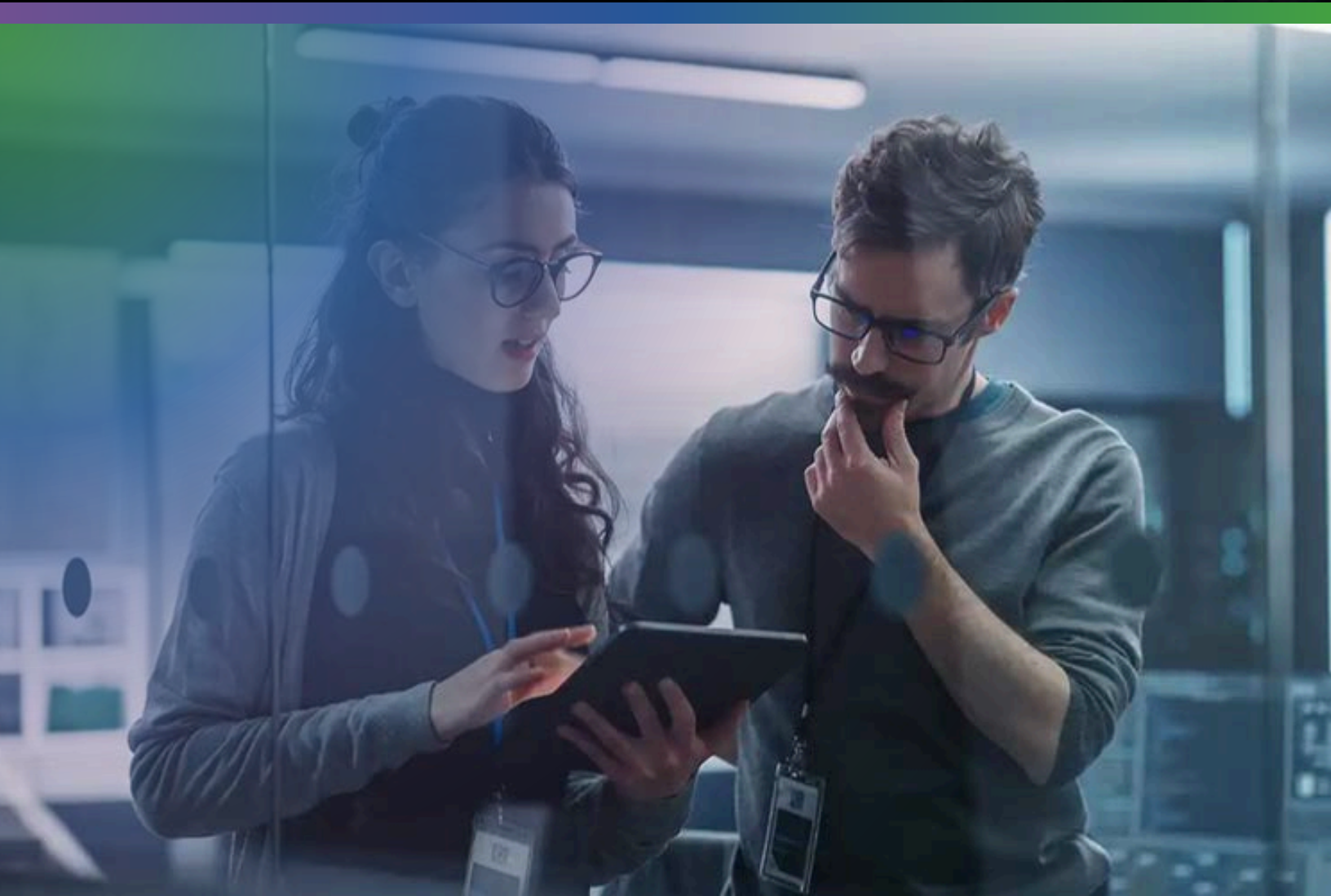


# vCISO Services: Staying Secure for Less



# Who's Protecting Your Data?

## Why a vCISO Might Be the Answer

The average cost of a data breach is \$4.88M, according to IBM. Meanwhile, the cyberthreat landscape continues to evolve at an alarming pace.

It's not enough to implement MFA (multifactor authentication) and hope for the best. Cybersecurity requires expert thought leadership—and that starts in the C-suite.

Yet not every organization can justify hiring a CISO (Chief Information Security Officer). Whether it's finances, organizational structure, or strategic priorities, many companies operate without this C-level guidance in cybersecurity.

The alternative is a vCISO (virtual CISO)—a fractional resource who provides this expertise at a lower cost.

