

The Value Of CYBERFORCE: A Partner's Perspective

Can a partner recognition program go beyond expressing appreciation and rewarding performance?

Yes, when it's **CYBERFORCE**. The Palo Alto Networks partner technical recognition program launched in 2017, has powered-up to help customers choose the best solution from the most reliable partner engineers.

"CYBERFORCE has become a valuable program for us," says Peter Black, Practice Director of Security Solutions at World Wide Technology (WWT). A CYBERFORCE Defender when he joined WWT in 2020, Black began growing a security solutions practice and promoted the value of CYBERFORCE to the architects he recruited. Within four months, he had built a six-person team of CYBERFORCE Heroes, including himself, with technical expertise spanning the Palo Alto Networks platform in Strata, Prisma, and Cortex solutions.

CYBERFORCE Expertise Starts With Listening To The Customer

Whether it's a next-generation firewall deployment, or a broader SASE solution, it's not going to be the same for any two customers. CYBERFORCE engineers listen to understand the needs and interdependencies to apply the appropriate solution framework that fits the customer. While our engineers are not sales reps, they have become instrumental to the pre-sales motion, says Black.

"My team is phenomenal," he says. "They dig in and listen through multiple conversations with the customer network, security, and leadership teams to understand what's causing them pain, what they want to accomplish, what they want to avoid, and what success looks like."

By first uncovering those customer problems and success factors, Black's CYBERFORCE team can analyze and recommend the best technology solutions. The team uses Palo Alto Networks sales tools such as Business Practice Assessments (BPAs) and Security Lifecycle Reviews (SLRs) as well as WWT's own **Advanced Technology Center** to demonstrate how and why Palo Alto Networks cybersecurity solutions solve those problems.

CYBERFORCE At-A-Glance

- Recognizes best-of-the-best from Palo Alto Networks partner community, with technical expertise levels including pre-sales Defender, Commander, and Hero, and post-sales Guardian.
- Membership earned by excelling in technical enablement, customer engagements, and closing deals.
- 3000+ members representing nearly 100 countries.
- Closing millions of dollars' worth of deals annually.

"We don't aspire to be average — we want to be among the top 1% of partner engineers in the world. The pursuit of excellence is demonstrated by the CYBERFORCE program. From a customer's point of view, when engaging with a CYBERFORCE Hero or Guardian, they are assured of the highest quality expertise from a technical and consultative standpoint. The program requires a continual refresh of technical knowledge and pre-sales acumen to produce quantifiable results."

Peter Black,
Practice Director of Security
Solutions at WWT

CYBERFORCE Value: A Win-Win for Partners and Customers

CYBERFORCE elevates the member's personal and professional branding, placing them among an elite, proven team of highly trained experts.

The team makes a point to introduce their customers to CYBERFORCE in their pre-sales meetings, as a prelude to presenting their recommended technology solutions. "When customer decision makers hear about CYBERFORCE, they are much more receptive to our recommendations," Black says. "They know we're providing them with the absolute best solution available based on our expertise and experience. That's what we're here for."

Black adds, "When we're establishing relationships with the Palo Alto field sales teams, we get an immediate reaction once we tell them we have five CYBERFORCE Heroes as well as Special Ops recognition. Their ears perk up to know there's that much expertise available to them and their customers."

With his initial team of CYBERFORCE pre-sales engineers in place, Black plans to get additional Heroes on board and help expand CYBERFORCE presence to WWT solution architects and core teams.

"Creating a security center of excellence means you get the best and drive them to be the best in every facet, including CYBERFORCE," says Black.

Why XPs?

CYBERFORCE members earn experience points (XPs) by completing customer engagement activities using Palo Alto Networks sales tools and demonstrating the power of the platform.

"XPs are critical to the customer engagement and represent what an engineer should be doing anyway, like running BPAs and SLRs as part of the pre-sales process," says Black. "Why not put in the effort and get credit for them. When you combine them with taking certification exams and closing deals, you're showing how relevant your technology expertise really is, which underscores the value of CYBERFORCE."



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