

If growth is essential to your executive agenda, then airtight security of your data and intellectual property is critical. For **Rupal Hollenbeck, President of Check Point**, thwarting global cyber threats comes with the territory.

BY **J.W. DOBBE**

Defending Your Data

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‘You will hear people say, ‘we built a trusting environment, we’re very transparent in our communications.’ That is great, but building trust takes time. It doesn’t just happen magically.’

—Rupal Hollenbeck
President, Check Point

In the realm of cybersecurity, where the stakes are higher than ever in our rapidly advancing digital age, the key to success lies in a delicate balance between agility and robust security measures.

With a solid foundation built on decades of leadership in cybersecurity, Check Point—an American-Israeli multinational provider of software and combined hardware and software products for IT security, including network security, endpoint security, cloud security, mobile security, data security and security management—has evolved into a comprehensive, AI-powered, cloud-delivered cybersecurity platform company.

According to Rupal Hollenbeck, President of Check Point, responsiveness is not just about reacting swiftly but stems from proactive engagement and anticipation of evolving needs. Ms. Hollenbeck’s approach extends beyond mere responsiveness; it’s about fostering meaningful relationships with customers and partners to drive continuous improvement and innovation.

In this Q&A with *Insigniam Quarterly*, Ms. Hollenbeck extolls the virtues of designing scalable cybersecurity solutions in the era of hybrid workforces while also emphasizing the importance of embracing setbacks as learning opportunities and fostering a culture that prioritizes people, growth, and collaboration.

IQ: As you know, the theme of this issue is “Leadership for the Next Digital Age,” which alludes to the fact that many CXOs are working to redefine their executive agendas in order to leverage and utilize the latest developments in technology, data, and artificial intelligence. What components of your executive agenda are you focused on for 2024 and beyond?

Ms. Hollenbeck: A major objective for us is to tell story of the Check Point we are today. Check Point has been a leader in cybersecurity for decades, and we’ve built an excellent reputation first and foremost through our technical innovation, and our research and customer focus. At the same time, we’ve significantly evolved from our roots as a firewall company.

In 2024, we are a comprehensive, AI-powered, cloud-delivered cybersecurity platform company. In the last several years, cybersecurity has skyrocketed as a priority for every industry and for just about every boardroom, and we’ve reached a point where companies want to consolidate their security solutions to drive better outcomes.

Our unique position as a thirty+ year cybersecurity leader gives us the tools to do this better than anyone else, and this year we’re focused on delivering that full value to our customers, partners, and prospects so they can maximize their cybersecurity investments.



IQ: Leading a cybersecurity company no doubt requires a balance between security and agility. How do you personally navigate this balance to ensure Check Point remains agile and responsive while maintaining robust security measures—both for the enterprise and for clients?

Ms. Hollenbeck: We don’t view this as a trade-off. We have rigorous internal security protocols, but we’re able to maintain a high degree of responsiveness, flexibility, and agility because the Check Point platform is optimized for the modern threat environment and built to scale and adapt as both your infrastructure and threats change.

Because the platform is cloud-delivered and AI-powered, we’re able to automate a great deal of security operations. Zero trust network access is adaptive and automated: AI-powered solutions for threat intelligence, event analysis, anomaly detection, and optimizing security policy act as a force-multiplier for our security team.

We offer the same exact capabilities to our partners and customers.

Our cybersecurity environment enables our business, it doesn’t restrict it.

IQ: The idea of ‘responsiveness’ is critical for both you and Check Point. How does a responsive approach lead to faster results for Check Point, both in terms of product development and customer support?

