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Planning for the New Year

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In Roman mythology, the god Janus is the guardian of portals, and patron of beginnings and endings. He is shown as having two faces, one looking back to the past and one seeing into the future, and the month of January is named after him.

As organizations get ready to close the books on the current year, and while that information is fresh, it's the right time to employ the "Janus Process" in planning for the future by looking at the closing year's performance in light of current objectives, particularly those that address the security needs of your organization.

Here are three questions to guide this annual assessment process:

Question 1: What specific key results are the organization (or division, department, team or individual) held accountable for? This sets the base line against which to measure performance.

Question 2: What specific key results did the organization actually accomplish, and what is the measurable evidence of these results? This provides for a comparison between what was planned and what was achieved.

Question 3: If there are differences between what was planned at the beginning of the year, and the actual results accomplished by the end of the year, what are the primary causes of these differences? This focuses on observable evidence of unexpected events and conditions, and assumptions and choices, as well as actions and inactions that contributed significantly to the year's results.

Armed with this valid and reliable information, you can use it retroactively with your organization's standard problem-solving practices or use it to affirm those operations that "achieved plan." But more important, this "Janus Process" guides you to use performance information from the past to more proactively. It will help you to accurately plan for your organization's security needs for the coming year, more precisely track needed results as they occur in the next twelve months, anticipate and prevent security threats before they do damage, and more accurately solve and recover more quickly from problems that will occur through out the year.