



SANS 2020 Improving the Bottom Line with Measures, Metrics and KPIs: A SANS Survey

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In the security industry, analytics has become a de facto tool to manage complex multi-stakeholder programs, allowing key internal and external stakeholders to make informed decisions through data analysis, visualization and other technologies such as machine learning. SANS surveys consistently show that organizations are looking to do more than manage risk with these metrics. They're looking for measures, metrics and KPIs that can effectively demonstrate how security operations are performing and how well security automation is helping them to achieve their key business objectives.

This survey, developed by SANS Analyst Program Research Director Barbara Filkins, will explore how cybersecurity metrics can demonstrate business value and reduce risks. The paper will define the terms—measures, metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs)—and reflect on potential or actual barriers and enablers to the successful use of analytics. Then it will provide a framework to operationalize these measures, metrics and KPIs.

The responses and research will lead to recommendations and practical guidance for:

- Determining important metrics and KPIs that apply to readers' organizations
- Developing procedures that support data quality and, more importantly, confidence in the data collected to support measures and metrics
- Defining the supporting measures (given both current and planned data sources) within IT infrastructures
- Using measures and metrics most effectively, accounting for the needs of various stakeholders from the security analyst to the C-suite

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About the Author



Barbara Filkins, SANS Senior Analyst

Barbara Filkins, a senior SANS analyst, holds several SANS certifications, including the GSEC, GCIH, GCPM, GLEG and GICSP, the CISSP, and an MS in information security management from the SANS Technology Institute. She has done extensive work in system procurement, vendor selection and vendor negotiations as a systems engineering and infrastructure design consultant.

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