



Ask the Expert

Justin Rutherford, CTO
at OryxAlign

Justin Rutherford is CTO at OryxAlign, and has been with the business for over 15 years. He has over 20 years of international ICT operational experience in both public and private sectors, acquiring a deep understanding of mission-critical technologies and communication architectures and the optimum service and support structures necessary to protect and sustain these architectures successfully.

We asked OryxAlign's Justin to tell us about his role as CTO...

"I think you would have to say I am pretty dedicated after 15 years. Whilst I've been shamed into making a few cups of tea in that time, my role has largely been managing Information Security across the whole company, both for OryxAlign and our clients.

That's meant bringing new technology into the business to support our own, and our clients' requirements, and ensuring the stability of the business' platforms from which we operate."

I say stability, but at OryxAlign I love the fact that we never sit still, always learning and growing, which is no doubt the same for any ambitious global technology business. I like to think we pass this ability to grow and change on to our customers as well, through our professional and managed services offerings."

15 years in the role is a long time in IT?

"It doesn't feel like that, every day brings a new challenge. And because we're a growing MSP that services clients from SMBs to blue chips, 5 users to FTSE 100, across a wide range of verticals, we never stop learning and building new experience. We're regularly building infrastructures and upskilling new teams, moving clients from on-premises to hybrid and cloud, and helping with almost all aspects of digital transformation."

Your role presumably includes a large element of IT security?

"Yes, and in fact that is the one thing that must be consistent. While threats change by the second, our protection and our threat response must always be faultless. Cyber criminals only have to get lucky once. We've got to get it right every time."

What standards does OryxAlign adopt to help clients mitigate and defend against these risks?

"We are certified against ISO27001, CE+ and work against the NIST Cyber Security Framework. In the case of 27001, we have done so for the last 6 years.

Our dedicated team ensures we adhere, mature, adopt and remain compliant against these frameworks. We engage with experienced, proven strategic partners to give us depth and scale, employing enterprise grade technology right across the IT landscape. We also cover our estate, and that of our clients, with Managed Detection and Response (MDR), and integrate this into our SEIM, providing round the clock 24x7x365 protection."

From a business perspective, a key driver for me is that these standards provide assurance to my board, the business, our clients, and wider market that we take our information security seriously. It demonstrates that the business is contractually compliant and provides a cornerstone to our proposals, helping us to consistently win new business."

And what do you believe are the key elements of a successful security posture, for both you and your clients?

“Three words really - **people, process and technology**. A balance of all three, right across the estate from board to basement. Put simply - ‘What technology does my business need, how will it be used and who are the people, both internal and external, that will be using it?’

It starts with the leadership team working with us to drive a consistent cyber and information security agenda, having defined business risks against the scope of their estate, and continues with the build and maturity of their cyber security programme, keeping their staff on board, aware and trained at all times.”

So, this approach scales quite easily?

“It has to, because of the range of businesses we work with. Our business model and strategic partnerships allow us to offer a range of suitable products and services. As an example, our base endpoint protection, which is a leader in Gartner, set against a vast number of sources which can be plugged into our SEIM monitored by our strategic partner 24x7x365 SOC who provides Managed Detection and Response (MDR) has over 25000 clients, ranging from SMB to Enterprise.

Vulnerability scanning, no matter how big or small the estates is key. It’s the output and visibility from vulnerability scans which highlights weakness allowing them to be closed down. Microsoft has a great security stack, ever growing, which we constantly work hard at maturing at for our benefit and our clients’. Our proven track record of delivering and maintaining large complex IT estates, through partnerships and use of Microsoft Stack, has given us visibility into a myriad of critical infrastructures; OT, IoT, IIoT, BMS, and IT environments.

Against the above and inline with NIST framework this allows us and our clients to identify, protect, detect, respond and recover, to deliver maturing Cyber Security programmes regardless of the scale of the estate.”

Any advice for anyone reading this?

“Other than working with OryxAlign to resolve your IT challenges and security issues, you mean?

You must get the basics right, no matter how mature your Cyber Programme is. Keep your staff cyber aware and test them regularly. It’s not just about employing the right technologies, commensurate with budget and risk appetite. People and process are a must against which OryxAlign and our clients remain continually focused. Remember those three pillars; people, process and technology.

Technology and business requirements never sit still, neither does OryxAlign, it’s what our business and clients expect, and it’s why, after 15 years, I still look forward to a new challenge every day.

Time I put the kettle on.”

If you would like to discuss your Cyber Security posture, or any other aspect of OryxAlign’s Managed Services, please get in touch with our Account Management Team.