




2024

Leadership and Organization

Benchmark Summary Report



This summary report provides high-level insights from our 2024 CISO Compensation Benchmark Report.

The complete 2024 Leadership and Organization Report is a comprehensive, 47-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 info@iansresearch.com.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4	Methodology	14
Insights into security organization design		Sample breakdown	
Org structure evolves with company size, mirroring increasing complexity			
Org design varies across industry, shaped by cyber maturity and risk tolerance		Appendix B: Industry-Specific Security	
Cyber leader compensation averages \$280K, with top-25% pay starting at \$345K		Leadership Org Charts	16
Published and upcoming reports in the 2024 Compensation and Budget report series		Financial services	
		Tech	
Three Security Org Designs	6	Healthcare	
Comp Differences Across Industries	8	About Us	22
Security Leadership Team Structures At Key Growth Milestones	10	Artico Search	
Other roles CISOs consider adding to their leadership teams		IANS	
Org Design Best Practices	13		
Prioritize the development of security leadership talent			
Continuously assess and optimize organizational design			
Cultivate strong cross-functional relationships			

Executive Summary

CISO are critically responsible for shaping the structure, operations and efficiency of their security organization and ensuring scalability and adaptability as the wider organization evolves. This includes a long list of decisions around hierarchical design, span of control, staff leveling, compensation, functional department creation, leadership appointments, reporting structures, degree of outsourcing and more.

Relevant benchmarking data can help in making such organizational design decisions by providing insights into industry standards and best practices. Benchmarks offer external perspectives to ensure decisions are not made in isolation but grounded in a broader understanding of peer and industry practices.

Insights into security organization design

To create benchmarks for security organizational structures, we analyzed data from the fifth annual CISO Compensation and Budget Research Study conducted jointly by IANS and Artico Search. More than 800 CISOs, among 1090 respondents, participated in this study, providing details about their departments, team sizes, installment of functional leadership positions, organizational level of key roles, compensation metrics and more. Data collection for this survey took place from April through September 2024. Additionally, we used data from the second annual Cybersecurity Staff Compensation and Career Survey by IANS and Artico Search, conducted during the same period.

This report includes blueprints of cybersecurity organizations tailored to various company sizes and scopes, highlighting how security organizational design evolves as companies and their operations scale. It also provides sector-specific leadership org charts for financial services, tech, healthcare and retail firms at a range of successive revenue milestones. Furthermore, the report offers compensation benchmark data for the heads of key infosec departments.

With these benchmarks, the report aims to offer CISOs valuable insights to guide their organizational planning, talent acquisition and compensation strategies.

Org structure evolves with company size, mirroring increasing complexity

Security team size tends to scale in alignment with company size. Firms with revenues exceeding \$6 billion generally have security teams of more than 50 professionals. Companies with revenues between \$400 million and \$6 billion typically have security teams ranging from 10 to 50 members, and most organizations with revenues up to \$400 million employ fewer than 10 security professionals.

In line with this data, we divided our sample into three security organization categories: Fortune-size, large and midsize.

In the Fortune-size group, we find large-scale security teams of 50-plus staff members, spanning four or more layers of leadership, with dedicated teams for core security functions such as security operations (SecOps); governance, risk and compliance (GRC); architecture and engineering (A&E); application security (AppSec) and/or product security, depending on the industry. Forty-four percent of CISOs in this group have appointed a named deputy CISO to serve as their right hand and potential successor.

The large organizations group has security teams ranging from 10 to 50 staff members. Their CISOs balance in-house capability with managed services partnerships and are more likely to utilize MSSPs than Fortune-size firms. In contrast, the midsize companies group tends to operate more agile security teams of three to 15 staff, where members generally wear multiple hats in various areas/pillars of security.

Org design varies across industry, shaped by cyber maturity and risk tolerance

As early adopters of advanced cyber programs, financial services firms tend to have greater cybersecurity maturity due to stringent regulations and a low risk tolerance. As a result, security leadership positions are established at lower revenue levels than in other industries. In comparison, healthcare companies' cybersecurity maturity varies, with larger organizations having more-comprehensive programs, while smaller providers lag due to limited resources. Dedicated security leadership roles are appointed later than in finance and tech.

Cyber leader compensation averages \$280K, with top-25% pay starting at \$345K

The average annual cash compensation for key leadership roles, specifically the heads of SecOps, GRC, A&E, AppSec/product security and deputy CISO, is \$245,000, with total compensation averaging \$280,000. Top-paying sectors include tech, financial services, and consumer goods and services. Among key roles, deputy CISOs and heads of product security earn the most, reflecting the complex skills these positions require.

Organizational size has a significant impact on compensation. A head of SecOps at a company with annual revenues exceeding \$10 billion earns an average total compensation of \$345,000—44% higher than the \$240,000 average total comp for the same role at firms with up to \$400 million in annual revenue. Top-quartile packages for functional security leaders at very large firms, typically including substantial equity, start at \$421,000.

Published and upcoming reports in the 2024 Compensation and Budget report series

- [2024 Security Budget Benchmark Report](#)
- [2024 CISO Compensation Report](#)
- 2024 State of the CISO Report, anticipated release Jan. 7, 2025
- 2024 Security Staff and Career Report, anticipated release Feb. 4, 2025

In addition to these reports, IANS clients also have access to the online CISO Compensation and Budget Visualization Tool, which allows them to conduct customized searches within the survey dataset.

