So just a little bit of separation there.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent, excellent. And, of course, you got great pizza right around the corner there.

Trevor Brown: Yes, Sally's, and the three best in the country, they say.

Ed Gaudet: What do you prefer? Have you been to any of them?

Trevor Brown: So I like Sally's.

Ed Gaudet: Me too.



Trevor Brown: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: It's so good. Yeah, my kids, whenever I'm down there, will you stop and get some pizza? So how did you get into healthcare and IT?

Trevor Brown: Yeah, so it's interesting. I actually started my career in IT audit, and this is back, going back to 2001. And at the time, I didn't know what IT was. When you're young, and you're just starting a career, but I had a technology background from school, so I was fortunate enough to get into that as one of my first jobs, and worked in IT audit, learned a lot of the business areas, mostly in banking, and was also at a manufacturing company. And at the time, security really wasn't, most companies didn't have a security group. It was, if you had IT audit questions around security, you'd find the networking guy that had been there 10, 15 years. He's usually somewhere down where no one went. And yeah, so you find that guy, and he'd tell you about answer some of your questions. And then it was really around maybe mid-2000, 2006, 2007 that it really started to emerge. You saw some of the more prevalent hacks happen, some of the frauds that happened, and security groups started being formed. And I had seen an opportunity at Haven, they were really starting their program, and I joined, and several other people joined at the same time, and we really built out the security function here.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, and there's such a difference between healthcare and other industries. What was the things that were so different when you first joined Yale New Haven that you hadn't seen in your other, your previous roles?

Trevor Brown: Yeah, I think the most impactful thing is that it's a 24/7 operation, it never stops. The other organizations that I've worked for, there was always your business continuity planning, your disaster recovery tasks. It was always after hours or on the weekend. And here, when do you do it? When do you actually want to bring down your critical applications? It's so I think that was the biggest difference is that your applications, your function, it never there's never a downtime.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. And one of the largest user base is the clinicians. Obviously, they don't sit at a desk, right? So they're constantly moving across the.



Trevor Brown: Right, and that's something for if you want to do user training or something. It's sometimes, you have to actually go to their locations, and because they're not sitting at their desk.

Ed Gaudet: That's right. That's right. And I think often I hear too is that shared mission of healthcare. Everyone's a caregiver. Everyone's a patient at some point in their life. What did that mean to you?

Trevor Brown: Yeah, like everybody, we've all been patients at one point. Unless you had superhuman immunity, you're one of those. There's actually, I remember in high school I was graduating, and there was one of my classmates. They gave him an award for perfect attendance, all 12 years. And I was shocked, that someone like that existed. But yeah, we've all been patients, and I think you can really see it from the patient perspective. And when you're designing, laying, security, you want to have something that functions. It works. It's helpful to both the clinicians, the patients, the nurses, and it's secure. And I think the main thing with looking at it from a patient perspective, I think it's very helpful because it's almost, like it takes away that that boundary or that artificial layer in between what you're doing for your job and actually hands-on at the end customer or the end patient.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, it's a great point. It gives you that level of empathy that you might not get.

Trevor Brown: It does. It does. That's yeah. That's actually something that is pushed here. That being empathetic, being having that empathy. Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: What would you look out over the next 12 months or so? What are your top three priorities?

Trevor Brown: So I would say training and awareness is big. A lot of companies talk about it, but we really want to push that hard, especially with all the ransomware coming in, really pushing that out. And one of the things, we just don't have your annual training and quarterly phishing campaigns, but we actually do something called in-service.

Trevor Brown (cont'd): So that's when some of our security teams will actually go to a floor, to a department, to a wing in the hospitals before their shift starts, and then have that security training in person. So it's a really good service that we offer. And I think that's a way to connect. And then we actually get good feedback too, from those things that we never really thought of that were like, oh, that's a great point. And then we incorporate that back into our training. So that would be, I think, number one in the training space. The second would be really making sure that we know what we have. We're a health system that we've acquired hospitals, practices. A lot of things come with that. They're not always listed in the purchase agreement. So you as a security team, you have to really go. We physically go there and inventory, and you have to know what you have. I think that's one of the top, top five. I know what you have. Absolutely, I would say that would be number two. And then the third is really making sure that, from a staffing perspective, that we have the right people in place. And one of the things that we're really good at doing is bringing in people that are a great fit in the team. They might not necessarily have all the perfect background and experience, but if you bring in someone that's really optimistic, a great team player is quick to learn. That's really what we're looking for. So really building out that team and making sure that core team stays in place.

Ed Gaudet: You struggle with filling those positions. I know a lot of CISOs will struggle with getting cybersecurity talent on board.

Trevor Brown: Yeah, so what I've liked to do for the past at least 3 or 4 years is identify good people internally that aren't in the security group. More of those people that you work with them, you see them, and then position comes up. Maybe other directors, managers may not like it as much because they do lose those people, but I never really pushed that. They see that opportunity comes up, and then they're usually coming to me, hey, and I already know that they have a good security sense because I've worked with them, or they've come highly recommended. So really bringing in those people internally, and then they bring all that business and clinical knowledge with them. So that's really what we try to do. And people, great people on the help desk desktop, some of the executive admins, tech supports, some of the other teams we bring in. What we see is like a skill set that's missing. And then there are some positions that are difficult to fill.



