

## Contact

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## Top Skills

Presentations

Red Teaming

Computer Forensics

## Languages

English (Native or Bilingual)

Spanish

## Certifications

Certified Scrum Master

Certified Data Privacy Solutions Engineer™ (CDPSE™)

ITIL® Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management

# Charles Valdes

Chief Information Security Officer @ Leon Capital Group | 2026 Dallas ORBIE CISO Finalist | AI-First Security | CISSP, CISM, C|CISO, CDPSE

Prosper, Texas, United States

## Summary

Founding CISO. AI-first builder. 2026 Dallas ORBIE CISO of the Year Finalist. I lead enterprise cybersecurity at Leon Capital Group, where I built the firm's first comprehensive security, data privacy, and AI security program from the ground up — protecting 9,000+ employees and 12M+ customers across financial services, healthcare, and real estate. WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF RIGHT NOW Leading Leon Capital's transformation into an AI-first enterprise. We've deployed both passive generative AI (analyst augmentation, log triage, policy generation) and agentic AI (autonomous threat response, vulnerability remediation, compliance monitoring) across the security stack. This isn't future-state vision — it's a working, measurable program redefining how modern security operates. My cybersecurity, GRC, and data-protection leadership was also instrumental in Leon Capital's successful attainment of its Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) and Broker-Dealer licenses, embedding SEC-, FINRA-, and SOX-aligned controls into the firm's operational architecture. CAREER HIGHLIGHTS (18+ YEARS) Across Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 enterprises — U.S. Bancorp, The DTCC, Trellix, Mitek Systems, Kubota North America, and American Airlines — I've architected and matured global security programs spanning cloud (Azure, AWS, GCP), fintech, banking, critical financial market infrastructure, and global supply chain operations. ▶ #1 BitSight cybersecurity rating among peer banks (U.S. Bancorp) ▶ \$3M+ annual savings via pen testing program redesign (U.S. Bancorp) ▶ 61% engineering labor reduction through proprietary security automation ▶ Founding CISO at multiple organizations — building from zero WHAT I BELIEVE Security must operate as a business enabler, not a brake. The best CISOs translate cyber risk into board-ready capital decisions, build security-first cultures that accelerate the business, and develop the next generation of security leaders behind them. That's the playbook I bring everywhere I go. CREDENTIALS CISSP · CISM · C|CISO ·

CDPSE · ITIL Active member: ISACA, ISC<sup>2</sup>, InfraGard Chapter Chair, OneTrust Privacy Connect LET'S CONNECT Open to advisory roles, board conversations, and engagements with fellow security leaders. Reach me here on LinkedIn or at [charlesavaldes@gmail.com](mailto:charlesavaldes@gmail.com).

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## Experience

### Leon Capital Group

Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

February 2025 - Present (1 year 4 months)

Dallas, Texas, United States

Appointed as the founding CISO to establish and lead Leon Capital Group's first comprehensive global cybersecurity and data privacy program across a diverse portfolio of subsidiaries in financial services, healthcare, and real estate.

Built and formalized the enterprise-wide cybersecurity strategy from the ground up, aligning with NIST, and SEC regulatory standards. Beyond program design and implementation, I established governance structures, risk management protocols, and compliance initiatives that safeguard the enterprise while enabling innovation and operational agility.

Protected operations for 9,000+ employees and 12M+ customers annually, ensuring resilience and trust across all business lines.

Implemented governance, risk, and compliance frameworks, embedding security into executive decision-making and subsidiary operations. Partnering with executive leadership, boards, and subsidiary management teams, I embedded cybersecurity as a business enabler—positioning Leon Capital Group as a trusted steward of information security and data privacy.

Enabled innovation and growth by balancing risk management with business agility—positioning security as a strategic business enabler. I architected and executed a security strategy that aligns with industry leading frameworks and regulatory standards, ensuring the protection of sensitive data, intellectual property, and critical business operations across Leon's diverse portfolio of subsidiaries.

Partnered with boards, executives, and subsidiary leadership to drive data protection, privacy, and cyber resilience as core business priorities.

Leon Capital Group is a multi-industry holding company that conceives, develops, and operates best-in-class businesses worldwide by providing patient capital, deep operational expertise, and strategic incentives, the firm empowers its subsidiaries to thrive—supported by the cybersecurity foundation I was entrusted to design and lead.

## Trellix

Deputy Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

August 2024 - January 2025 (6 months)

Plano, Texas, United States

Deputy CISO and Executive Leader of Global Information Security appointed to lead and strengthen Trellix's security posture for infrastructure landscape and the portfolio of products offered. Collaborate with executive leadership to define and execute the company's long-term security vision. Build a robust security framework that aligns with industry standards such as NIST 800.53 CSF and HITRUST CSF, ensuring Trellix remains at the forefront of cybersecurity innovation.