But not all vCISOs are created equal. Here's what you need to know to get the most value out of these services.

### Key points:

- A virtual CISO offers C-level guidance that's far more affordable than hiring an executive.
- As an external resource, a vCISO brings an unbiased perspective on cybersecurity to your organization.
- A vCISO offers flexibility and scalability to meet your changing needs.
- A vCISO can take ownership of regulatory compliance initiatives.



# 1. What is a vCISO?

A vCISO (virtual CISO) is a C-level cybersecurity expert who provides consulting, decision-making, and oversight on a part-time basis. Also known as a fractional CISO, this expert usually offers services as part of an agreement covering managed cybersecurity services and/or cybersecurity consulting.

A client may choose vCISO services alone, or they may bundle them with **virtual CIO services**, **managed cybersecurity services**, and other offerings—as long as their service provider has comprehensive coverage.

## 2. vCISO vs CISO

How does a vCISO compare to a full-time CISO?

It's a great question, particularly if you're able to hire a CISO. Where will you get the most value for your money? What level of service can you expect?

Here's how the two options compare.

### Capabilities

vCISOs and CISOs have comparable capabilities. In both cases, you're working with a C-level executive with deep experience in cybersecurity. Both vCISOs and CISOs can:

- Define and lead the implementation of an organization's cybersecurity strategy.
- Provide ongoing consulting, leadership, and guidance to keep your strategy up to date.
- Advocate within the C-suite for a whole-organization approach to cybersecurity.
- Stay on top of emerging cybersecurity trends and technologies and apply them to your organization's operations.
- Serve as your organization's cybersecurity evangelist and thought leader to employees, customers, partners, and other stakeholders.
- Lead your organization to success in regulatory compliance initiatives and cybersecurity trust initiatives such as AICPA SOC 2.
- Advocate for cybersecurity as the foundation of business transformation initiatives.

This is just a short list. Every organization has unique threats and opportunities in cybersecurity. A good CISO, whether fractional or full-time, will adapt his or her capabilities to the challenges you face.

## Day-to-day working relationship

What's it like to work with a vCISO vs a CISO?

The answer will depend on several factors, such as your organization's needs and the policies of your vCISO services provider.

That said, a good partner should make it easy to work with your vCISO. They should be responsive, ready to jump in on emerging questions and problems, while also working proactively on strategy and future initiatives. The best vCISO will feel like part of your team, maintaining deep knowledge of your organization even as they work with multiple clients.

For more on this, see below—What to Look for in a Virtual CISO.

## Cost

Here's where the vCISO approach really shines.

As a fractional resource, a virtual CISO costs significantly less than a full-time, salaried executive. Yet they provide the same level of expertise, attention, and strategic acumen.

Just how affordable is a vCISO?

The answer depends on your provider's policies and whether you're getting a vCISO as part of a larger service bundle. The best value comes with a comprehensive package, such as Corsica Secure, which covers IT, cybersecurity, vCISO consulting, and much more. Get all the details here: [Corsica Secure Service Package](#).

# 3. Why choose a vCISO?

Whatever the size of your organization, a virtual CISO offers significant benefits. Here are the seven biggest advantages of these services. You get:

