



THE DEVOTO GROUP, INC.
Executive Search Built on Relationships

January / February 2026

WHAT'S NEW



Announcements, Articles, New Information

Message from Jeff Devoto, Managing Director of The Devoto Group!

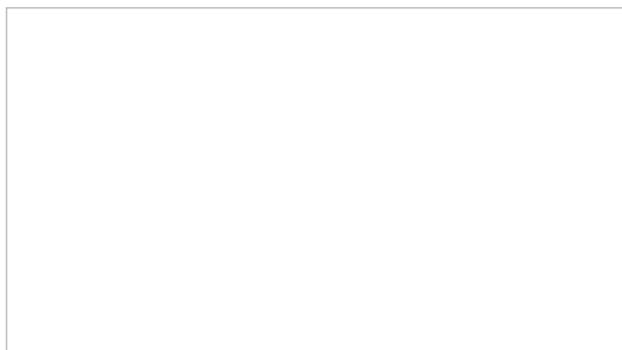
For this issue, we would like to learn from you how AI is affecting you. Please take the following survey and help in our efforts to better serve you in your job search.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, AI is having a major impact in the markets but tell us how it is impacting you in both positive and not so positive ways.

AI Survey please respond by replying to this email. Thank you.

1. Are you finding that it is making your job easier or more enjoyable?
2. Do the AI tools available assist in your search efforts and making it easier to find a better job?
3. Are you concerned that AI has put your current job in jeopardy?
4. Are you in the middle of a job search and what type of position?

A great one by Summers ...



Roles Affected By AI

Roles that are taking on more importance -- being reshaped, not reduced:

- CISO / head of security: The role is expanding to include AI governance, oversight of autonomous systems, and board-level guidance on AI risk, making it more strategic rather than less relevant.
- Cyber risk / enterprise security risk managers: As AI enables continuous monitoring and quantified risk metrics, these managers move from periodic assessments to ongoing, data-driven decision support for executives.

**"Formal education will make you a living;
self-education will make you a fortune."**

- Jim Rhone

The CISO's critical role in AI Security

CISOs and their security teams help manage AI risk and unleash AI value. Check out KPMG's article on how critical the CISO's role is [here](#).

CISO Role in 2026

Learn why cybersecurity leadership is moving to the C-Suite and Board Tables in [this](#) article from Vantage

Interview with Malcolm Harkins (CISO, HiddenLayer)

Malcolm has been a guest speaker at our executive lunches and shares his views to our questions below.

Strategy and priorities

1. How do you decide what your top 3 security priorities are for the year, and what made them rise to the top?

Same way I always have – based on the returns the organizations need to achieve. My #1 design goal for security has always been no material or significant event that could impact the company, its shareholders, or its customers. That was always the focus for me, starting in late 2001 when I started running security & business continuity back when I was at Intel and has continued as my focus at every organization since that time. The business wants at the end of the day a business result – no material or significant event. Another way to look at this is via my 9 boxes of controls – the CEO, CFO, board wants me to have the least amount of risk, at the lowest total cost, with the least amount of control friction. If I do that then the business is maximized while minimizing/managing information and technology risks.

2. When you talk to the CEO or board, how do you explain cyber risk in business terms rather than technical terms?

See above – but the key is knowing what can create or contribute to a material or significant event, what are the ways to manage those risks to have the lowest total cost and least amount of control friction on business velocity. It is also critical to know where the company has exposure not just risk in “theory” – where are you exploitable to the “oh shit” moment that could cause significant harm. This isn't just understanding and doing whack a mole with vulnerabilities

AI, cloud, and emerging tech

3. What skills do you wish your team had more of to deal with AI, cloud, and automation?

Skills for myself and my teams always needs to constantly be evolving and expanding

along the lines of my z-shaped framework that I have written and talked about. We need to always be enhancing our breadth of business acumen, we need to always need to be enhancing our breadth of technical acumen, and we need to increase our depth in risk/security/controls/compliance with a focus on exposure based on exploitability not just vulnerability

Risk, incidents, and measurement

4. In your view, what are the top 2–3 threats that are most likely to hurt your organization?

That's the wrong question in my mind. Cyber threats are external and infinite, while exposures and misperceived risks are internal, finite, and actionable. Focusing on the wrong side of that equation leads to a lot of activity and very little actual risk reduction. Threat-centric thinking creates a false sense of control. Threat oriented discussions often feel rigorous: named actors, heat maps, likelihood scores, "top 10 threats for 2026". But most of that threat info isn't specific to your environment, can't be operationalized cleanly, and rarely changes real decisions. It encourages the belief that if we understand the threat well enough, we're safe. That's backwards. Most breaches happen not because the threat was unknown but because known weaknesses were tolerated.

