ActualTech
BY FUTURE B2B

2025 MID-YEAR CYBERSECURITY BUYERS UPDATE

New Threats, New Budgets, Same Old Humans

When we first released this guide in December 2024, the world was already sprinting into what we lovingly refer to as "Peak Cybersecurity Paranoia." Six months later? Turns out paranoia pays. We've seen funding flow faster than a zero-day exploit through unpatched firmware—and buyers are still very much in the mood to secure the bag… and the network… and the fridge, apparently.

The original report warned us that 2025 would bring increased attention to cybersecurity—and ***spoiler alert***—it was right. Midway through the year, security is no longer just a line item on the budget; it's *the* line item. Budgets are still growing, but now they're backed by more urgency and shorter buying cycles. Marketers, if you're still waiting for "the right time" to launch that campaign—congratulations, it was four months ago.

WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE DECEMBER?

AI's Hype Curve Has Entered Phase 2: Consequences

While generative AI helped your marketing team scale webinars and crank out content at breakneck speed, CISOs now face an inbox full of AI-generated phishing attempts that read like they were written by Hemingway. The market has matured, and buyers are now demanding AI-driven defenses, not just AI-fueled hype.

The Rise of "Compliance-as-a-Conversion-Tactic"

Marketers, rejoice: The alphabet soup of cybersecurity compliance (NIS2, DORA, CCPA++, etc.) is now your top-of-funnel weapon. Buyers aren't just investigating vendors because of shiny features—they're looking for partners who make the pain of compliance go away faster than their auditors can say "gap assessment."

Webinars Remain Supreme—With an Asterisk

Webinars still beat trade shows and podcasts, but buyer fatigue is real. Those 47-minute product walkthroughs with 39 slides? Yeah, no. The winners now are those offering snackable insights, immediate takeaways, and a live chat box that *isn't* monitored by a bot named Greg.

Self-Service Grows, But So Does Confusion

The report correctly predicted the slow-but-sure shift toward direct-buying preferences. Mid-year? That's holding steady—but here's the twist: More vendors have slapped on a "Start Free Trial" button without adjusting for SMB onboarding complexity. The result? A surge in abandoned trials and follow-up support tickets that would make your customer success team cry.

PoC Anxiety Is Spiking

Buyers now walk into every proof of concept like it's a hostage negotiation. Integration anxiety is real, data privacy scrutiny is up, and everyone's asking the same thing: "Will this thing *actually* work with our mess of a stack… and not get us on the front page of Reddit?" Vendors who lead with clear integration messaging are winning.

The Human Problem Just Got… More Human

We used to say humans were the weakest link. Now, they're also the biggest wildcard. Social engineering has gotten creepier, deepfakes are in play, and your average employee's password is still Spring2025!. Messaging that tackles real-world human behavior—not theoretical security architecture—is what's cutting through.

WHAT TO DO NOW

If you're a security marketer:

- Lead with clarity, not cleverness.
- Build nurturing cadences that align with 3-to-6-month budgeting cycles (we still don't impulse-buy EDR platforms like we do socks).
- Show how your product integrates without requiring a blood pact and three weeks of professional services.
- And for the love of all things SOC 2, stop treating SMBs like enterprise-light. They're different animals—and they know it.

If you're in product or customer success:

- Circle back to your PoC onboarding. Streamline, simplify, secure.
- Get ahead of post-sale deployment delays by aligning expectations up front.
- And seriously, revisit your documentation. Some of it reads like it was written in Klingon.

We'll be back with the full 2026 update soon—but for now, take this data, sharpen your pitch decks, and keep fighting the good (cyber) fight. Just make sure your Zoom background isn't revealing your post-it note of admin passwords.

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