

SUCCESS STORY

Immersive Labs Helps Optiv Analysts Increase Speed, Quality and Accuracy



Background

Optiv is the cyber advisory and solutions leader, delivering strategic and technical expertise to nearly 6,000 companies across every major industry. The company partners with organizations to advise, deploy and operate complete cybersecurity programs from strategy and managed security services to risk, integration and technology solutions.

Challenge

Optiv threat analysts support hundreds of clients through managed services. To maintain and continue to develop analyst skills and knowledge, Optiv sought a consistent and scalable solution capable of accelerating and enhancing team responses to emerging cyber threats. Optiv needed a robust program that could scale across different teams, roles, and experience levels, applicable to associate, core, senior, and principal analysts, as well as threat hunters.

Solution

With the goal of delivering world-class threat analysis to their customers, Optiv prioritized having a tool that covered recent and emerging cyber threats as well as wider coverage across MITRE technique frameworks for staff and applied this expanded knowledge toward the elevation of client-facing analysis.

The Immersive Labs Cyber Workforce Resilience Platform provided a solution designed for consistency and scalability, equipped with hands-on labs that enabled increased speed, quality, and accuracy of response to new threats.



INDUSTRY: CYBER SECURITY
COUNTRY: UNITED STATES

CHALLENGE

- Enabling consistent, scalable security training for different user levels

SOLUTION

- Immersive Labs Cyber Workforce Resilience Platform

RESULTS

- **Averaged 40+ hours** of completed labs per user in the first 9 months
- **92 of 110** of MITRE techniques covered

OUTCOMES

- Helped improve speed, quality, and accuracy of analyst responses to emerging threats
- Positive impact on employee collaboration and development

Hands-On Labs. Immersive Labs provides not only Hands-On Labs based on user roles and levels of experience but it also allows analysts to access a breadth of material that users can self-serve to increase their knowledge in specific areas. For example, although some Optiv analysts are focused on defensive security approaches, nearly a quarter of the labs completed are offensive in nature. “If you know the offense, you can become a better defender,” says Rutherford Rankin, Senior Cybersecurity Education Specialist on Optiv’s Cyber Operations team.

Cyber Threat Intelligence Labs. The cyber threat landscape is constantly evolving – and a new threat variant can cause widespread damage in very little time. As emerging threats appear, new Cyber Threat Intelligence labs are released on the Immersive Labs platform to provide immediate upskilling to counter the latest attacks.

Benefits

Since adopting the Immersive Labs platform, Optiv has observed benefits for their users and overall training program.

Engagement: Gamification of fundamentals training was another highly-engaging aspect of the Immersive Labs platform. The incorporation of benchmarking in labs enabled users to engage in friendly competition: “We had a group of analysts competing against each other, trying to get to the top of the leaderboard. They were growing and having fun at the same time,” says Shogren.

Collaboration: Optiv created an internal community of their Immersive Labs users – and not just in terms of fostering friendly competition. The platform has helped enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange on challenging topics. “They would ask each other, ‘Hey, why did you do that?’ or ‘Can someone show me a way to do this more efficiently?’ It got people talking, and I think that really helps our analysts,” says Rankin.

Flexibility: Since Labs happen in a realistic virtual machine environment, the Immersive Labs platform supports flexible modes of learning. As Rankin explains, “If a user goes in and figures out a different way to work through something, they can still meet the goal of the lab. That’s beneficial because different analysts have their own unique experience, knowledge, and skill sets. Just because they don’t know a specific tool doesn’t mean that they can’t do that kind of analysis.”

Outcomes

For Optiv, the program was a success. Areas of impact range from an increase in MITRE framework coverage, an average of 40 hours of labs completed by analysts and the ability for them to self-serve content, including labs released in response to the most recent cyber attacks. “Immersive Labs releases these labs so quickly that users are able to train on the topics almost in real time,” says Shogren.

“The team at Immersive Labs has shown a great willingness to participate and share lessons to help us design the program. They’ve helped us map to top MITRE tactics and supported the creation of a coach’s playbook session for our Yorker-Blitz Challenge. And it hasn’t ever felt salesy. They’re genuinely invested in the success of their platform,” says Shogren. “Immersive Labs listens to us. They seek out feedback via focus groups and then implement what makes sense.”



Employees want to feel that they are seen, invested in and recognized by an organization. Immersive Labs provides a platform that helps enable organizations to do all three of those things via a scalable, role specific solution.

The number and frequency of labs released to align with new and evolving threats and their risks and impacts is impressive.

Tiffany Shogren
Senior Manager Cyber Operations, Optiv

Immersive Labs is trusted by the world’s largest organizations and governments, including Citi, Pfizer, Humana, HSBC, the UK Ministry of Defence, and the UK National Health Service. We are backed by Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Ten Eleven Ventures, Summit Partners, Insight Partners, Citi Ventures, and Menlo Ventures.

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