- Conducted internal assessment of all software development and build environments to identify security gaps in Trellix's software supply chain for software, firmware and hardware.
- Centralized and aligned development and product engineering teams to a unified, secure software development framework to optimize cost initiatives and galvanize software development practices.
- Spearheaded the establishment of Trellix's security vision and execution through roadmaps, aligning it with industry standards and regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance and operational excellence.
- Designed, maintained, and periodically tested a comprehensive incident response plan, enabling rapid containment and mitigation of security threats.
- Developed and executed a rigorous vendor risk assessment process, ensuring external partners adhered to Trellix's security standards and contractual obligations.
- Led security risk evaluations, identifying vulnerabilities and collaborating with the Director of Governance Risk and Compliance (GRC) to craft targeted mitigation strategies.
- Oversaw the performance of the Security Operations Center (SOC), ensuring all SLA requirements were met and efficiently managing potential breaches.

- Directed the implementation and enhancement of security technologies, ensuring they remained current, robust, and capable of countering evolving threat vectors.
- Instituted resource allocation strategies that maximized ROI on security investments and aligned them with business objectives.

## Mitek Systems

Interim Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

January 2024 - August 2024 (8 months)

San Diego, California, United States

Executive Leader of Global Information Security at Mitek, spearheading the development and formalization of an advanced Cyber-Security and Data Privacy program from the ground up for a publicly traded, global tech company. Mitek specializes in AI and Biometrics for fraud prevention and identity validation. Entrusted with the immense responsibility of maturing a nascent security framework into a comprehensive, scalable, and sustainable global security and data protection program.

Recognized as the leader in the Deposit Identity Fintech industry, Mitek's growth strategy, primarily driven by strategic mergers and acquisitions, required a robust security infrastructure to safeguard and propel the business forward. The mandate includes the establishment and centralization of critical security policies, building and leading high-performing teams, and ensuring the company's responsible and secure growth in a highly competitive and regulated market.

By introducing new routines and methodologies to centralize and mature our security practices, this has positioned security as a core component of our value proposition. This shift not only enhanced Mitek's competitive edge but also reinforced the commitment to protect customer data and ensure regulatory compliance.

- Built and matured a security framework that transitioned Mitek from viewing security as an afterthought to leveraging it as a key market differentiator.
- Centralized and formalized critical security policies, ensuring Mitek's growth strategy prioritized security and compliance.
- Positioned security as a core component of Mitek's value proposition, enhancing the company's competitive edge while safeguarding customer data.

## U.S. Bank

Senior Vice President

May 2022 - December 2023 (1 year 8 months)

Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States

Currently, I own the leadership of cybersecurity and compliance architecture development, where I direct proof-of-concept projects, and build technology roadmaps. I align 14 teams in the advancement of vulnerability initiatives across Azure, AWS, GCP, on-premise infrastructure footprints, mobile assets, API security, application development security, penetration testing, enterprise configuration compliance, container security, mobile security, and application threat modeling.

Some key achievements include:

- The total redevelopment of the vulnerability management program, where I shifted the focus from a tactical, reactive capability to a mature, strategic and improved program by integrating robust routines that anticipated challenges, addressing each with technical playbooks across all cybersecurity vectors.
- By recalibrating the security exception process, I was able to align the company's risk appetite to vulnerability SLAs.
- I introduced companywide strategic routines for BitSight cybersecurity ratings, that steered the enterprise in securing the #1 ranking spot for peer banks and companies.
- By integrating a tailored residual risk rating framework for vulnerabilities, we accurately represented risk and impact, thus empowering technology teams to prioritize security to align with BAU.
- I drove the full automation of the total lifecycle of vulnerability management, by leveraging AI and Machine Learning I steered the next generation of vulnerability management and application security.
- I directed a maturity assessment across the enterprise system of record, where I purged 60M+ unnecessary records, consolidated 300+ logic assignment rules, integrated purging and archiving routines and improved the performance of the security enablement system for operators and end users.
- I developed and launched the Product Management Community of Practice (CoP).

The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation (DTCC)

Executive Director of Global Security Engineering and Operations

April 2021 - May 2022 (1 year 2 months)

Coppell, Texas, United States

As a trusted decision maker across multiple channels I was challenged with the development of a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy that aligned with business objectives. By building relationships across the enterprise, I was able

to keep a pulse on feedback from stakeholders allowing me to remove pain points and embed a security-first culture across 12 squads.

Some key achievements include:

- Through the composition of detailed RACI charts I was able to completely realign the security operations teams and improve efficiency.
- I optimized operational security by introducing maturity artifacts and processes including start/stop/continue lists, target state architecture, gap analyses for technologies, skills, and working agreements.
- I drove the migration from traditional AV/Malware solution to CrowdStrike Endpoint Threat Detection and Response (ETDR) by automating the capabilities of endpoint monitoring, data correlation and analysis for immediate threat response.
- By devising best of breed solutions such as Venafi, Hashicorp Vault, and Thales I allowed for the automation in the management of digital certificates, public keys and secrets to then scale trusted business and expand Internet of Things (IoT).
- By capitalizing on my knowledge of Site Reliability Engineering principles I advanced the incorporation of automation of alerts, notifications and self-healing properties into security technology processes, that boosted the resiliency of security constructs.
- I enacted authenticated, automated network scans for vulnerabilities across all environments, advancing the ability to identify, detect and respond to vulnerabilities quickly, securely and in a risk aware manner.
- I established the first unified portal for Security Operations engagements providing a centralized single stop for self- service, requests, reviews and engagements which also captured analytics data for continuous improvement.

