

Culture determines whether cyber policies succeed or fail

October 09, 2025

This article is part of BLG's 12-part series: [12 Strategic Priorities for Privacy, Cybersecurity, and AI Risk Management](#). The series offers Canadian boards and leadership teams practical guidance to embed resilience, trust and accountability into their organizations.

No matter how well-crafted your policies are, they will fail without a culture that supports them. Culture influences whether employees follow procedures, speak up about risks, or become the entry point for a breach.

Why it matters

A recent study found that human error remains a top cause of data breaches. Clicked links, ignored protocols, and unauthorized access often come down to lapses in awareness – not technology. Cybersecurity is as much about behaviour as it is about infrastructure.

Culture begins with leadership. Boards and executives set the tone through actions, resource allocation, messaging, and prioritization. A healthy privacy and security culture empowers employees, reduces risks, and boosts compliance with laws such as Law 25 and PIPEDA.

What management and boards must prioritize

1. Ongoing training and awareness

Cybersecurity training must be continuous, role-specific, and reinforced regularly. Annual checkbox training is no longer sufficient in the face of evolving threats.

2. Clear roles and expectations

All employees should know their privacy and security responsibilities. Leadership must clearly communicate what is expected, especially in high-risk departments such as finance, legal, IT, and operations.

3. Measuring and managing culture

Boards should request regular updates on security awareness metrics, phishing simulation results, and cultural assessments. Tracking these indicators helps identify where reinforcement is needed.

Final thoughts

Culture is the invisible infrastructure that supports your privacy and cybersecurity goals. Investing in awareness, leadership modelling, and clear expectations can transform your governance from reactive to resilient.

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