



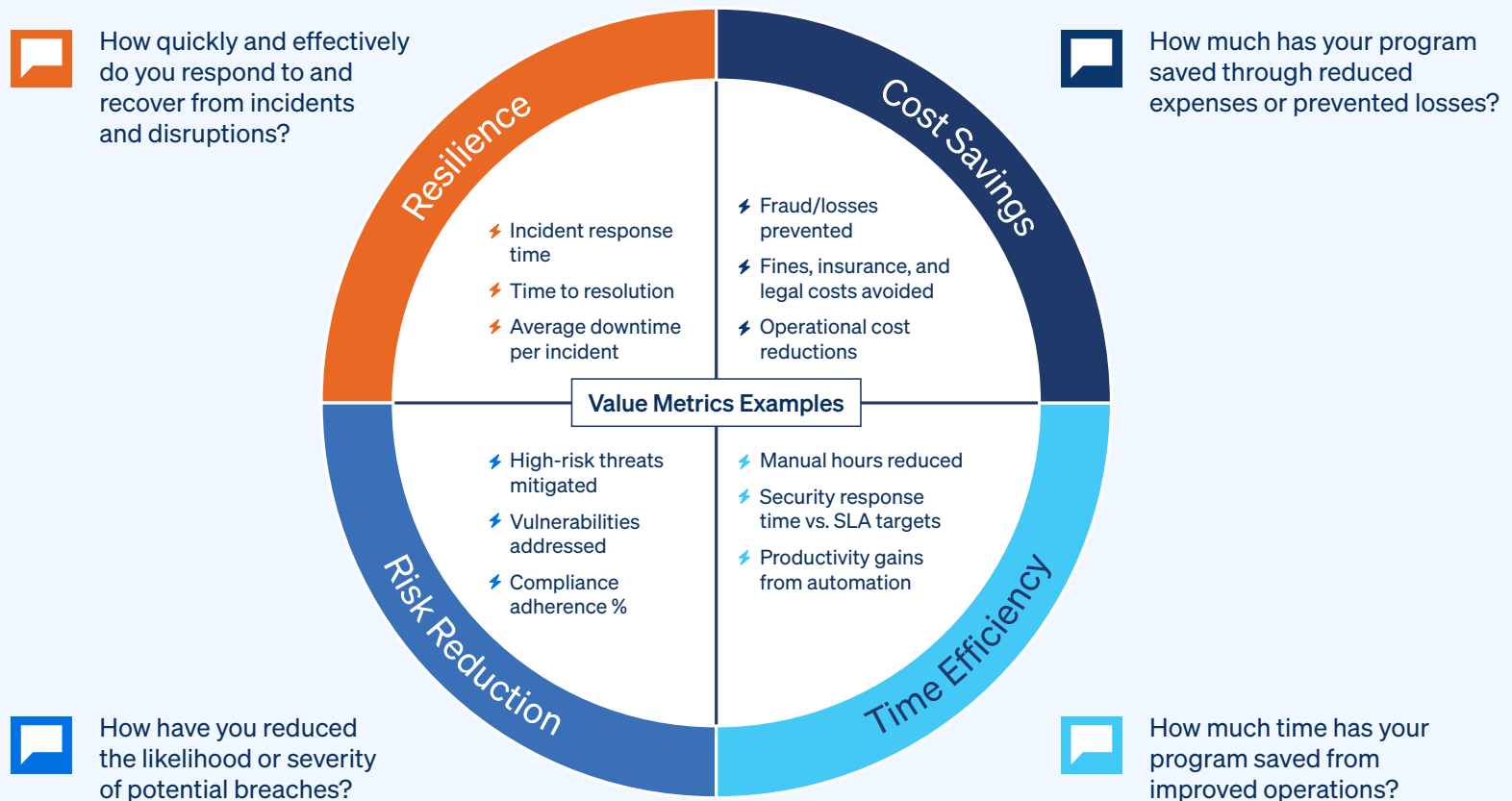
# The Security ROI Cheat Sheet

A guide to speaking the language of business  
and securing your seat at the table.

# The four value metrics categories

Executives care about outcomes. Build your reporting around these four business value drivers.

