**EMCS2420: Management of IT Systems and Cybersecurity Risks**

Post-Work: Reflection

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The IBM Cyberrange made me fall in love with the practice of crisis management. After experiencing the issues in the heat of the moment, I realized how much Iove dealing with high-pressure situations. Discussing issues in class is stimulating, writing about issues can be intriguing, but actually solving problems in the heat of the moment is extremely satisfying. As I watched my classmates it was apparent that even though we had most of the answers “academically”, there was a clear lack of nimbleness and organization. In other words, we had the right answers but didn’t have the capacity to enact them. Therefore my first observation is that **knowing what to do is valuable, but practicing how to respond in priceless.** Having the information serves very little utility without the ability to spontaneously create team roles and hierarchy, tackle several problems in parallel and remain calmly engaged.

My second observation was that **staying curious about the elements of the crisis is a better response than reacting out of fear.** For example, I noticed that when someone in the room answered the phone and reacted with fear, they often hurried the caller off the phone without getting enough information. My strategy when I answered the phone was to keep questioning the caller until they seemed to start repeating themselves. By staying curious and asking questions you naturally don’t “give up” unnecessary information to the caller while retaining the advantage of probing for helpful details.

Finally, as I was walking out of the Cyberrange I shook the hand of the Mr. King and he promptly congratulated me on being the MVP. I followed up with an email to thank him :

*“My name is Brian Davis. I recently attended a Cyber Range Exercise with a group from Brown EMCS. We had to leave in a rush because of the bus schedule, but I wanted to say thank you for such an amazing experience. I absolutely loved everything. It might sound strange but I enjoy situations like the one we were engaged in. I don’t have a security position like many of my colleagues, so I am hoping to find ways to use my cross functional experience to get a “pure” security position. I am in the process of studying for my OSCP but if you have any suggestions beyond that I would love to hear them! Thank you again, the experience was life changing.”*

His response was on point as I would expect:

“*Good to hear from you and it's great that you found inspiration from the event here at the range. It is always a challenge to find the right mix of certs and education to get started in this field, so I can completely sympathize. OSCP is a very hard program so "try harder". Like many, this field pulled up alongside what I was doing for the military and it was a no brainer to change horses and get on board with something that I had always been doing, but not as a principal duty - if that makes any sense.*

*Talk with Jordan and the long and short of it is that there is no menu of certs of skills that get you in. It is a mix of capabilities and experience that opens opportunities, but knowing what YOU want is the most critical piece.*

*The other thing I will say is to swing for the fence at every opportunity. You may be surprised how far you can hit the ball, when you really try.”*

I couldn’t think of any way to get more out of this experience other than doing it again, and again … and again. It was truly the highlight of the EMCS program.