Ms. Hollenbeck: Responsiveness is an important part of everything we do at Check Point, but it’s only part of how we produce results. In fact, I’d even say responsiveness is a function of our proactiveness. We have regular touchpoints with customers and partners, and are always seeking to improve these relationships through proactive engagement beyond simple check-in calls. We anticipate needs and we’re not afraid to change programs to meet them. We revamped our global partner program in 2023 and we’re already seeing positive feedback. In the sales organization, we’ve implemented new metrics to ensure that we have ongoing dialog with our customers not only about their Check Point products, but about their

Defending Your Castle
Check Point’s AI-powered and cloud-delivered Infinity Platform provides enterprise-grade security to data centers, networks, branch offices and remote users with unified management. By using AI and automation, the Infinity Platform protects enterprises against the escalation in sophisticated cyber attacks.



Always in The Know

By ensuring customers receive timely alerts related to any potential security incidents, Check Point is working to safeguard the integrity of their customer's cloud-based assets and data, minimizing potential losses and risks associated with cloud breaches.

evolving cybersecurity needs. By investing in relationships this way, we are able to achieve better results faster while also building trust.

On the technology side, the approach is the same; even some of the mechanisms are the same. We connect regularly with customers and partners with the goal of generating an ongoing conversation about their needs, and this forms an indispensable foundation for the product roadmap. We have the industry's largest security data lake, developed over 30 years, which is an asset that drives an impressive 99.7% block rate (Miercom 2023 and 2024) for malware and phishing and generates unique insights

that keeps us at the forefront of innovation. At the end of the day, responsiveness is about implementing systems to stay close to customers and partners and maintaining the flexibility to translate their needs and friction-points into action.

IQ: From a product and services perspective, can you share some of the specific software solutions or technologies that Check Point leverages to help your clients achieve critical and essential results for their businesses?

Ms. Hollenbeck: Consolidation is driving a great deal of cybersecurity strategy among

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enterprises today. Suites of point products with limited interoperability are unable to manage the increased complexity and scale of the cyber threat environment. The Check Point Infinity Platform is uniquely positioned to address this need by providing enterprise-grade security across the data center, network, cloud, and workspaces with unified management.

The Infinity Platform is AI-powered and cloud-delivered, which achieves unprecedented consolidation and collaboration across all attack vectors from code to cloud. It has the flexibility to implement all the leading security architectures. Data from 30 years of cybersecurity leadership informs the AI engines that drive all our key threat prevention products, services, and decision-making tools, including the 50+ AI engines of ThreatCloudAI driving real-time threat prevention, automated threat response, anomaly detection, and more. These unique capabilities allow us to produce critical outcomes for our users, including preventing approximately 2.8 billion attacks each year.

IQ: What are the biggest challenges currently facing Check Point and the industry at large? How does Check Point adapt its use of enterprise software to stay ahead of emerging threats and maintain a competitive edge?

Ms. Hollenbeck: The biggest challenge facing enterprises today is the increasing complexity and scale of the cyber threat environment combined with changing workforce dynamics. Enterprises need AI-powered automation to fill gaps produced by the perfect storm of expanding attack surface and a cybersecurity skills shortage. The permanent hybrid workforce requires scalable zero trust network access to company networks from anywhere.

A primary driver of our consistent innovation over the last 30 years is our deep customer focus, combined with unmatched insights from decades of cybersecurity data. We constantly refine these mechanisms and leverage them to stay ahead of the curve and provide ongoing value to customers and partners.

IQ: Check Point's growth has been

very impressive. Can you shed some insight into the strategies, tactics, and leadership directives you've undertaken to help realize this growth?

Ms. Hollenbeck: Our growth is the result of several key initiatives, but it starts with our people. We hire and develop ambitious, skilled individuals who are dedicated to constant improvement for Check Point employees and innovation.

At Check Point, a major part of our success is internal innovation combined with strategic acquisitions. In 2023 we closed three acquisitions, including our biggest to date, and those made a major impact, especially as we brought our game-changing secure access service edge (SASE) solution to market. We've created new, high-velocity sales engines to support the business through more efficient prospecting.

Innovative technology is always the anchor. In the era of cloud-scale threats and increasing IT complexity, along with the corresponding drive for consolidation, the Infinity Platform is ideally positioned as a growth engine for Check Point into the future.