Three Security Org Designs

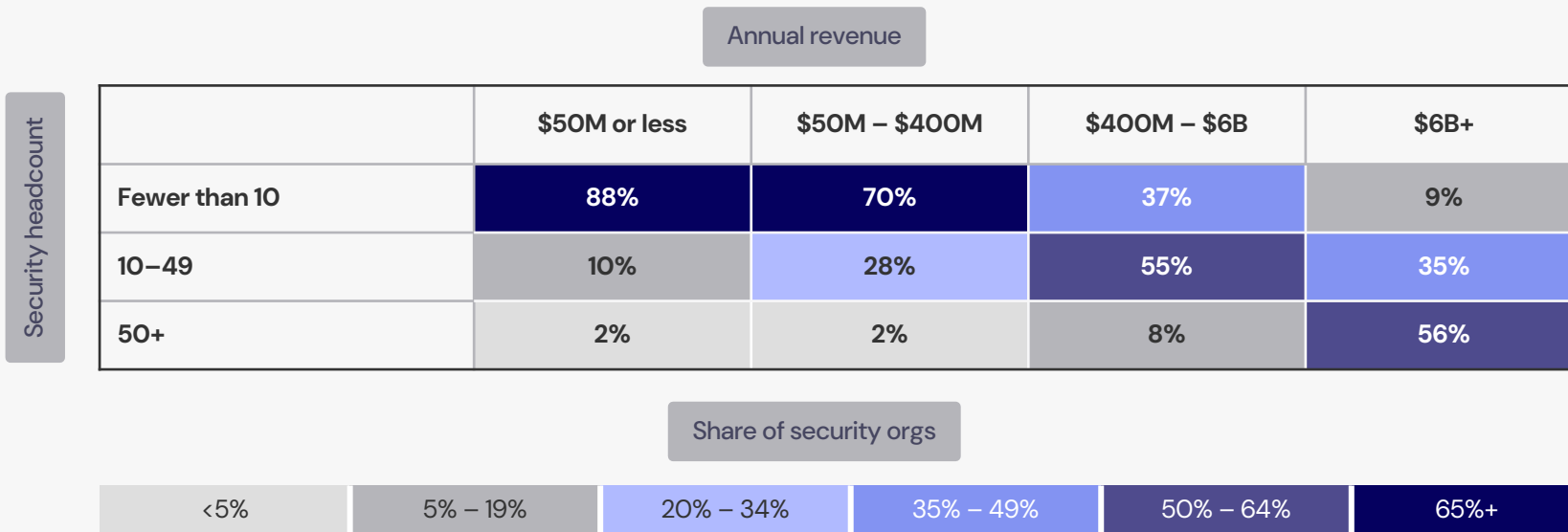
As organizations grow, their operations become more complex and involve a broader range of stakeholders. As a result, cybersecurity organizations must scale to protect against increasing risks and maintain security across the expanding business.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the correlation between the company’s revenue and the number of security staff.

FIGURE 1 Source: IANS & Artico Search

Security Team Size Evolves With the Size of the Wider Organization

Full-time security employee headcount versus the size of the wider organization by annual revenue, in USD



As staff numbers increase, the structure of the security organization also evolves. To illustrate this, we developed three security organizational models, using survey data from CISOs and their teams.

The analysis categorized respondents into three groups: Fortune-size organizations, large enterprises and midsize organizations. Each group includes entities from a wide range of industries and ownership types, including publicly listed companies, privately held businesses, nonprofit organizations and quasi-government institutions.

The table below shows the definitions of each group in terms of their annual revenue, security budget and full-time security employees. We have also included the median values for the respective samples, as the groups are defined by ranges for each criterion.¹

TABLE Source: IANS & Artico Search

Three Types of Security Organizations

The underlying criteria underpinning the three types of security organizations

Type	Security FTE range and median	Security budget range and median	Annual revenue range and sample median	Security characteristics
Fortune-size organizations	Range: 50+ Median: 88	Range: \$10M+ Median: \$40M	Range: \$6B+ Median: \$19B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly complex security initiatives Large, specialized security workforce covering comprehensive security measures Adhering to a complex set of local, national and international laws, regulations and governing bodies
Large organizations	Range: 10–50 Median: 22	Range: \$2.5M – \$10M Median: \$7M	Range: \$400M – \$6B Median: \$2.5B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate to substantial security requirements Dedicated security team responsible for a range of security functions
Midsize organizations	Range: <15 Median: 8	Range: \$1M – \$5M Median: \$1.4M	Range: \$50M – \$400M Median: \$300M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited security requirements Small, focused security team handling essential security measures

¹ In 2024, the minimum total revenue in the Fortune 500 list is \$7.2 billion. Because this figure falls within the \$6 billion to \$8 billion data range we defined in the survey’s answer options, the Fortune-size organization category begins at \$6 billion.

Comp Differences Across Industries

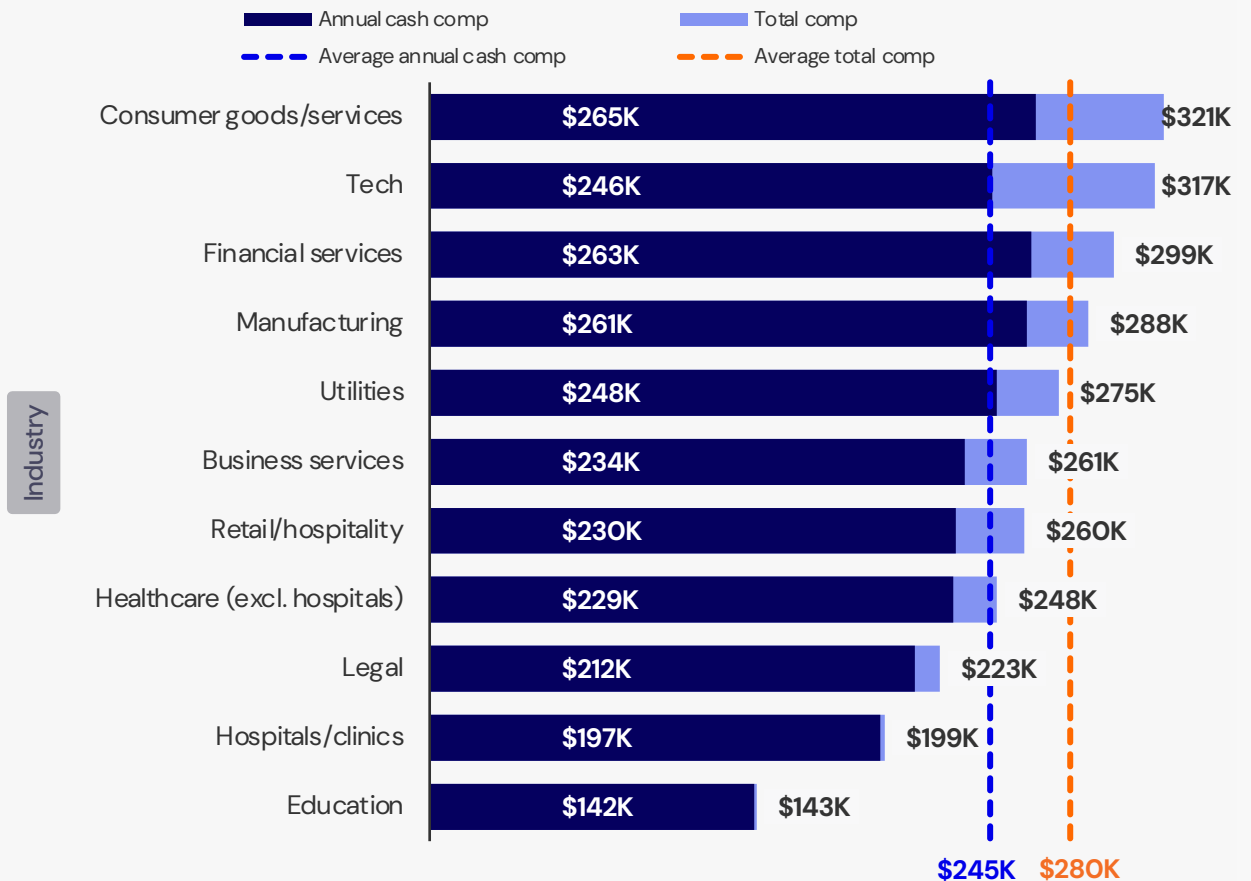
Our CISO compensation research shows that compensation varies significantly across industries. The sectors with the highest average compensation are tech, financial services, and consumer goods and services—a trend that has persisted over the past five years.