Leadership and culture

5. What part of your job do you find most challenging as a leader, not as a technologist?

Leadership is the art of motivating others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. The challenge and the reward are making this happen routinely enough that not only you, but your team is operating in their ideal state to deliver results and persevere when things get tough.

6. Where do you see the biggest misunderstandings between security and engineering/product teams?

Everyone misperceives risks and everyone has a bias based on their own goals and perspectives. Doesn't mean we need to misunderstand each other – but it does mean we need to combat this issue to "struggle" for "shared aspirations" as I mentioned above.

Career, expectations, and advice

7. How has your role changed over the last 3–5 years, and where do you think it's heading next?

It hasn't really changed in 25 years – only the scope of the risks and the nature of the business have changed. My primary goal of no material or significant event has been constant as has my focus on delivering the least amount of risk at the lowest total cost with the least amount of control friction on the business

Executive Lunches Coming Back!

The Devoto Group executive lunches have been scaled back, but we continue to host small (3-5 attendees) get-togethers at Bay Area restaurants.

Il Fornaio in Palo Alto, our venue for the past several years has -- unfortunately -- closed. This was one of our favorite lunch spots as well as for other technology executives like Steve Jobs. See SFGate's article [here](#).

Stay tuned for our next lunch in May in a new location.

ChatGPT Breakup

From our favorite PM newsletter -- Rich Mironov's Product Bytes

"Eryk Salvaggio's ChatGPT Breakup Mixtape (2026) is the smartest, funniest, most insightful piece on LLMs I've read in a very long time. Actual AI breakup convs set to AI slop-pop. I laughed, I cried. Where can I buy tickets for the Eros tour?" --*Rich*

Check it out [here](#).

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



Current Openings

Director/Manager, Post Sales Customer Success & Support - coming in mid March

You will be a key part of the sales team, with a laser focus on post sales. As the first person in this role, you will be reporting to the CEO.

Their Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) solutions enable smaller and medium-sized companies to gain complete control over their network traffic, security and privacy — from the core to the edge.

The ideal candidate will have 6-8 years in Post Sales Customer Support at a cyber security company with a strong technical foundation in networking and security fundamentals, as well as be comfortable working in public channels (e.g. Reddit, industry forums, Slack groups).

Director, Product Management / Senior Product Manager - coming in early April

Our client -- a John Chambers backed company -- has asked us to assist them in finding a talented and visionary Product Leader with an extensive understanding of the market – customers, segments, technology, and players.

This role demands hands-on experience and deep knowledge of switching network technologies.

The ideal candidate will possess a minimum of 10 years of practical experience in campus switching, coupled with strong business acumen and market expertise. As a leader in their product management team, you will play a critical role in driving their product strategy, roadmap, and overall success — ensuring they remain at the forefront of secured connectivity innovation.

\$1,000 Referral Fee for finding the Winning Candidate for any of the

above-mentioned openings!

Let us know if any of these openings interest you.

jeff@devotogroup.com

EVENTS





Upcoming Events

February 23-24

Gartner CIO Leadership Forum, Phoenix

March 9-10

Gartner Product Leadership Conference, TX

March 9-11

Gartner Data & Analytics, FL

March 10-12

F5 AppWorld 2026, Las Vegas

March 11

Silicon Valley Product Management Association Monthly Meeting, via Zoom

March 23-24

Gartner Digital Workplace Summit, CA

March 30-31

Gartner CIO Leadership Forum, FL

KEY SUCCESSES



Testimonials

“The Devoto Group has been one of our primary sources for talent. They are adept at listening to our needs, providing guidance, and engaging candidates from outreach through post-employment. They consistently have been able to fill key product management, product marketing, and systems engineering roles at an expedited pace and with stellar hires. They have worked with us over the past 3 years and we value their services. I would recommend Jeff and his team to any high-tech company looking to build out sales and marketing teams.”

