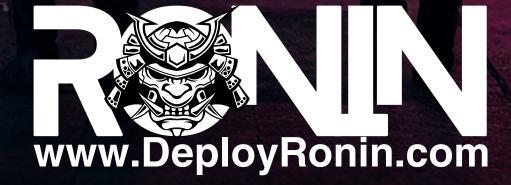# Winning Over Cybersecurity Practitioners:

The Ultimate How-To Guide For Vendors

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Introduction

Cybersecurity is not just a matter of high-level strategy; it's a field where the ground realities matter just as much.

While CISOs are key decision-makers, the day-to-day implementation and effectiveness of cybersecurity tools rest in the hands of practitioners – the IT managers, system administrators, and cybersecurity analysts.

Often, marketing efforts are skewed towards impressing top executives, overlooking these crucial players who interact with the tools on a practical level.

This guide aims to shift the focus, illustrating why and how vendors should target both ends of the spectrum for a truly effective marketing strategy.

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Broadening the Target Beyond CISOs

Understanding the cybersecurity ecosystem is crucial. It's not just CISOs making pivotal decisions; practitioners play a significant role in selecting, implementing, and advocating for cybersecurity tools within their organizations.

The Impact of Neglecting Practitioners

By focusing solely on CISOs, vendors risk creating a disconnect between their product offerings and the actual needs and preferences of end-users, leading to lower adoption and dissatisfaction.

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Why Practitioners Matter

Understanding the Ground Reality

Cybersecurity practitioners, from the IT staff to security analysts, are the ones who interact with cybersecurity products on a daily basis.
They are the first line of defense against threats and are intimately familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the tools they use.

CISOs Rely on Practitioner Feedback

In many organizations, CISOs turn to their teams for input when evaluating potential cybersecurity products. Practitioners' experience makes their feedback invaluable in assessing a product's practicality, effectiveness, and integration capabilities.

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Why Practitioners Matter

Influencing Decision-Making

Practitioners often have a significant influence on the decision-making process. Their recommendations can sway the purchase decisions as they are the end-users who understand the operational nuances and technical requirements.

First-Hand Product Experience

Practitioners provide the most realistic assessment of a product's performance. Their direct interaction with the tools gives them unique insights into how well these solutions work in real-world scenarios.

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Recognizing Practitioners as Unsung Heroes

Practitioners are on the cybersecurity frontlines, constantly adapting and responding to emerging threats. Their insights are invaluable in shaping the effectiveness of cybersecurity solutions.

Empathizing with Their Challenges

Understanding their daily operational challenges offers invaluable insights for product development and marketing. Practitioners often deal with a myriad of security issues that require practical and efficient solutions.

Their endorsement can directly influence B2B purchasing decisions.

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Creating Internal Evangelists

Empowering Practitioners as Advocates

When cybersecurity practitioners find a tool that effectively meets their needs, they can become powerful advocates within their organization. They can champion the tool's adoption and broader implementation, influencing decision-makers.

Fostering Positive Experiences

Vendors should focus on creating positive experiences for practitioners by providing robust, user-friendly, and effective solutions. A good product experience can turn practitioners into evangelists who actively promote the tool to peers and superiors.

Creating Internal Evangelists

Training and Engagement

Providing comprehensive training and ongoing engagement can further empower practitioners. This includes regular updates, advanced training sessions, and responsive customer support.

Recognizing and Valuing Their Input

Practitioners should feel that their feedback and suggestions are valued. Encouraging open dialogue and implementing their input in product updates or strategy adjustments can strengthen their loyalty and advocacy.

Building a Community

Creating a community around the product where practitioners can share insights, best practices, and success stories can amplify their role as evangelists. This could be facilitated through online forums, social media groups, or user conferences.

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Divergent Channels for CISOs and Practitioners

While CISOs might lean towards high-level reports and executive briefs, practitioners are more likely to engage with detailed technical guides, hands-on tutorials, and real-time discussions on platforms like GitHub or Stack Overflow.

Effective Engagement Platforms

Identifying and leveraging these platforms can help in crafting more targeted and relevant marketing strategies that resonate with practitioners.

Reddit, GitHub, Stack Overflow, Discord, Slack

Learn them—Now.

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Embracing Hidden Channels

Engaging in platforms like Discord, Slack, and Reddit, which are frequented by technical users, can provide direct access to a community of practitioners.

AMA sessions, technical discussions, and problem-solving threads can be effective ways to engage and build trust within these communities.

Warning: If you engage, you must respect the community & provide value.

If you don't, you'll still get a response, it just won't be pretty.

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Building Trust with Practitioners

Authentic Communication is Key

Practitioners value content that speaks to their technical nature and everyday challenges. Avoiding marketing fluff and providing real, tangible solutions is crucial.

Feedback as a Tool for Improvement

Encouraging and incorporating feedback from practitioners can lead to better product development and a more effective marketing strategy.

Tying Marketing Spend to Business Outcomes

It's important to remember that while practitioners do write the check, they are crucial in the buying process & should be treated with the same respect.

However, marketing teams often neglect targeting them due to internal misalignment in attribution.

Targeting practitioners can lead to better product usage and satisfaction, which often translates into strong internal advocacy within organizations.

Highlight examples where focused marketing towards practitioners resulted in tangible outcomes like increased adoption rates or enhanced customer loyalty.

Case studies & qualitative research can easily justify the spend.

Ask Ronin how.

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How Ronin Can Help

Ronin is an group of peer-vetted cybersecurity and IT experts, influencers, and GTM specialists — 100% on-demand for vendors that are embracing a new mindset when engaging their audience.

- Bespoke GTM solutions tailored to the unique needs and challenges of each client, whether they are startups, established firms, or government agencies.

- Unparalleled cybersecurity and Go-To-Market (GTM) specialists. Includes strategists, market analysts, marketing experts, CISOs, and more.

- Access to a pool of cybersecurity & IT experts who have a proven track record of success in the cybersecurity industry.

- Vast network of industry contacts, including B2B influencers, to extend the reach and effectiveness of GTM strategies.

- Continuous training programs to keep your team updated with the latest trends and skills in cybersecurity and GTM strategies.

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