For the management layer below the CISO—the security leadership team—the same sectors maintain above-average compensation, along with manufacturing (see FIGURE 11).

FIGURE 11 Source: IANS & Artico Search

Functional Security Leader Compensation by Industry

Calculated annual cash compensation (base salary and target bonus) and annual total compensation (base salary, target bonus and equity), in USD



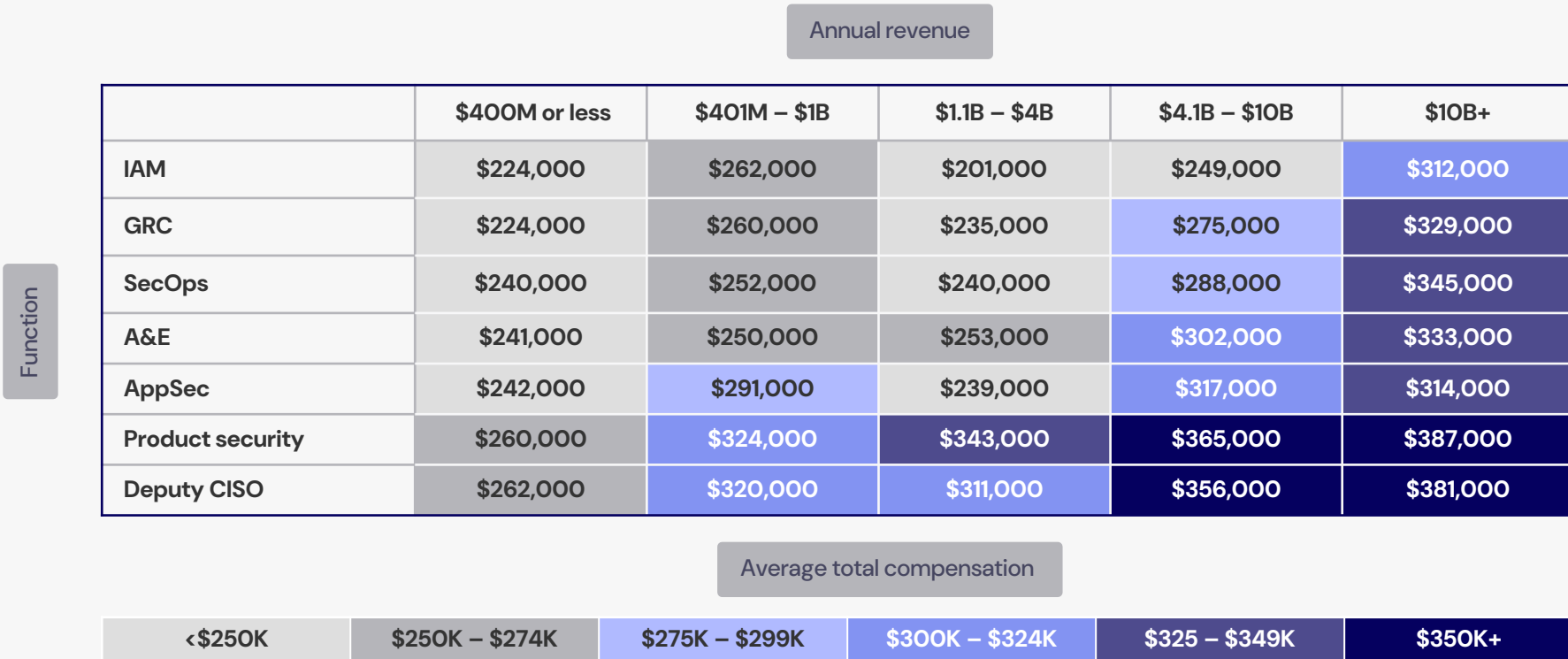
Top-end compensation at billion-dollar firms exceeds \$500K

A similar view by role and company revenue shows that organizations with annual revenues exceeding \$10 billion offer higher compensation packages, on average, than smaller organizations. Additionally, product security leaders and deputy CISOs consistently lead in compensation across all revenue segments (see FIGURE 14).

FIGURE 14 Source: IANS & Artico Search

Heat Map: Functional Security Leader Compensation by Function and Company Revenue

Total annual compensation (base salary, target bonus and equity) for security leaders, in USD



The sample size for all shown combinations is at least 15.

