Interview with Cybernews: Kieran Fowler

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"I would recommend everyone to move from 'protect only' to 'prepare and protect' mentalities"

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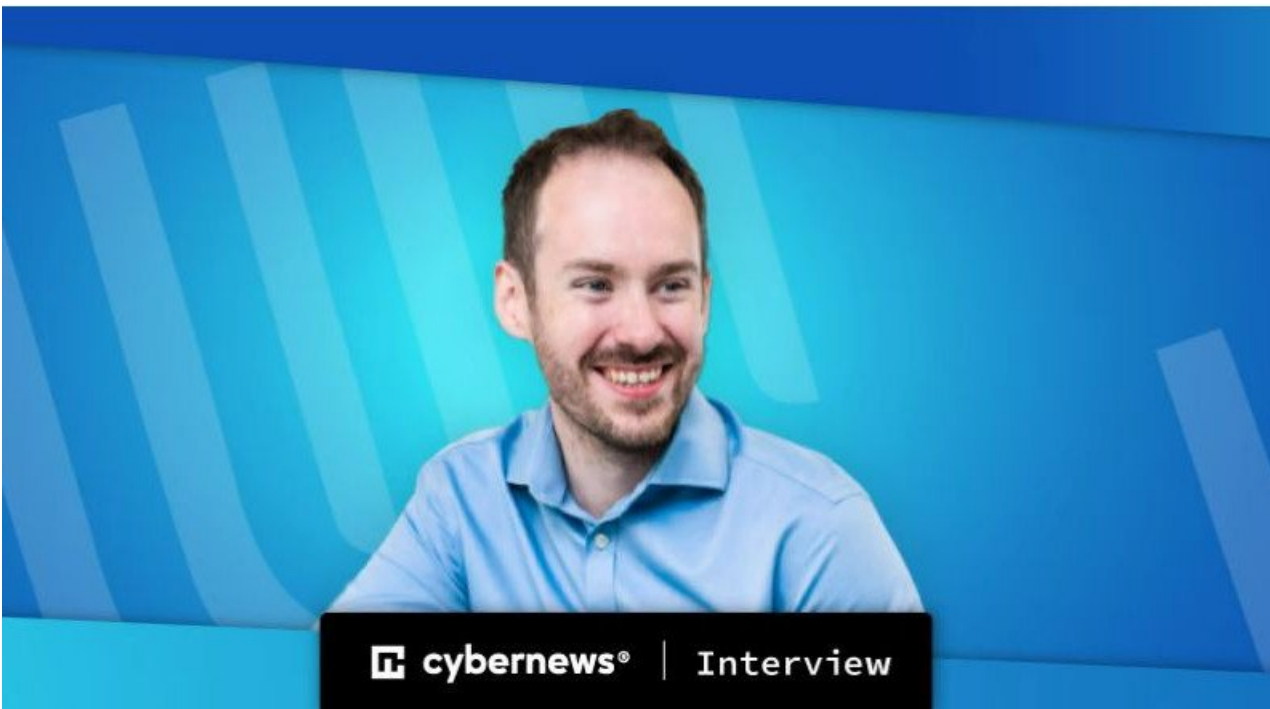## Kieran Fowler

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In a recent interview with Cybernews, Head of Cyber Consulting Kieran Fowler talked about the history and future of Waterstons, as well as the required shift in mentality needed in an ever-changing digital age.

Read a snippet below, or the full interview here.

Digital transformation is taking over the world, with new advanced tech getting released faster than we can keep up. But with great changes come even greater responsibilities, especially when it comes to cybersecurity.

The speed of digitalization brings about exciting opportunities – as well as new attack vectors for cybercriminals.

How did the recent global events affect your field of work?

It depends on which events you mean! During COVID, I was nervous for a few weeks when clients battened down the hatches as we went into the first lockdown. It was understandable that they would cut costs as much as possible with unknown hardships ahead and many businesses focusing on survival. It quickly became apparent, though, that organizations working remotely brought larger attack surfaces and needed more security support not only to survive but even thrive in uncertain times. We helped many clients adapt to new ways of working without compromising and often improving their security.

More recently, events in Ukraine have seen organizations re-evaluating their susceptibility to cyber-attack in line with a worsening threat landscape. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) did a great job highlighting the types of cyber-attacks that we might see and provided timely advice on mitigation. We've seen businesses that were previously struggling to implement critical patches or update unsupported operating systems granted the resource to address their security concerns as a result.

Talking about cybersecurity, what would you consider the key tools every company should implement nowadays?

Ransomware is rife; it has been a pandemic within *the* pandemic. I would recommend everyone to move from 'protect only' to 'prepare and protect' mentalities. It's no longer about thinking it won't happen because you have a tool or control to stop the attack.

It's about knowing how you will respond WHEN it happens. Well-implemented backups that are off the domain (if you are compromised, they are safe) and which can be relied upon to restore from could be the difference between recovering from an event quickly or suffering a catastrophic, business-crippling incident.

What tips would you give to companies looking to create more engaging customer experiences?

Over half of Waterstons' new business comes from word-of-mouth referrals. This is only possible if we deliver great experiences to our customers. Underlining that point; we don't have a Sales Director, but we do have a Client Experience Director. My tip would be to give customer experience the attention and investment it needs to do well in your organization. Consider the entire customer journey, ask for (and deliver) meaningful feedback and learn from your mistakes.

80% of organizations believe they are delivering a "superior experience" to customers (Bain and Company), but customers only agreed with this statement 8% of the time. In many businesses, there is a gulf between how well they think they're doing and how their customers feel. It is critical to recognize and understand those gaps, which only comes from a deep understanding of your customers and addressing their needs with quality interactions.

Read the full interview here.