Like many security leaders, you face evolving threats with limited resources. Your role is critical, yet often undervalued, because the impact isn't always recognized. To gain the executive support you need to drive your program forward, connect your work to business outcomes by translating security metrics into value they understand. Focus your reporting on four key drivers: **resilience**, **risk reduction**, **cost savings**, and **time efficiency**.



# From activity tracking to executive narrative

How to put the four key value metrics into practice:

**The problem:** Many security reports focus on raw numbers showing activity (e.g., “500 incidents”).

**The gap:** Executives care less about activity or actions taken — they care about how it impacts the business.

**The solution:** Shift your reporting from activity tracking to value metrics representing the business outcomes your actions create.

## Converting activity into value-driven narratives:



### Tip: Start with what you have




**Use proxy metrics:** Estimate financial impact if exact cost savings aren't available.

**Look for existing business KPIs** that security contributes to (like employee productivity or compliance metrics).

**Focus on trends over time:** Even without hard dollar values, tracking risk reduction over months/years shows improvement.

# How to apply the framework

See how activity metrics translate into executive-level value.

 <b>STEP 01</b> Activity tracking	<b>Pick one activity that your team tracks</b> <i>Example: 500 incidents recorded last quarter</i>
 <b>STEP 02</b> Value metrics	<b>Identify relevant business outcomes and calculate value</b> <i>Outcome: One of the recorded incidents prevented a gun-related threat at the Tampa retail location</i> <i>Value metric: Potential revenue loss avoided: \$1,500,000</i> <i>Estimated store downtime: 6 hours</i> <i>Store's estimated hourly revenue: \$250,000</i> <i>(6 hours x \$250,000 = \$1,500,000)</i>
 <b>STEP 03</b> Executive narrative	<b>Tell the business impact story by adding context</b> By successfully de-escalating a gun-related threat at our Tampa retail location, our security team prevented an estimated 6-hour store closure, protecting approximately \$1.5M in revenue while ensuring customer and employee safety.

**Here's how to calculate commonly-used value metrics:**

**Incident Avoidance Value** = (average \$ loss per incident type) x (number of incidents prevented)

**Downtime Prevention Value** = (hours of disruption avoided) x (hourly business cost) x (number of occurrences)

**Time Savings Value** = (hours saved per person) x (hourly rate) x (people affected)

**Overall Security ROI** = (total value created) ÷ (security investment) x 100%

# Your step-by-step action plan

Turn security activity into tangible business value.

**Sample 3-month implementation roadmap:**

## Month 1: Build the foundation

- **Select your metrics:** Select 1-2 trackable security activities
- **Calculate value:** Calculate their business value using the value metrics framework
- **Draft your first narrative:** Draft one executive narrative statement
- **Get feedback:** Get feedback from a trusted business stakeholder

## Month 2: Implement

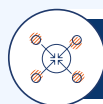
- **Update reporting:** Redesign reports to lead with value metrics
- **Present to leadership:** Present metrics in your next leadership meeting
- **Benchmark performance:** Benchmark against industry standards
- **Document wins:** Document security's business contributions

## Month 3: Scale

- **Standardize reporting:** Establish your quarterly "Security Impact Report" template
- **Educate:** Train your team to communicate business impact
- **Gather executive input:** Get feedback on your reporting
- **Refine and expand:** Add 1-2 new metrics aligned to business goals

# Tips for making your reports stand out

Successfully demonstrating the value of security isn't easy — even with the right metrics. The best practices below can help you do it more effectively.



## 1. Listen closely to how executives describe business priorities

When presenting impact stories, mirror the language of your executives — it shows you're aligned with business priorities and understand what matters to them.



## 2. Report regularly using a consistent format

Provide updates at least quarterly. Use dashboards and reports with resilience, risk reduction, cost savings, and time efficiency metrics with clear executive narratives.



## 3. Be concise and focus on high-level outcomes

Executives don't need to know every operational detail — only how security supports the business goals.



## 4. Use visuals to tell the story

Executives scan reports quickly. Use charts to illustrate meaningful trends and explain what's driving the changes.



## 5. Communicate using a repeatable “executive narrative” format

By [security program action taken], security [specific outcome], creating [\$ value] in [business benefit] while reducing [specific risk].



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