Security Leadership Team Structures At Key Growth Milestones

In this section, we examine how security leadership evolves as companies grow.

For this analysis, we used responses from 800 CISOs regarding the leadership roles in their organizations and whether those positions are filled. Specifically, we asked CISOs if they have dedicated leaders for the functions SecOps, GRC, A&E, AppSec, product security and IAM and whether they have a deputy CISO. If staffed, the CISOs also provided information on the organizational level of the person in the role.

FIGURE 16 on the next page presents a generic security leadership org chart at six different revenue milestones. For each milestone, the chart shows the approximate percentage of CISOs who have expanded their leadership teams to include the seven key cyber leadership roles. Moving from left to right, we see a clear trend of more cyber organizations adding dedicated leaders for these key functions as companies grow.

For key leadership roles with at least 25% staffing, we included an indicator for the most common organizational level of the role—from below director to executive level, based on survey data. For example, at the \$5 billion milestone, most CISOs in the sample are at the VP level, while their deputy CISOs typically hold director-level positions. Functional heads, in turn, are usually directors or lower (such as manager, supervisor or team lead).

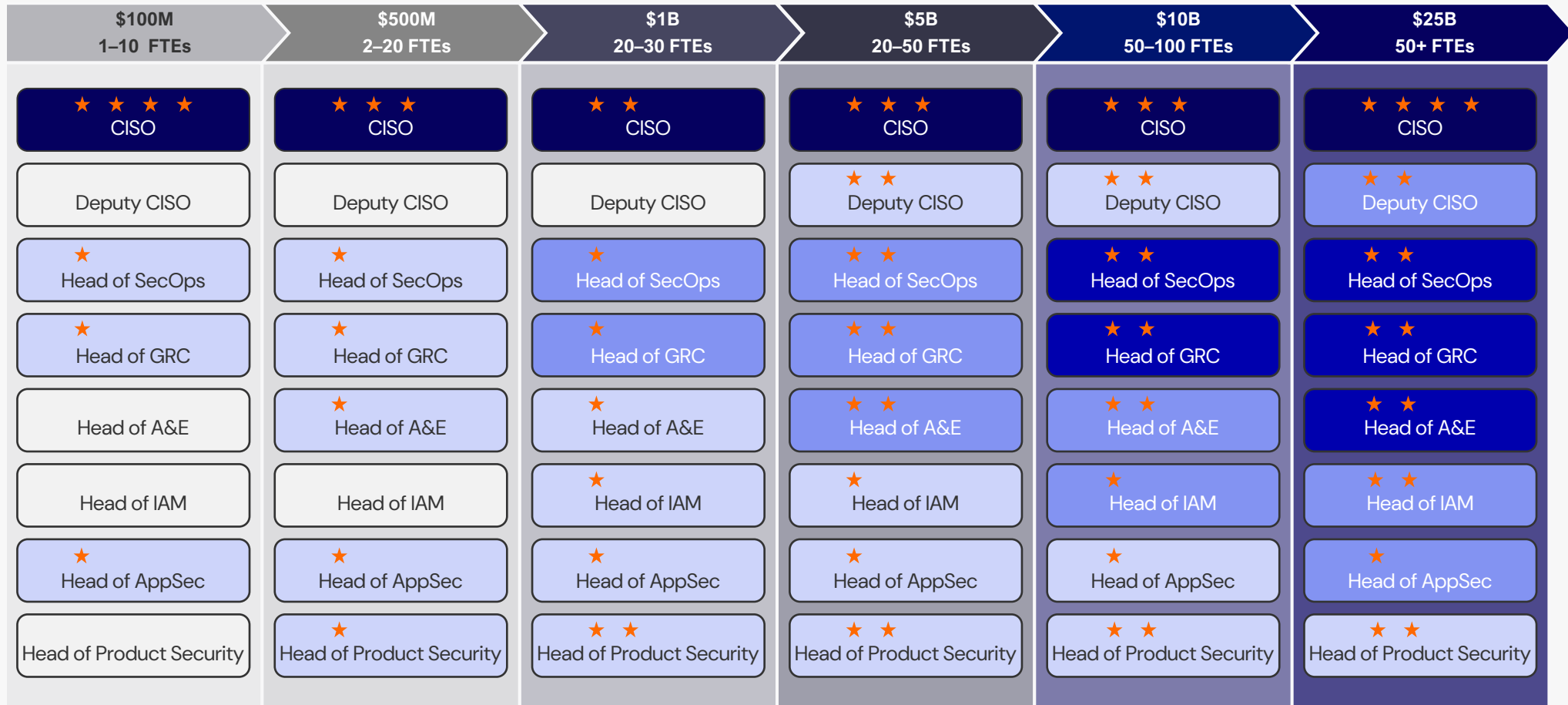
APPENDIX B contains security leadership team structures tailored to the financial services, healthcare, tech and retail sectors.

FIGURE 16 Source: IANS & Artico Search

Security Org Design at Different Revenue Growth Stages: All Industries

Typical security leadership team structure in FTE for various revenue growth stages

Revenue milestone (USD) and average FTE range



- ★★★★ ▶ Majority is executive level (SVP, EVP, C-level)
- ★★★ ★ ▶ Majority is VP level
- ★★ ★ ★ ▶ Majority is director level
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ▶ Majority is below director level

75%+ have this role
50% – 74% have this role
25% – 49% have this role
Fewer than 25% have this role

Other roles CISOs consider adding to their leadership teams

In an open-ended survey question, we asked CISOs which additional leadership roles they are considering adding to their security leadership team, if any. Of the respondents, 120 provided written responses, with 18% mentioning a deputy CISO and 15% mentioning the BISO role, of which several indicated a desire to hire multiple BISOs.



Although CISOs value the BISO role, the general market has not bought in yet, as most companies do not have these positions. Even companies that have a BISO structure rarely have those individuals as part of corporate security succession-planning. Based on what we've seen over the last few years, CISOs who plan to hire BISOs in 2025 may find their requests being deprioritized.

