Engaging with your executive sponsor

An executive sponsor makes sure the goals for your Splunk implementation are aligned with overall company strategy. They foster support (and overcomes resistance) from other stakeholders, and provide a backstop for accountability to ensure you have the resources you need for your Splunk implementation to be successful.

Best practices for ensuring effective executive sponsorship

Here are some best practices for ensuring that your Splunk implementation receives the attention it needs from your executive sponsor to be successful.

Identify an executive sponsor who is invested in the value of data

Ideally, your sponsor should be fully invested in the value of machine data and the potential it has to transform your business, such as informing strategic and competitive decisions, optimizing IT infrastructure, and securing your data infrastructure against cyber threats and malware.

Identify a sponsor whose objectives depend on the success of your Splunk implementation

An executive sponsor will be a more effective champion if their own objectives depend on the value Splunk software and solutions provide.

Understand what matters to your executive sponsor and key stakeholders

Research what information your executive sponsor and key stakeholders are likely to be most interested in. This will help the innovators on your Splunk implementation team know how to focus their experiments, measure results, validate the importance of their approach, and iterate as they go. By focusing efforts on what matters to stakeholders, you can clearly demonstrate the importance of your Splunk implementation when it comes time to scale, which validates your executive sponsor and helps garner additional support.

Involve your executive sponsor in Splunk implementation planning

Ensure that the executive sponsor is involved in project planning to set, clarify, and get aligned on objectives and expectations. Clarify the guidance, senior-level support, and resources you will need for a successful Splunk implementation. Ask your executive sponsor to participate in analyzing and sharpening the objectives of your Splunk implementation, establishing key milestones, and setting up a communication schedule.

Set expectations on incremental milestones to show how small wins lead to big ones

A fully optimized, well-tailored Splunk implementation is continually evolving as you perfect what works and iterate on what doesn’t. Make sure that project milestones are focused on realistic, measurable goals that clearly factor into a longer-term overall strategy. Make these milestones visible, and communicate clearly and often when
you achieve them.

Use Splunk dashboards, reports, and data-driven visuals to show visible progress

To help keep your executive sponsor motivated and involved, and to give them visible return on investment to share with other executive stakeholders, use Splunk dashboards and other visuals to demonstrate early wins. Focus on new insights, efficiencies, and progress on stated goals. This helps encourage a strong emotional commitment from your executive sponsor to do what is necessary for your Splunk implementation to succeed.

Establish accountability

The executive sponsor helps establish accountability for completing project milestones. You can also foster accountability from your executive sponsor by setting up regular meetings, reviews, and checkpoints.