Trevor Brown (cont'd): And then, we've posted them externally, and sometimes it is a while to fill that position. It's most of our role now is we're either fully remote or hybrid, which helps, but the problem is with that is that if someone is fully remote, what's to stop them from just taking another job and they're still working from home? So we struggle with that. Everybody else does.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's a great point. And I think what also, what you're doing is you're creating that culture of cybersecurity because you're drawing from the business and from other areas of the organization. And that word gets out there too, so they know.

Trevor Brown: It does, and I would tell any young person there's probably no better career in terms of opportunities than getting into information security. Yeah, and actually my daughter, she's only 13, but she's yeah, I want to do what dad does want to do information security. So she's, what is it that you do though? She just knows I'm always on the, on Zoom meetings. But yeah, she's quite quick and smart. And I do think that there would be a great opportunity for her.

Ed Gaudet: Awesome. That's awesome. Yeah. What keeps you up at night these days?

Trevor Brown: So it's almost like the, because we do have a lot of very valuable data, we are a target. It's just like that constant unknown. And when you have something go wrong in your environment, it could be just a technical problem or a malfunction of some type. But the first thing that comes to mind is that is this the attack, right? Is this the breach? So that we do have really good team in place. We've really done all that we can to prepare ourselves. And I think having that preparation in place, if it does happen, we can respond quickly, and I think that's doing that prep work ahead of time with think we'd be much more comfortable if it did happen. Obviously, it would be not good like any company. But yeah, I think we're well prepared.

Ed Gaudet: I think that's one of the things we learned during the pandemic, is that we're going to get hit eventually, so it's better to be resilient as possible. It is. We're not going to be able to protect against every attack out there.



Trevor Brown: You can, it's just an email click, and credentials are gone. And how can you really prevent that?

Ed Gaudet: You can't. And obviously, the pandemic was hard for a lot of folks. What are you most personally or professionally proud of over the last couple of years?

Trevor Brown: I think keeping that key team in place, and we were very accommodating as a management team for someone needs personal time, if they need to address things outside of work, that's fine because we've hired the right people and we know that don't make that up. And a lot of people go above and beyond, but then, as a management team, you give that back to them as well. And having a lot of flexibility in terms of work locations, geographic, family scenarios, I think really keeping that team in place prior to the pandemic all the way through and then to now, we've had in general, I would say lower turnover than a lot of organizations, and I think it is because of that. Maybe it goes with healthcare too, that a lot of people that work here do want to work here, because they do have that caring and that empathy. So I think that's the type of person that we do attract.

Ed Gaudet: Have you figured out a balance for getting in person, with remote folks?

Trevor Brown: So it's really, most of the technology function is remote and then some are hybrid. I bring the team in occasionally, almost like on a schedule. Right now, it's just once a month, and it's good. I think that's a good balance now, some people, you can come in as you like though, there is space. So I try to come in. I'm coming in three days a week. Some people on the team come in one two days a week, and then other people. It's the once a month. But, and I'm fine with that. I always have the attitude, if you're doing a great job, it's fine if you're. Yeah, anywhere. Yeah, but there is something to be said too, about that in-person interaction. I think that a team that is just completely remote without ever meeting, you do lack that kind of connection. So I absolutely do bring people in.



Ed Gaudet: Yeah. No, that's a great point. You have to get together. And I think once you are together, you spend that time a little more focused on what matters because you're not there together often, so it's much more productive.

Trevor Brown: Yeah, and how many times have you just walked by someone's office and asked them a quick question? But if they're remote, probably not going to reach out to them as frequently.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, no, that's a good point. Yeah. I talked to someone today. They said they, in a remote posture, they're actually spending more time with people than they would have if they were five feet away from them for some reason.

Trevor Brown: Oh, really?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. That was interesting. What, outside of healthcare and IT, what are you most passionate about? What would you be doing if you weren't doing this?

Trevor Brown: So I'd probably be doing gardening, honestly.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, nice.

Trevor Brown: Yeah, it sounds a little different, but yeah, one of my daughters and I, we really like gardening. We'd have, we're not very good. So that's why I'd spend a lot of time doing it. Also hiking, I have done a lot of like Appalachian Trail, hiking with my son, and getting out in nature. I do to be, maybe it's because from where I grew up in the country, surrounded by forests, but I do like to be out in nature and doing those types of activities.

Ed Gaudet: And Connecticut has beautiful places to go hiking.



Trevor Brown: There is. There's actually great hiking. A lot of, I think a lot of people that live in the country don't really know much about Connecticut. They know it's in between Boston and New York, but I like Connecticut more than both those locations. It's a fantastic state to raise your family. A lot of great hiking, great restaurants, and things to do. And it is quieter as at some point in your life you want that.