## 1. Strategic cybersecurity leadership

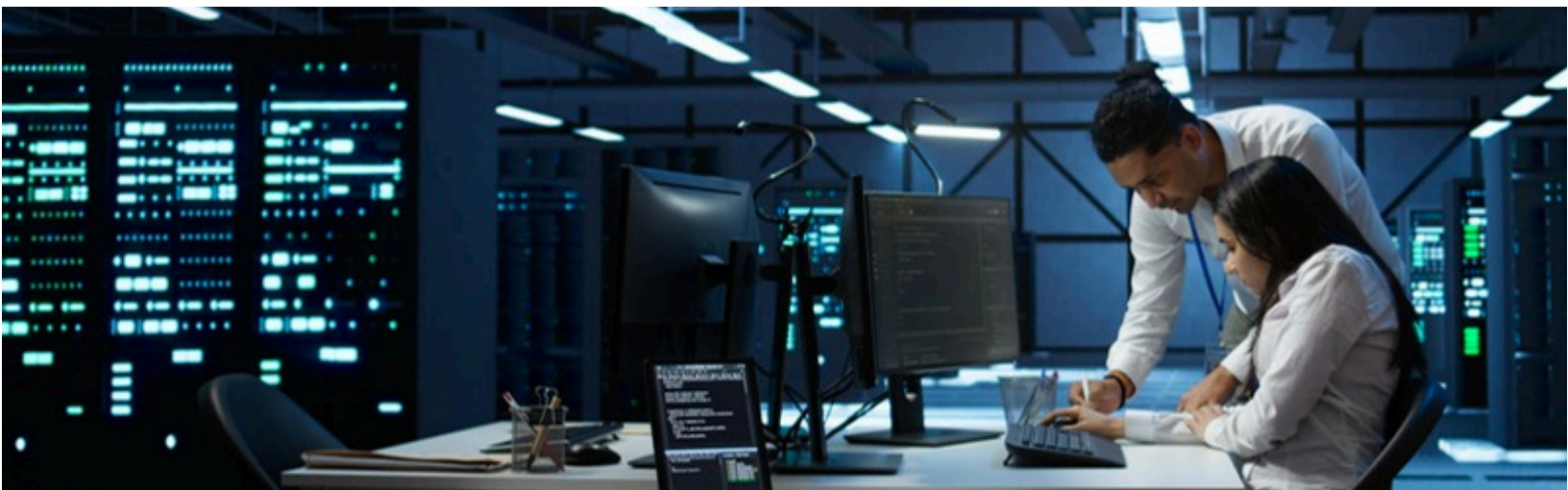
If you don't have a CISO on staff, your cybersecurity strategy may have some holes in it—or you may have no strategy at all. You need that C-level expertise, both in terms of knowing the current threat landscape and knowing what best practices apply to your organization.

A vCISO fills this gap. The best consultants work directly with you, collaborating to develop, implement, and maintain your cybersecurity strategy.

## 2. A cybersecurity change agent

Cybersecurity is a whole-organization issue. From Betty in accounting to the C-suite, you need everyone on board. If your organization has significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities, or if you need to make changes to stay secure, the cultural side of that change can be difficult if you don't approach it with a smart plan.

A vCISO brings soft skills alongside sophisticated cybersecurity expertise. The right consultant can help you implement change in a way that brings everyone into the fold so all concerns are heard.



### **3. Flexible, scalable engagement**

If a full-time CISO is out of the question, a vCISO offers great benefits in comparison. A fractional CISO gives you a flexible, scalable engagement that's ready to adapt with you on your journey. As your operational needs change, your vCISO can change with you, offering more or less service as needed.

### **4. Ownership of regulatory compliance**

Regulatory compliance is a complex challenge for many organizations. You need someone on your side who knows the applicable regulations, knows how to audit your systems for compliance, and knows how to achieve and maintain compliance.

This is one of the strongest arguments for hiring a fractional CISO. Having worked with many clients, a fractional CISO comes with a clear framework for achieving and maintaining compliance. As the "owner" of compliance initiatives, they can also provide the necessary push across the organization to make compliance a reality.

### **5. On-demand access to an expert cybersecurity team**

A decent service provider won't only give you a vCISO.

They'll also provide a team of cybersecurity experts to back up that C-level consultant. After all, a strategy isn't much good if you can't implement and maintain it.

This is a huge benefit to an organization that can't justify hiring a full-time CISO (or a cybersecurity team). You get access to an entire team of experts for roughly the cost of one staff hire. If you need a SOC (Security Operations Center) alongside your C-level expert, you can even get a SOC-as-a-service package that includes vCISO consulting.



## 6. Independent perspective

By definition, a virtual CISO is an outsider.

While they'll learn the ins and outs of your organization over time, ultimately, they'll always maintain that independent perspective. And that's a good thing. You don't want a cybersecurity leader who's going to get tunnel vision or be blinded by your organization's traditional processes or culture. An independent voice can make insightful recommendations to end entrenched practices that are hurting your cybersecurity standing.

## 7. Great financial value

A vCISO is cheaper than a full-time CISO. It's that simple.

How much cheaper?

That will depend on what services you need to support your vCISO. However, most organizations can get a fractional CISO plus an outsourced services team for roughly the cost of one staff hire. It's an incredible value in today's rapidly evolving threat environment.

Learn more here: [Corsica Secure Service Bundle](#).

## 4. What should you look for in a vCISO?

Not all virtual CISO companies are a great fit for every organization. You want to make sure your chosen service provider is qualified and familiar with your industry.

Here's what you should look for.

### **Experience (including knowledge of your industry)**

A seasoned vCISO brings a perspective that you can't get any other way. Look for someone who's been in the cybersecurity space for at least 10 years and has worked with a wide range of clients.