IQ: As a leader, what keeps you up at night? What are some of the most difficult aspects of your role that others may not realize?

Ms. Hollenbeck: Cybersecurity is about prevention, detection, and response and keeping organizations safe. But the bad guys are always out there, and they are persistent. They certainly don't follow a policy or ethical rules of behavior. So, predicting what they will do next or how they will try to penetrate an organization and cause damage is not a neat formula.

So using data, analytics, and AI is a must for us, and to do this effectively our organization has to stay dynamic and in constant learning mode. It can feel like a treadmill that doesn't stop but at the same time, when we are able to help our customers prevent the next large scale attack we read about, it makes it all very worthwhile.

IQ: In your career—whether at Check Point or in previous roles—have you had



**BIO: Rupal Hollenbeck
President, Check
Point**

Rupal Hollenbeck, President of Check Point, manages all go-to-market functions for the company. Ms. Hollenbeck joined the executive team as Chief Commercial Officer in March 2022. She previously served as a member of Check Point's Board of Directors from January 2021 to March 2022.

Ms. Hollenbeck has served as CMO of AI hardware start-up Cerebras Systems, Senior Vice President and CMO at Oracle, and Corporate Vice President and General Manager of Global Data Center Sales at Intel, among other positions. She is a Founding Member of Neythri, a non-profit organization dedicated to the professional advancement of South Asian women, and a Founding LP in the affiliated VC firm Neythri Futures Fund. Ms. Hollenbeck is also an industry advisor at California State University East Bay and she serves on the Board of Directors of Blackbaud, the world's leading cloud software company powering social good.

Ms. Hollenbeck holds a Master's degree in International Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management and a Bachelor's degree in Finance and International Studies from Boston College.



Selling Security
Ms. Hollenbeck delivers comments in Munich, Germany at Check Point Software's CXP360 event in 2023, an annual gathering that brings together cyber security experts from around the globe to explore the latest solutions and strategies that protect organizations.

“As companies mature and grow, they run the risk of slowing down their pace of innovation. To survive, we must move past rigid processes and ways of thinking and nurture innovation at every level.

—Rupal Hollenbeck
President, Check Point

to contend with setbacks and failures, and how do you apply those learnings in your current capacity?

Ms. Hollenbeck: For me, it's always been about focusing on the net forward progress. Setbacks and failures mean that you're pushing the envelope and trying new things. I believe that if you don't have many in recent history, maybe you have stopped taking important risks that can accelerate the business.

My advice is to embrace the setbacks as learnings and make sure you really do learn from them, which is critical. Also, ensure the organization is celebrating the progress that is made every stop of the way—it serves to motivate and stick to the mission.

IQ: What excites you most about the future?

Ms. Hollenbeck: We are very much in the era of AI. Large scale technology-enabled transformations of society such as this one are very exciting to me. While there are certainly many risks with AI and the democratization of generative AI tools, these risks have existed in prior transitions such as the internet and mobility.

I believe the benefit to society is yet unknown in areas such as health and wellbeing, education, and the environment. The prospect of companies like mine using AI more and more to keep organizations secure is very exciting to me!

IQ: Lastly, what advice would you give to other leaders looking to create a similar culture within their organizations, one that embraces agility and uses enterprise software effectively? What key lessons have you learned during your tenure at Check Point that could benefit others in the industry?

Ms. Hollenbeck: Create a culture that embraces the values of the company. For us, we know our people make the difference and that, as an organization, security is at the center of everything we do. This has implications on how we make decisions and trade-offs, our internal practices, and the way we collaborate.

In addition, in most sectors of technology, a learning culture and growth mindset are not just phrases on posters. They are a matter of breach or no breach in our world. The bad guys learn and move faster. Staying ahead is predicated on the constant need to learn and grow your perspective.

Finally, I think of solving problems or addressing opportunities first with people in mind, then processes, and finally the technology that enables them both. I see organizations change this order, but until we are all replaced by machines it's important to remember that people work with people and together achieve results. **IQ**

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