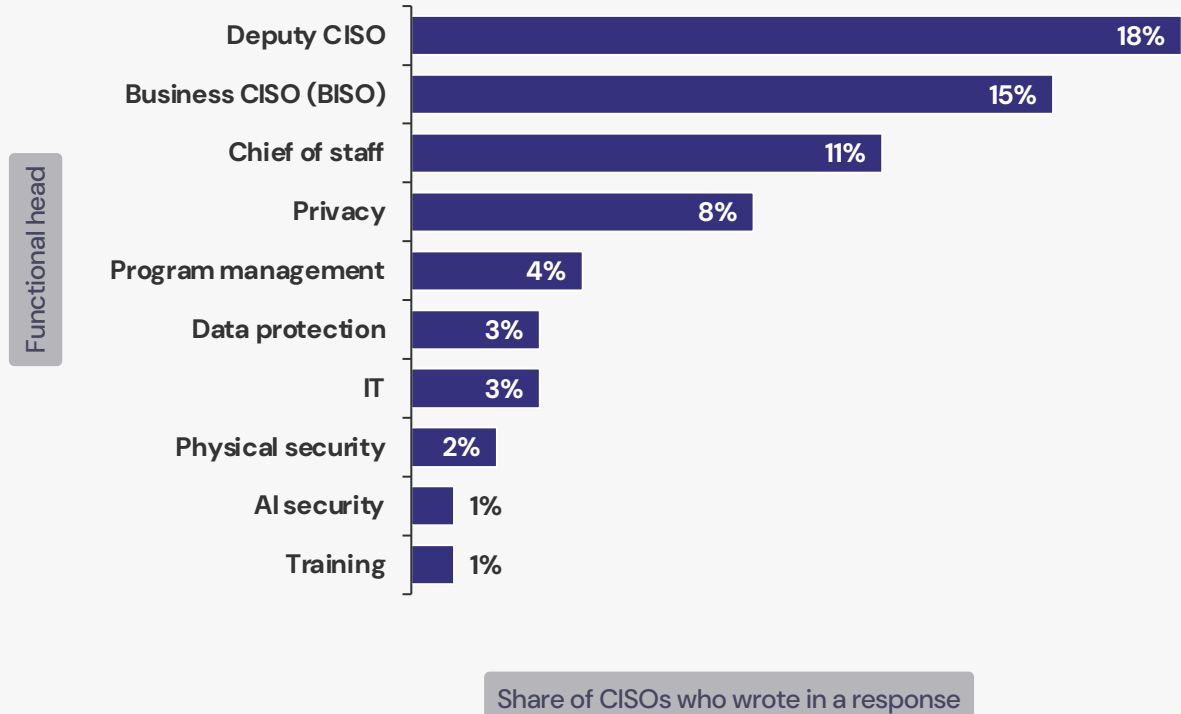
Steve Martano

Other roles with multiple mentions include chief of staff and heads for privacy, program management and data protection (see FIGURE 17).

FIGURE 17 Source: IANS & Artico Search

As CISOs Expand Their Leadership Teams, Deputy CISO, BISO and Chief of Staff Top Their Wish Lists

What other leadership roles are you considering adding to your security management team?
Open-ended question



Org Design Best Practices

This report presented an analysis of cybersecurity organizational structure and leadership compensation trends. The set of security team blueprints offered insights into how CISOs align their security organization's structure with the company's size and complexity.

From these insights, the following best practices emerge:

Prioritize the development of security leadership talent

Building a strong leadership pipeline is essential for long-term security success. This requires investing in professional development, mentorship and competitive compensation packages. Key positions like deputy CISOs and heads of product security command the highest compensation, underscoring the complexity and critical nature of their roles. For CISOs at large and Fortune-size organizations, it is a best practice to benchmark leadership compensation within the top 25% to retain and attract top-tier talent. This ensures the security organization has the leadership strength to manage the demands of large-scale, complex security operations.

Continuously assess and optimize organizational design

The security landscape is evolving rapidly. To stay ahead, CISOs should regularly evaluate and adjust their security organizational structures. This ensures they remain agile, responsive and aligned with the latest threats and business needs. Periodic reviews help identify inefficiencies and position the team to meet emerging challenges.

Cultivate strong cross-functional relationships

As security becomes more integrated with business operations, the relationship between security leaders and business leaders becomes increasingly critical. Rapid digitization is expanding threat landscapes that are more directly tied to revenue. Fostering strong stakeholder relationships and engaging business leaders in impactful risk conversations positions leaders to inform organizational governance without taking direct ownership of risk. In cases where shared risk ownership is needed, these cross-functional relationships also facilitate budget collaboration and resource planning across lines of business.

Methodology

IANS Research and Artico Search fielded their fifth annual CISO Compensation and Budget survey in April 2024. From April until September, we received survey responses from 805 security executives at a diverse set of companies in regard to size, location and industry.

Key steps in the research process are:

Survey design

We improve our surveys on an ongoing basis by incorporating feedback from respondents and adding topics based on client demand.

Respondent recruitment

We recruit from last year's already vetted respondents. We grew the sample by recruiting from diverse CISO audiences. Respondents receive a complimentary copy of the research. There is no monetary compensation attached to taking the survey.

Data hygiene

The survey design and data collection process includes precautions to prevent fake respondents and survey response errors. For example, respondents can skip questions if they don't have access to the requested information.

Analysis

A five-member team runs the analysis, builds the storyline and writes the report. This is a multidisciplinary team with combined expertise in data science, cybersecurity, CISOs' key imperatives, and cyber executive talent and recruitment.

