Altura Partners

INFOSEC EUROPE 2026 · FIELD REPORT

SIGNAL OVER NOISE

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380 exhibitors. Four members of the Altura team. Three days on the floor at ExCeL London. Here is what the conversations were all about and our insights.

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01 / OVERALL IMPRESSION

More Positive Than The Last Few Years.

Infosec Europe 2026 was notably different from the previous two editions. Companies were growing, hiring, and investing in marketing and channel relationships again. It was the first year the event charged for attendance: a signal, in itself, of where confidence has moved.

380+	**$14B**	**55%**	**63%**
Exhibitors at ExCeL London across three days	Cyber startup funding raised in 2025 — strongest year since 2021	Of orgs that cut security headcount for AI automation reported a negative outcome	Of 2025 funding rounds were early-stage: seed and Series A

SENIOR LEADERS ON THE GROUND

More senior people on the floor than at previous editions — VPs of Sales, VPs of Marketing, and founders. Visible, approachable, and willing to have real conversations. The posture has changed.

EUROPE IS BACK ON THE AGENDA

UK, France, and Germany are genuinely being invested in again. GTM roles that were silent for two years are now being recruited. H2 headcount pressure is building across sales, marketing, and channel functions.

FROM THE FLOOR · EXCEL LONDON

02 / KEY INSIGHT

"AI-Powered" Is No Longer A Differentiator

Every booth, every pitch, every agenda slot led back to AI. But something has shifted. When every vendor claims it, the claim stops working. The frontier has moved, and vendors who have not moved with it are already behind.

SHADOW RISK

The Threat You Cannot See

Employees using AI tools in their day-to-day work can inadvertently expose confidential data. Non-malicious, invisible, and hard to govern. CISOs called it one of their most urgent concerns: a 10,000-person network where each person has an AI tool built into their device.

AGENTIC AI

The New Frontier

Autonomous systems that investigate alerts, prioritise vulnerabilities, and operate with minimal human supervision. The conversation has moved from "could AI help?" to "how do we govern what it is already doing?"

GOVERNANCE GAP

Safeguards Are Not Keeping Up

The pace of AI adoption in security is outrunning the guardrails. Most organisations do not yet have formal AI governance policies. Most CISOs know it. Boards want risk reduction and business enablement, not technical specification reviews.

> "Very few organisations were talking about the risks associated with AI. Most were focused on how AI is solving problems. The technology is moving way too quickly for the safeguards and guardrails to catch up.

ONE STAND THAT CUT THROUGH THE NOISE

Filigran, backed by Accel, showed up without the AI headline. Their OpenCTI threat intelligence platform is open-source and community-built. No assumed familiarity, no vendor theatre. "Open, human, and not scary" is becoming a credible counter-position to AI maximalism.

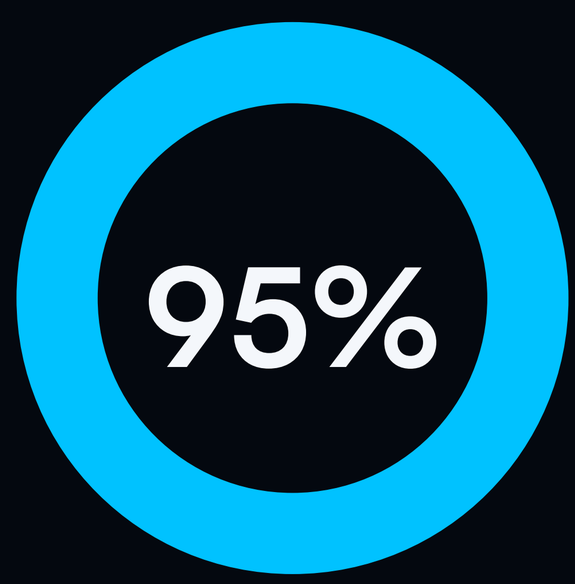
03 / MARKET SIGNALS

Capital Is Back. Talent Is Not Enough.

Cyber startup investment hit $14 billion in 2025, the strongest year since the 2021 peak. Early-stage rounds accounted for 63% of deals. Capital is moving again. But the conversations on the floor made clear that money alone does not close the capability gap: the skills shortage has grown alongside the investment.

The Skills Gap Is Now a Skills Mismatch

- Almost nine in ten security professionals said their organisation suffered a significant cybersecurity incident due to a skills gap in the past year (ISC2 2025 Workforce Study).
- Budget is now the top constraint: 33% cite it as the primary barrier to talent, 39% as the main driver of widening skills gaps.
- The problem has shifted from headcount to capability: it is no longer about bodies, it is about the right skills in the right roles.
- Many CISOs are turning to AI automation not by preference, but because they cannot hire the practitioners they need at the pace the threat landscape demands.