— Scott Gordon, Chief Marketing Officer, Pulse Secure

Over the past decade, I've continued to rely on Jeff and his team for critical hires due to their ability to consistently identify top-tier talent. The professionals they placed not only contributed to the immediate success of the organization but have also gone on to achieve significant career milestones — clear evidence of the quality and impact of their work

evidence of the quality and impact of their work.

I highly recommend The Devoto Group for their ability to deliver measurable results through exceptional talent acquisition."

— Steven Shalita, CMO

"I connected with Jeff Devoto of The Devoto Group through a good friend while planning career transition to Silicon Valley last Summer. Jeff quickly presented me to Infoblox for a Senior Product Manager role. As the role was a great match for my skill set, I accepted the offer and started last September.

Jeff and his team were very helpful throughout the process in presenting the position, preparing me for each interview, and assisting in the final negotiations to land the job, all while I was still based in NYC. I would absolutely recommend Jeff and this team if you are looking for an product management or product marketing role with an exciting Silicon Valley tech company!"

— Josef Krakora

"I have known Jeff for several years as a candidate and as a client. Last summer he brought me into Arbor Networks as the western area sales director.

Over the past year he has been instrumental in bringing in some key sales and sales engineering talent in the Bay Area including three Sales Engineers and a key sales rep for my team.

I would highly recommend Jeff's recruiting services for if you are looking for top talent in sales, sales engineering, and sales management!"

— George Daum

"The Devoto Group worked tirelessly to help find the right job match and to prepare me for interviews that resulted from their hard work. Their communication with me along the labyrinth of the hiring process allowed me to focus on crushing the interviews while they dealt with the background details. If you are looking for high-tech work, the Devoto Group should be your first call."

— Scott Emo, Director, Product Marketing

"Things are good here. Both Sales Engineers are doing really, really well. They fit in well with our culture, bring a ton of knowledge and experience and are very different from each other. Couldn't be more pleased with both of them."

— Rick Jenssen, VP Global Field Operations, Plexier

"The Devoto Group has been a long time recruiting resource for me over the past several years. Jeff and Andrea have a very strong portfolio of clients -- everything from early stage start-ups to big established companies. They have a very good understanding of key areas of marketing -- especially demand generation and outbound product marketing. They have always presented me with exciting roles and I am happy to recommend The Devoto Group if you are a marketing professional looking for your next opportunity!"

— Debbie Margulies, Director of DemandGen and Digital Marketing

Placements – Key Marketing, Product Management & SE roles

MARKETING / SALES / SALES ENGINEERING

VP, Sales – Titanium, Inc.

Director, Product Marketing – Netskope

Director, Sales – RedSeal

Head of Sales - Feitian Technologies

Director, Product Marketing – tCell

Director, Product Marketing – iGen
VP, Product Marketing – Feedzai
Senior Director, Product Marketing – Elastica/Blue Coat Systems
Senior Product Marketing Manager – Netscout
Director, DemandGen – Cloud Cruiser

Senior Director, Marketing – PayNearMe
Director, Sales – Pulse Secure
Director, Sales – Arbor Networks
Director, Field Operations/DemandGen – Skybox Security
Director, Security Solutions – Gigamon
Senior Director, Product Marketing – Affirmed Networks
Director, Technical Marketing – Sinefa
Sales Engineer – Plixer

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Director, Product Management – Absolute Software
VP, Product Management – Citrix
VP, Product Management – Blue Coat Systems
VP, Product Management – Pulse Secure
Senior Director, Product Management – Pulse Secure
Director, Product Management – Megaport

About Us

Founded in 1995, The Devoto Group is a leading executive search firm located in Redwood City, CA and serving the Bay Area. Our focus is finding talented executive level individuals for sales, marketing, and product management positions for our clients – early stage and mature high technology companies. We work with only the leading edge Internet companies and we pride ourselves on locating high-quality talent very quickly.

Our current focus is working with technology companies involved in the artificial intelligence, networking, security, cloud and mobility markets.



Jeff Devoto, Managing Director
415.265.0534 | jeff@devotogroup.com



Andrea Devoto, Founder



Sukesh Garg, Advisor



Susan Murry, Director Research & Administration



[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

The Devoto Group
274 Redwood Shores Parkway
Redwood City, CA 94065
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