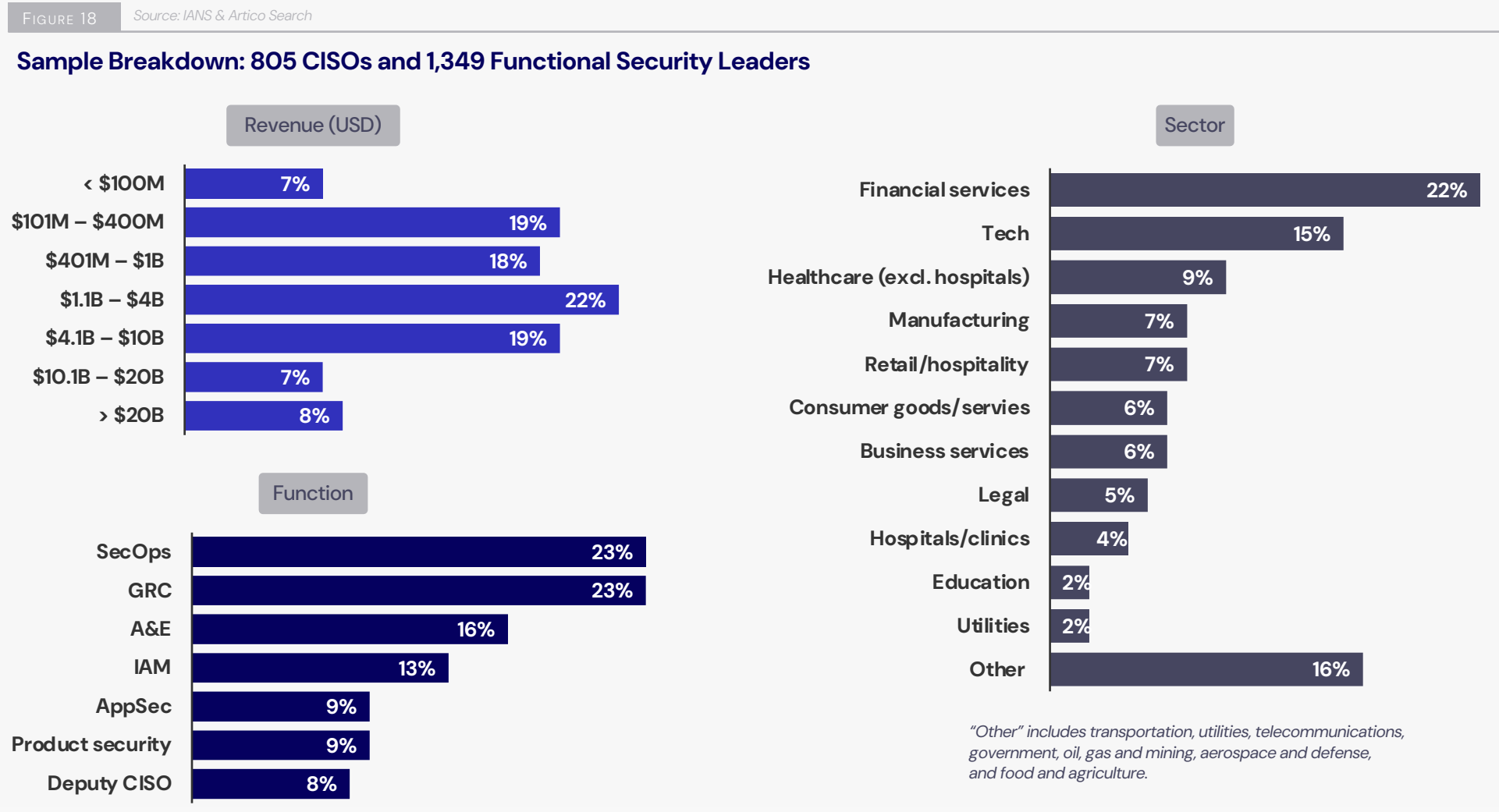
Objectivity

This research is neither influenced by nor paid for by third parties. We report on the data objectively and free from personal bias and opinions. Clarifying insights are drawn from Artico's cyber practice and clearly marked as quotes.

Sample breakdown

Respondents provided a range of security organizational data, including details about the size of their teams. Combined, the respondents provided data about 1,349 security leader positions in their organizations, including compensation metrics, organizational level and years of infosec experience. Using respondents' data, we calculated averages (the statistical mean).

FIGURE 18 provides the breakdown of respondents by company industry, company size in revenue and cyber leader roles.



Appendix B: Industry-Specific Security Leadership Org Charts

Financial services

Financial services is a highly cyber-mature sector, driven by stringent regulations and heavy reliance on sensitive data. With a generally low risk tolerance, the sector places high priority on operational continuity and minimizing the reputational impact of breaches.