Look for a vCISO (and a vCISO company) with deep experience in your industry. You want an expert who understands the unique challenges and cybersecurity risks faced by companies in your vertical—and you want someone who understands applicable regulation as well.



## Certifications

Cybersecurity is an ever-changing field, and the best professionals keep up by maintaining relevant certifications. There's no governing body that offers an official "vCISO certification," but there are several credentials to look for as you evaluate potential partners.

Here are the general certifications that matter most to our clients:

- CISSP (Certified Information Systems Security Professional)
- CISA (Certified Information Systems Auditor)
- CISM (Certified Information Security Manager)

Some industries come with unique challenges that require specialized knowledge. Here are a few specific credentials that may be helpful in certain industries:

- CHSP (HIPAA Security Professional)
- CPCIP: PCI-DSS Compliance Professional
- Cisco Lifecycle Services Advanced Security

Other certifications may be relevant in your industry. Reach out to us to learn more about industry-specific credentials and the certifications that our vCISOs carry.

## Broad technical capabilities

Due to their unique architecture, mobile applications come with potential vulnerabilities that should be examined through penetration testing. Dependence on third-party APIs creates a unique attack surface, while lackluster encryption can make mobile apps especially easy to hack.

Between these factors and others like weak authentication policies and unpatched vulnerabilities, mobile apps need regular penetration testing to keep them secure.

## Backed by a robust, integrated services team

Of course, a vCISO doesn't have time or energy to implement and manage your cybersecurity solutions 24/7/365. Their consulting and leadership are critical, but you need more.

That's why the best vCISOs are backed by a strong services team.



**“Corsica is a one-stop shop for us. If I have a problem, I can go to my vCIO or a number of people, and you take care of it. That’s an investment in mutual success.”**

Greg Sopcak | Southern Michigan Bank & Trust

But not every team can handle every technology challenge you have. In fact, most providers specialize in IT and cybersecurity. They can't help you with specialized systems like EDI or data integration.

Here at Corsica Technologies, our services team is comprised of experts from every technology discipline. We cover:

- IT, cloud, hardware, and infrastructure
- Cybersecurity
- EDI and data integration
- AI and business transformation
- ERP and CRM
- VoIP telephony

Learn more here: [\*\*Our Services\*\*](#).

# 5. How much do vCISO services cost?

vCISO pricing depends on several factors, such as the complexity of your technology environment, the amount of support you need, and whether you're pursuing a one-time project or an ongoing services partnership.

When it comes to recurring services, not all fractional CISOs come with customer-friendly pricing models. Most service providers will multiply an hourly rate by the number of service hours consumed. This means that your bill can fluctuate with your needs, making it tough to stick to a budget.

Our approach is different.

Our consultants work with you to determine a service package that's right for you, including a monthly price. That price will never fluctuate for the duration of your contract—even as your service consumption goes up or down.

This is a rare pricing model for vCISO services. Most providers won't absorb the cost of customers' fluctuating needs. But here at Corsica, we find that this model serves our customers better. It takes financial stress off their plates while also empowering our team to take full ownership of customer needs. It's a win-win arrangement for us and our clients.

Want to learn more?

Check out our [\*\*FREE vCISO Pricing Calculator\*\*](#).



## 6. How do you hire a virtual CISO?

To make sure you find a good fit, you should use a careful process to uncover your needs and align them with potential vCISOs. Here's the process that we recommend.

- Determine whether you need a vCISO alone or one backed by a services team.
- Evaluate service providers and make sure they can cover IT, cybersecurity, EDI, data integration, AI, and digital transformation, as needed.
- Create a list of top-ranked vCISO service providers who have the expertise to cover every system in your technology stack.
- Interview providers, asking tough questions about your unique needs and the unique cybersecurity challenges of your industry.
- Create a short list of preferred providers.
- Conduct deeper interviews.
- Make a decision.
- Evaluate fit every 1-3 years.



# Ready to take the next step with a virtual CISO?

Contact us today, and let's talk about your cybersecurity challenges and how a vCISO can help.

[Contact Us Now →](#)



**“Picking a partner to assist in building cybersecurity policies and procedures is huge.”**



Jeff Barney | Ecommerce & IT Manager | Scientific Sales



Corsica Technologies is a strategic technology partner specializing in consulting and managed services. With an integrated team of experts in cybersecurity, IT services, AI solutions, digital transformation, EDI, and data integration, Corsica offers comprehensive coverage and unlimited service consumption for one predictable monthly price—whether fully managed or co-managed.

## Ready to learn more about managed technology services?

Schedule a free consultation with our specialists to learn how technology can enable and transform your business.

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