## KUBOTA NORTH AMERICA CORPORATION

CISO (Information Security & Privacy)

November 2017 - March 2021 (3 years 5 months)

Grapevine, Texas, United States

As the Chief Security Officer I led the design of global privacy policies and procedures, guiding risk assessments that evaluated potential risks associated with privacy-related policies and practices.

Some key achievements include:

- The development of a Cyber-Security & Data Privacy Program that protected the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of enterprise Information Systems and consumer data.

- I launched centralized governance and security standards for all North America entities that homogenized security technologies; these standards helped cut vendor costs and pricing tiers by optimizing economies of scale.
- I crafted the security requirements for Microsoft Azure and KNA subsidiary subscriptions; I built a spoke and hub model that allowed individual subscriptions to utilize a common set of enterprise services while maintaining segregation.
- By initiating the ForgeRock Digital Identity and Access Management Platform, I centralized authentication, authorization, and access management while providing single sign on (SSO) capabilities for the Enterprise.
- I play an instrumental role in initiating DevSecOps tools for the CI/CD pipeline including Native Architecture, Cloud native tools, container platforms, Rapid-7 RASP for vulnerabilities, If this then that (IFTTT) for event driven automation, Grafana/Kibana for log analytics and queries on elastic search, and WhiteHat for Dynamic Code Analysis.

## OneTrust

OneTrust Privacy Connect Chapter Chair

June 2020 - January 2021 (8 months)

Dallas, Texas, United States

## American Airlines

Senior Security Manager

August 2012 - December 2017 (5 years 5 months)

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

As a senior member of the leadership team, I was trusted with the responsibility of delivering several mission critical security initiatives both planned and unplanned. The success of these efforts bolstered the enterprise infrastructure by implementing enhanced cybersecurity best practices and measures. The result of my contributions helped fortify company vectors against potential threats and ensured the mitigation of unauthorized access, safeguarding sensitive data, and fostering more resilient and secure environments.

Some key achievements include:

- I led project efforts for critical security initiatives for American Airlines, reducing the vulnerability of the Enterprise while hardening the environment.
- I spearheaded the implementation of the Host Based firewall manager: Deep Security Manager (DSM) thus decreasing firewall overhead.

- As a crucial support in the implementation of the Skybox Firewall Management system for layer 3-4 appliances, I drove the creation of a holistic network model, group model, integrating DSM, and decommissioning firewall rules (ACLS) among ancillary features.

### Tabletop Media

Program Manager

2010 - August 2012 (2 years)

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

Directed the adoption of Basecamp Project Management Software, supporting online collaboration between internal resources and clients for the successful management of project efforts; Directed interdepartmental Change Control and Change Advisory Board (CAB) meetings that were key to assessing the impacts of multiple projects and efforts.

### Franeli Group, LLC

Chief Information Security Officer

2006 - 2010 (4 years)

Irving, Texas

Built and deployed enterprise-wide disaster recovery and business continuity plans; Executed all POS Footprint and implementation roll out efforts for Radiant and Papa John's proprietary POS software; Designed and implemented company LAN/WAN infrastructure networks including all aspects of user/domain security through AD and Enterprise systems security via a complex network of Cisco/HP/SONICWALL routers and managed switches; Steered projects from Alpha to Omega as related to PCI standards and compliance both for satellite and corporate systems.

### ACE Cash Express

Security Consultant

2003 - 2006 (3 years)

Irving, Texas

Led and supervised a team of 10 technical PM specialists and 6 Business Analysts tasked with project efforts supporting company security initiatives. Oversaw all aspects of the software development lifecycle, from requirements gathering and architecture review through to design, testing and implementation into the non-production and production environments. Monitored project progress to ensure the on time and within budget delivery of all infrastructure and software security efforts for over 2300 brick and mortar locations.

#### Major Contributions:

- # Helped create and implement security awareness training program for all contractors and FTEs.
- # Coordinated sessions with external auditing teams for PCI related audits and compliance remediation efforts
- # Spear headed effort to document and registered all corporate training material of PMO guides, templates and documents
- # Consulted in development sessions to provide SME feedback for security in design

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## Education

### The University of Texas at Austin

Business Administration and Management, General · (1990 - 1992)

### Collin County Community College

Business Administration and Management, General · (2010 - 2012)

### Brookhaven Community College

Business Administration and Management, General · (1993 - 1994)