### **Data leak worksheet**

**Incident summary:** A sales manager shared access to a folder of internal-only documents with their team during a meeting. The folder contained files associated with a new product that has not been publicly announced. It also included customer analytics and promotional materials. After the meeting, the manager did not revoke access to the internal folder, but warned the team to wait for approval before sharing the promotional materials with others.

During a video call with a business partner, a member of the sales team forgot the warning from their manager. The sales representative intended to share a link to the promotional materials so that the business partner could circulate the materials to their customers. However, the sales representative accidentally shared a link to the internal folder instead. Later, the business partner posted the link on their company's social media page assuming that it was the promotional materials.

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| **Control** | **Least privilege** |
| **Issue(s)** | *What factors contributed to the information leak?*  *The sales manager failed to revoke access after the meeting, allowing ongoing access to sensitive internal documents.*  *The sales team member forgot the manager's warning and was unaware of the sensitive contents in the folder, leading to improper sharing. Access to promotional materials and sensitive internal data was granted simultaneously, increasing the risk of accidental disclosure.* |
| **Review** | *What does NIST SP 800-53: AC-6 address?*  *AC-6 (Least Privilege) emphasizes the principle of granting users the minimum level of access necessary to perform their jobs. This ensures that only authorized personnel can access sensitive information, reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized data exposure.* |
| **Recommendation(s)** | *How might the principle of least privilege be improved at the company?*  *Implement automated revocation of access immediately after meetings or set time-limited access for sensitive files to reduce human error.*  *Create separate folders for promotional materials and sensitive internal documents, ensuring distinct access permissions to prevent accidental exposure.*  *Conduct mandatory security training to improve awareness among employees regarding the importance of following access control procedures and the principle of least privilege.* |
| **Justification** | *How might these improvements address the issues?*  *Automated access control would have prevented ongoing access after the meeting, reducing the chance of accidental sharing.*  *Segregating access would ensure that sensitive data, like customer analytics, is not accessible when sharing promotional materials, reducing confusion for employees.*  *Improved training would reduce instances where employees forget warnings or misuse access, making them more aware of the consequences of improper sharing.* |

### **Security plan snapshot**

The NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) uses a hierarchical, tree-like structure to organize information. From left to right, it describes a broad security function, then becomes more specific as it branches out to a category, subcategory, and individual security controls.

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| **Function** | **Category** | **Subcategory** | **Reference(s)** |
| **Protect** | PR.DS: *Data security* | PR.DS-5: *Protections against data leaks.* | NIST SP 800-53: AC-6 |

In this example, the implemented controls that are used by the manufacturer to protect against data leaks are defined in NIST SP 800-53—a set of guidelines for securing the privacy of information systems.

**Note:** References are commonly hyperlinked to the guidelines or regulations they relate to. This makes it easy to learn more about how a particular control should be implemented. It's common to find multiple links to different sources in the references columns.

### **NIST SP 800-53: AC-6**

NIST developed SP 800-53 to provide businesses with a customizable information privacy plan. It's a comprehensive resource that describes a wide range of control categories. Each control provides a few key pieces of information:

* **Control:** A definition of the security control.
* **Discussion:** A description of how the control should be implemented.
* **Control enhancements:** A list of suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the control.

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| **AC-6** | **Least Privilege** |
| Control:  Only the minimal access and authorization required to complete a task or function should be provided to users. |
| Discussion:  Processes, user accounts, and roles should be enforced as necessary to achieve least privilege. The intention is to prevent a user from operating at privilege levels higher than what is necessary to accomplish business objectives. |
| Control enhancements:   * Restrict access to sensitive resources based on user role. * Automatically revoke access to information after a period of time. * Keep activity logs of provisioned user accounts. * Regularly audit user privileges. |

**Note:** In the category of access controls, SP 800-53 lists least privilege sixth, i.e. AC-6.