Of cybersecurity roles now require cloud security skills, yet fewer than half of practitioners hold relevant cloud certifications.

33%
Cite budget as the primary barrier to building their security team

9 in 10
Suffered an incident tied to a critical skills shortage in the past year

04 / TALENT INTELLIGENCE

What Everyone Is Actually Hiring For

The order of demand on the floor was consistent across every conversation. Five role types kept surfacing. The hardest to fill was not the most senior.

01

SDRs

The single most-searched role across the floor. Pipeline generation is the immediate priority for growth-stage vendors investing in European market entry.

HIGH DEMAND

02

Founding AEs

Not a standard enterprise AE. Six-plus years selling the same solution, a CISO network, technical depth, and the ability to run AE, SE, and CSM simultaneously. Genuinely rare.

HIGH DEMAND

03

Senior Demand Generation

Back with a rebrand: "demand gen" is what buyers are actually asking for again as pipeline becomes the measure that matters.

MID DEMAND

04

Product Marketing Managers

Increasingly in demand at Series A and B as vendors move from founder-led messaging to structured positioning strategy.

MID DEMAND

05

Content Roles

Demand for standalone content writers has not recovered. AI-assisted production has absorbed much of the capacity gap at this level.

LOW DEMAND

THE PROFILE EVERYONE IS HUNTING

Someone with six or seven years selling the same solution at an established vendor, deep technical understanding, a CISO network they can call directly, and the ability to cover AE, SE, and customer success simultaneously. "It almost becomes a mix of a technical account manager, an AE, and a sales engineer." Genuinely rare. And everyone on the floor was competing for the same person.

05 / THE TRUST SHIFT

Attention Flows to The Human Vendor

The vendors that stood out on the floor were not the most technically advanced. They were the most human, the most open, and the most willing to tell a real story. This was not accidental, and the data explains why.

76% **Associate Nostalgia With Trust**

Edelman's 2026 Trust Barometer (31,000 respondents, 17 markets) found that nostalgia-forward communication is associated with higher trustworthiness. A recreated 1990s hacker bedroom is not decoration: it is a trust signal.

23% **Sales Lift From Emotional Resonance**

Nielsen research links strong emotional response to roughly a 23% average sales lift. The stands that used nostalgia, play, and human warmth were building credibility, not sacrificing it.

FOUNDER VISIBILITY AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

When buyers can see the founder on the ground, look them in the eye, and speak directly about where the company is going, it is both credible to customers and motivating to their team. Vendor credibility in 2026 is not built from a white paper. It is built face to face.

HUMAN CONTENT IS RECOVERING

After a period where many marketing teams replaced human content production with AI, companies are quietly reversing course. Being human-made is becoming a selling point. In a hall where every booth claims AI-powered, a Lego set or a D&D game is a pattern-break that stops people.

> "The booths that actually stopped people were the ones that leaned into humanity. Not the slickest screen. Not the biggest claim. The ones that made you feel something.

06 / FROM THE TEAM

What We Each Walked Away With

Four people. Four vantage points. One consistent direction of travel.

Arian Kazem Tabrizi

PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT

"Everyone, not just people in security, needs to start working with AI and learn how to do it safely. The pace of the attack is fast. The question is whether the defence can keep up."

Dan Rhodes

CO-FOUNDER

"If you do not have any kind of AI within your solution portfolio, you are probably already way behind. The market has moved past the question of whether AI matters."

Lovisa Bjurle

CONSULTANT

"Everyone was trying to show off. But the stands that actually stopped people were the ones that felt human. A 1990s hacker bedroom, a Dungeons and Dragons game, Lego. People would walk in and just go: I used to love this."

Anthony Sibayan

BUSINESS MANAGER

"The cybersecurity industry has moved beyond talking about AI. The leaders pulling ahead are now using it to fundamentally redesign how security operations, risk management, and cyber resilience are delivered."

OFF THE CLOCK • THREE DAYS ON THE FLOOR

CLOSING · THE MANDATE

Hire for the Team You Need in Three Years.

The organisations gaining ground are not simply adding headcount. They are building teams capable of operating with AI, automation, and business context at a scale that was not possible two years ago. That is the question Altura Partners is built to help you answer.

GET IN TOUCH

Speak directly with our team about your hiring priorities for H2 2026.

altura-partners.com