

## Cybersecurity Readiness Podcast Series

Episode Title: Leading Under Fire: Legal and Leadership Lessons from Cyber Crises

Host: Dave Chatterjee, Ph.D. — <https://dchatte.com>

Guest: Joshua Cook, Cybersecurity and Privacy Attorney, Partner, Prince Lobel Tye LLP

### Summary Pitch

In this episode, Dr. Dave Chatterjee speaks with Josh Cook, a seasoned cybersecurity and privacy attorney who has guided multinational corporations and mid-sized businesses through high-stakes cyber crises. Drawing on his experience as the first Global Cyber Counsel for a Fortune Global 500 company, Cook shares how he built a global cyber legal function from scratch and why legal teams must be engaged long before an incident occurs.

Together, they explore the human, organizational, and legal dynamics of crisis leadership: from building attorney-client privilege into preparation, to developing muscle memory through tabletop exercises, to ensuring the C-suite speaks with one unified voice when every second counts. Anchored in Dr. Chatterjee's **Commitment-Preparedness-Discipline (CPD) framework**, the discussion underscores how legal, leadership, and security functions must converge to preserve trust and resilience in the face of relentless cyber threats.

### Discussion Highlights

- **Legal's critical role in cybersecurity:** Engaging counsel early enables privilege-protected dialogue, candid risk assessments, and stronger defenses.
- **Building a global cyber legal function:** From fragmented incident responses to a unified global strategy with ransomware playbooks and consistent practices.
- **Prepared vs. unprepared organizations:** The "B-OODA loop" (Breathe-Observe-Orient-Decide-Act) as a model for calm, deliberate crisis decision-making.
- **CPD framework in practice:** Leadership commitment, structured preparedness (planning, training, tabletop exercises), and discipline to sustain readiness.
- **Leadership under fire:** The leader's demeanor—calm vs. frantic—sets the tone for the entire incident response team.
- **Cybersecurity as a strategic enabler:** Positioning privacy and cybersecurity not as cost centers but as trust foundations for competitive advantage.

- **C-suite alignment:** The need for one voice, one strategy, and one truth in communication to stakeholders.
- **Effective crisis communication:** Keep it simple, transparent, and consistent across employees, regulators, vendors, and customers.

## Actionable Recommendations

- **Engage legal early**—not just during incidents but in strategy formulation and preparation.
- **Develop muscle memory** through regular tabletop exercises that assign clear roles and responsibilities.
- **Adopt the CPD framework**—drive leadership commitment, plan and rehearse preparedness, and maintain discipline in execution.
- **Think like attackers**—prepare for the *next* incident, not just the last one.
- **Unify C-suite decision-making**—avoid contradictory directives that erode trust and credibility.
- **Communicate with care**—deliver one consistent, plain-language message that acknowledges customer impact and affirms corrective action.

## Time Stamps

- **0:49** — Introduction to Josh Cook and his career journey
- **2:43** — Building the global cyber legal function
- **6:18** — Why legal must be engaged early in cyber strategy
- **9:10** — Prepared vs. unprepared organizations and the “B-OODA loop”
- **10:58** — Dr. Chatterjee introduces the CPD framework in crisis leadership
- **14:30** — Leadership commitment and the ROI of prevention
- **17:11** — Tabletop exercises and developing organizational muscle memory
- **19:45** — Crisis leadership styles and their impact on teams
- **21:55** — Cybersecurity as strategic enabler and trust foundation

- **27:03** — Preparing for the *next* attack, not the last one
- **29:45** — Common crisis weakness: fractured C-suite response
- **33:58** — Unified communication and trust building
- **38:02** — Clear, simple, consistent crisis communications
- **41:17** — The importance of genuine care for stakeholders
- **43:08** — Josh Cook’s closing reflections: cyber crises are business problems rooted in people

### Memorable Quotes

- Attorney-client privilege can be liberating—it allows executives to speak openly about risks and fix them before disaster strikes.” — Josh Cook
- “Prepared organizations breathe first. Calm leadership is contagious in crisis.” — Josh Cook
- “Security must be seen as an enabler of business goals, not a hindrance.” — Dr. Dave Chatterjee
- “Without trust, your profit centers collapse. Cybersecurity is the foundation of brand trust.” — Josh Cook
- “You don’t need a technical background to lead in a cyber crisis—you need to keep people at the center.” — Josh Cook