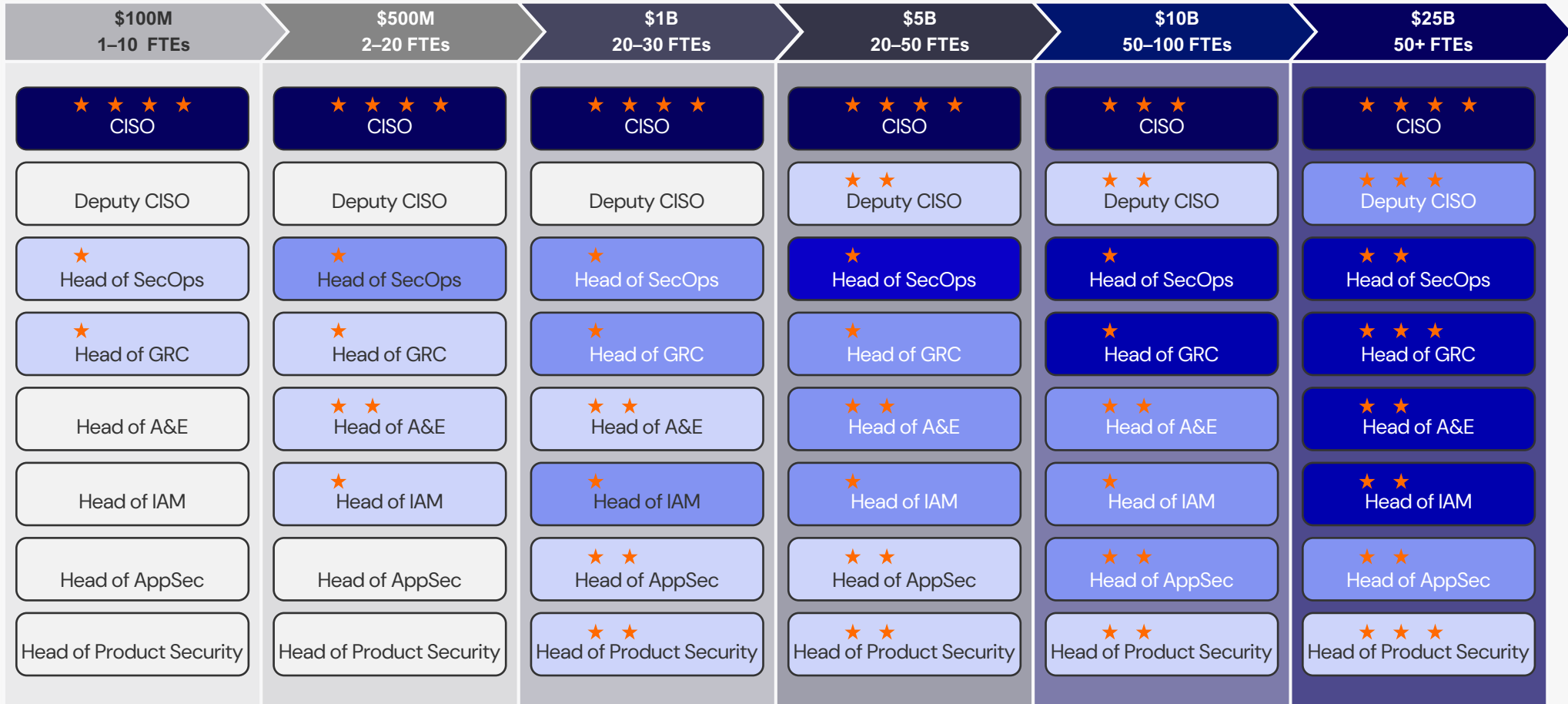
This is reflected in its security leadership structures, where more leader positions are implemented at lower revenue levels compared to other sectors, and most organizations maintain an executive-level CISO, regardless of revenue. In smaller financial services firms, especially fintechs, security leadership roles often begin below the director level but rise in rank as the company grows.



Security Org Design at Different Revenue Growth Stages: Financial services

Typical security leadership team structure in FTE for various revenue growth stages

Revenue milestone (USD) and average FTE range



- ★★★★ ➔ Majority is executive level (SVP, EVP, C-level)
- ★★★ ★ ➔ Majority is VP level
- ★★ ★ ★ ➔ Majority is director level
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ➔ Majority is below director level

75%+ have this role
50% – 74% have this role
25% – 49% have this role
Fewer than 25% have this role

Tech

Cyber maturity in the tech sector varies widely. Software firms, especially those providing cybersecurity or fintech solutions, typically exhibit high maturity, whereas startups or smaller tech firms may prioritize speed over security, resulting in lower overall maturity. The tech sector invests more in security tools and staff as a percentage of IT spend, percentage of revenue and percentage of overall headcount than other industries.

This investment is reflected in the rate at which tech companies build their security leadership teams. Even smaller tech security teams often appoint heads for the SecOps, GRC, AppSec and product security functions. By the \$10 billion revenue milestone, most tech firms have all leadership roles installed, with only the deputy CISO position not universally present.

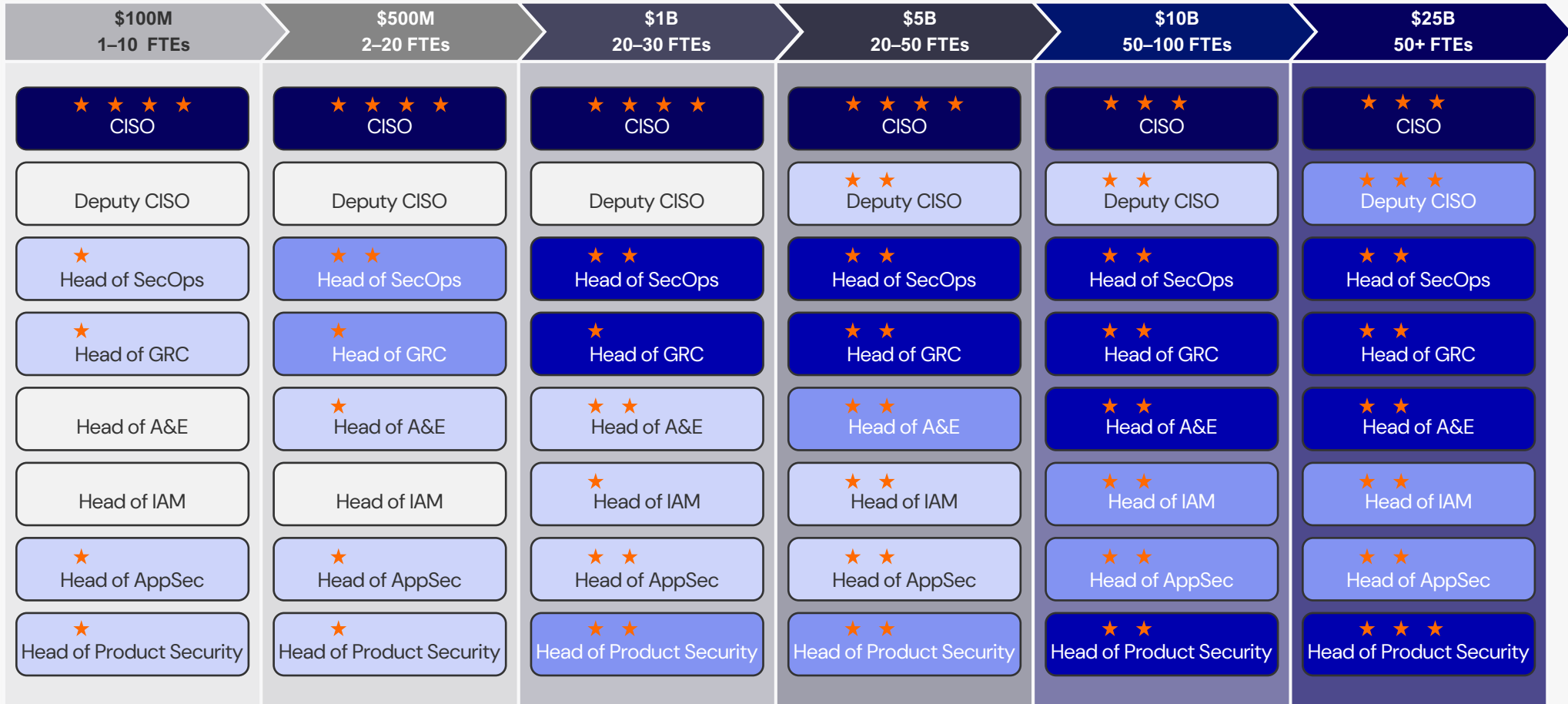
At larger tech firms, the heads of AppSec and product security are frequently VP-ranked positions, a level up from what's typical in other sectors.



