Why critical energy infrastructure needs more cyber skills

As cyber threats become more sophisticated, critical industries like energy, construction, and mining face increasing pressure to strengthen their cyber security capabilities. The risks are frighteningly real. From ransomware targeting mining operations to threats against the grid, teams lacking cyber skills are leaving businesses vulnerable.

But finding talent isn't always easy.

Cyber professionals searching for their next role aren't exactly lining up to work in critical infrastructure – especially with the allure of tech giants and startups in an already competitive market.

Trends reported by the **National University of San Diego** suggest the global cyber workforce gap will exceed 3.5 million unfilled roles by 2025. Which means sourcing talent will be tougher than ever.

The good news? With the right strategies, attracting and retaining top cyber talent is possible. The real challenge is positioning your business as a place where cyber professionals can grow and make an impact.

What cyber talent looks for in a role and how to adapt your strategy

When we asked our jobseekers what's driving their career decisions in 2025, two things stood out: flexibility and wellbeing. According to data from The **Tech Talent Outlook**, remote work and access to meaningful benefits like additional leave and financial subsidies are top priorities for cyber candidates, and it's easy to see why.

With cyber threats becoming more complex and major breaches making headlines, there's more focus on the people who protect businesses from these risks than ever before. As business needs shift, so do the expectations of cyber professionals.

Cyber candidates want to work for companies that prioritise work-life balance, especially in the wake of COVID-19's impact on the workforce. They're seeking out organisations that are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of both their employees and customers.

So, here are four ways you can adapt your hiring strategy to remain competitive in today's market.

1. **Make remote working the norm for everyone**

The demand for remote and hybrid working is consistent across all seniority levels. Flexible working arrangements should be a prominent feature in your attraction strategy, regardless of seniority.

2. **Offer employee perks people *actually care* about**

There's often a big gap between the benefits companies offer and those employees use. Instead of offering a long list of perks that go unnoticed and unused, streamline to focus on the ones employees value – like flexible work, financial subsidies and access to things like mental health days.

3. **Show candidates *how* you're making an impact**

Leaders tend to prioritise environmental responsibility and corporate values more than junior employees. This makes it even more important to include values-based messaging in your recruitment strategy, especially when hiring for leadership roles.

4. **Adapt your message for different information channels**

Talk to candidates where they are. Our data shows that younger candidates rely heavily on online reviews and social media for information about potential employers. Meanwhile, older professionals prefer using their networks and referrals.

Industry and candidate expectations are ever-shifting. Staying on top of what cyber professionals expect from a workplace is one of the simplest ways to attract cyber skills to infrastructure industries.

Building a future-focused cyber hiring plan for energy infrastructure

We need to start thinking differently about how we bring people into cyber roles, especially in male-dominated industries like mining and energy. In Australia, growth in cyber remains slow, with only 17% of roles currently held by women according to a report by **RMIT's Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation**.

We need to take a more inclusive, creative approach to building the next generation of cyber talent in critical energy infrastructure. But what exactly does that look like?

1. **Build a proactive talent pipeline**

If you only hire when a role becomes available, you're already behind. Building a talent pipeline and proactively sourcing candidates is a must for a successful hiring strategy. Consider leveraging internal career pathways or partnering with a talent agency like **Talenza** to access talent pools.

2. **Adopt more inclusive strategies**

Offering more flexible roles (think job-share or part-time roles) and promoting benefits like family leave can attract a more diverse talent pool. Using inclusive language in job ads can also appeal to more candidates.

3. **Align leadership on priorities**

Attracting talent shouldn't fall solely on talent teams. Business and technology leaders need to align on priorities. When everyone is on the same page about why cyber skills matter, building a long-term strategy that drives results and reduces risk becomes easier.

So, is investing in cyber skills essential?

The short answer is yes. Companies can no longer afford to hire someone who "knows security," especially in industries like mining, construction, and energy. Too much is at risk. As digital adoption and automation grow, now is the time for critical energy infrastructure to treat cyber skills as a strategic business priority.

At Talenza, we understand the challenges and the stakes. We can help you create successful hiring strategies, build talent pipelines, and attract candidates who meet your business needs.

Ready to see how your business stacks up?

Use our **Cyber Hiring Scorecard** to learn what your organisation can do to attract more cyber skills. And don't miss our **Cybersecurity in Critical Energy Infrastructure report** for more valuable industry insights.

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