Ed Gaudet: That's so true. I grew up in Plantsville, Connecticut. Do you know where that is?

Trevor Brown: Oh, okay. Okay, that's upstate a little bit.

Ed Gaudet: Right in between, it's part of Southington.

Trevor Brown: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: By New Britain, Hartford area. Yeah.

Trevor Brown: Oh, okay. Okay.

Ed Gaudet: Very nice. Yeah. So we're we've been referred to as the DMZ between the Red Sox and the Yankees. Yes. Literally right in the middle of. If you could go back in time, what would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Trevor Brown: So I think everybody's thought of that question like they said, oh, I wish I could go. I don't know if I tell myself anything, honestly, because if I did, that would just change your life, and I think I'm at a point now that I've achieved some pretty good things, great family. And if I was to go back, maybe some different things would happen. So if I was to tell myself anything, I would say that most people are thinking about themselves. So don't think too much of what people think of you because they're focused on themselves. And I think whenever you have to do public speaking or some type of presentation or anything, like most people are just focused on themselves and people want you to succeed too, in life. I've found that if you're willing to put work in and really be driven and passionate, people will help you along the way.



Trevor Brown (cont'd): So I would say, just don't worry too much and just enjoy your life because it goes by quick and you probably notice the years are just flying by. It's incredible. And you look back and you're like, wow, it's 2023 already. That was seemed like a distant future at one point.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, I know, especially, you have children. They are the markers of time, aren't they?

Trevor Brown: Yes.

Ed Gaudet: Like that's like how old are you now I know. When did that happen?

Trevor Brown: My son is now, he's 15 but he's my height now. He's about to, he's basically surpassing me.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, Jesus. I have three daughters. I have a daughter that's turning 30, and that's, wait, when did that happen?

Trevor Brown: I know, it's amazing.

Ed Gaudet: What, I have to ask this question. This is the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. What is the riskiest thing you've ever done, Trevor?

Trevor Brown: So probably just moving here when I was out of college looking for a job. And I think when you're that age, you're just you'll take anything. You're just applying like crazy. Hundreds of resumes going out. And this was back in the year 2000. And I had an email response from a recruiter at a company and they said, are you looking? Would you consider Connecticut? And I honestly had to look it up on the map because I knew it was like DC, Washington, East Coast, but I didn't know exactly. And I looked it up and yeah, this was a small consulting company, my first job. And I came down, I interviewed, and they offered me the job on the spot. So my mother actually dropped me off in Bangor, Maine, and I took the bus down and then took the bus back up, grabbed my things, and two weeks later I was down.



Trevor Brown (cont'd): So it was looking back, what do you have to lose when you're that age, really? So at the time, I didn't think it was a big thing. Looking back, it was a huge change in my life.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. No, kids, I don't think kids do that as much as they used to as we used to when we were growing up.

Trevor Brown: As adventurous. Just.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, just, I did the same. I moved out of Connecticut to Massachusetts right out of school and never looked back and stayed in the Boston area. Yeah, yeah. That's great. So as we wrap up, any advice you could give to people that are thinking about getting into healthcare, cybersecurity, or IT in general?

Trevor Brown: So I would say that there's actually, some people think cybersecurity, you're just you're battling like the Russians and the Chinese all day. It's really not like that. It's more, it's a lot of it is risk management. A lot of it is just issues, follow-up, and tracking. I think having a well-rounded knowledge and technology, and what I would highly recommend is that there's a lot of free courses out there. If you like Coursera, for example, you can go and you can take like Intro to Cybersecurity, you can take Networking Security, you can take all of these courses for free or for a very low cost \$30, \$40. And I think if you can combine that with either some formal schooling, that'll really set that foundation for you. And I would also say, use LinkedIn as a resource. If you're a young person reaching out to someone and just saying, hey, I'm my name is John. I'm looking to get into cybersecurity. Would you mind giving me some career advice? 99% of people will be willing to help you, and they could be an executive, a director, a manager, someone that just works in security more than helpful. And you never know, that could result in a job, too, because so many places are hiring entry-level if they see that eagerness and desire, they talk to you, they like you. They're going to say, hey, why don't you put forward me your resume? Yeah, that's what I would highly recommend.



Ed Gaudet: I love that and don't think again. Don't think this generation does much of that. I know we used to do that as much as we could network. And I love going out, and just, if you don't have the background, go out and take a couple of courses, and you may be in a position to get an entry-level job right out of the gate. So love that, great advice. All right. Any last comments before we go?

Trevor Brown: I appreciate you having me on. I think it's a great podcast. It is true, risk never sleeps. It's always there, especially in healthcare, 24/7. But you can only prepare as best you can and just really rely and bring in good people to work with. I think that's critical.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent. Great way to end. Thank you, Trevor, so much for your time.

Trevor Brown: Thank you.

Ed Gaudet: And for the folks that are on the front lines protecting patient safety and care delivery, remember to stay vigilant because risk never sleeps.



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