Security Org Design at Different Revenue Growth Stages: Tech

Typical security leadership team structure in FTE for various revenue growth stages

Revenue milestone (USD) and average FTE range



- ★★★★ ➔ Majority is executive level (SVP, EVP, C-level)
- ★★★ ★ ➔ Majority is VP level
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75%+ have this role
50% – 74% have this role
25% – 49% have this role
Fewer than 25% have this role

Healthcare

The healthcare firms in the sample are a mix of publicly listed companies, private firms and nonprofit or quasi-government entities. Cyber maturity varies, with larger organizations running extensive security programs, while smaller and nonprofit/quasi-government providers often lag due to limited resources.

In healthcare, dedicated heads of SecOps, GRC and A&E are typically appointed later than in financial services and tech. Furthermore, the need for AppSec and product security leaders remains low across the different revenue milestones.

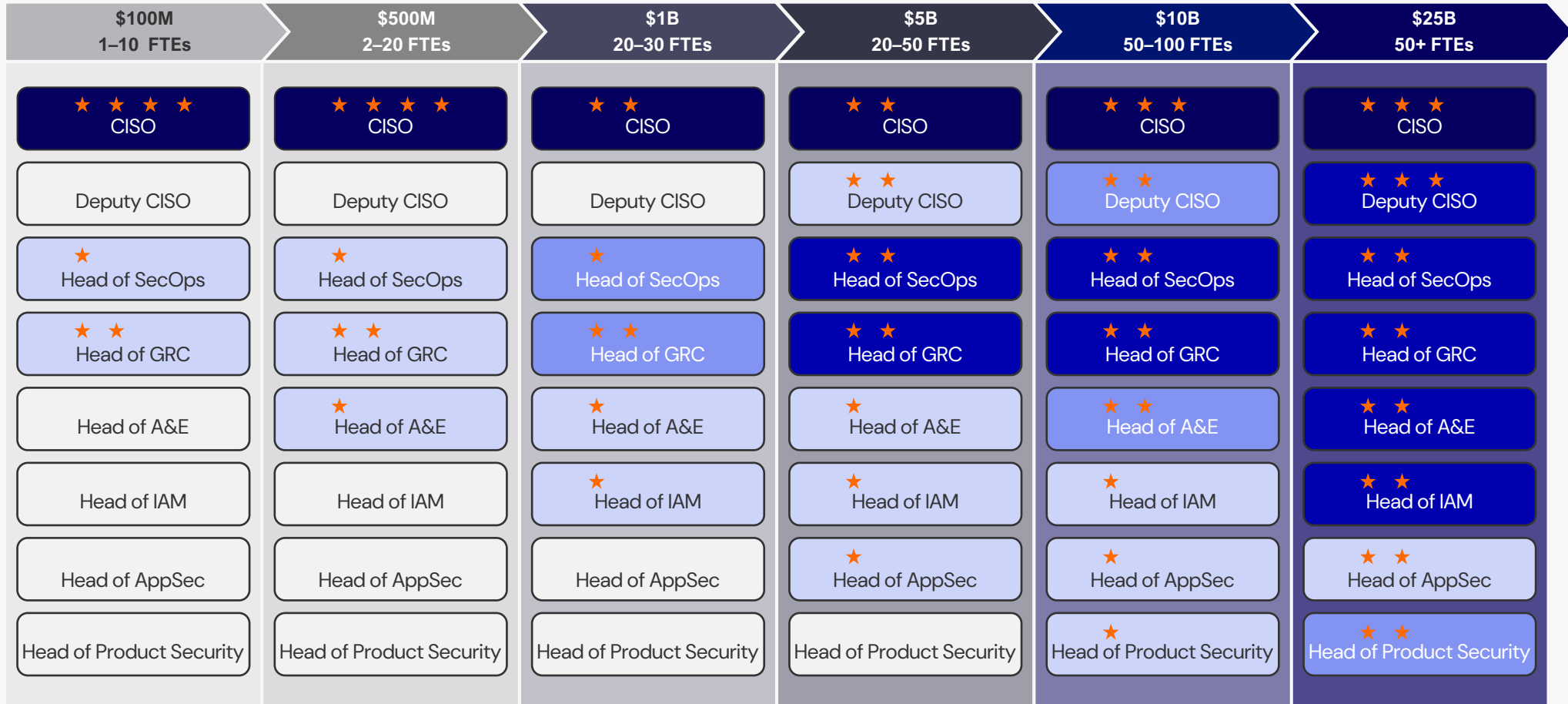
The security leadership team, including the CISO, is often ranked a level below that of other industries.

Security Org Design at Different Revenue Growth Stages: Healthcare



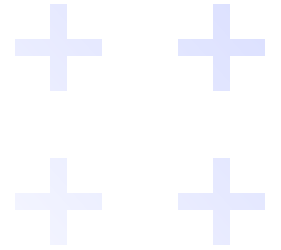
Typical security leadership team structure in FTE for various revenue growth stages

Revenue milestone (USD) and average FTE range



- ★★★★ ➔ Majority is executive level (SVP, EVP, C-level)
- ★★★ ★ ➔ Majority is VP level
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About Us

This publication is created in partnership between IANS and Artico Search.

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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.



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