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In relationships, trust is everything. And for accountants, who typically handle large amounts of sensitive information for their clients, trust is a prerequisite. Names, social security numbers, addresses, salaries and wages — all of these, if mishandled, can result in identity theft, criminal charges, financial loss and more. Indeed, financial services suffered more data breaches in 2018 than any other industry, according to a [report by IBM Security](#).

That's why it's so important for firms and their accountants to understand potential

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Get to know the law

In recent years, there has been a global push to implement regulations that protect financial transactions and consumer data against cyber threats, ranging from the European Union's [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) to New York's [Cybersecurity Requirements for Financial Services Companies](#). That's why it's so imperative you stay [up to date](#) on the latest data and privacy regulations impacting your business. Implement mandatory training to ensure all staff members are aware when regulations change, and make sure they are proactive about protecting sensitive company and client information.

Determine potential cybersecurity risks

To understand your cybersecurity risks, you should take an IT assessment — a comprehensive analysis that helps you identify risk-factors your practice may be susceptible to. Once you're aware of the risks, you'll need to take action. The goal should be not only to address cybersecurity-related issues and improve your business operations, but also to educate your team on best practices going forward.

Implement two-step verification

The accounting industry increasingly depends on cloud-based programs, which provide greater flexibility and support collaborative teamwork. Plus, by centralizing critical data, these programs can automate tasks that once took up valuable time. However, every accounting professional needs to help protect this cloud-based data by consistently updating their computer and cloud passwords.

Two-step verification adds an additional layer of security to the login process, requiring two separate sources to verify the identity of a given user. For instance, some email service providers require an alphanumeric password as well as an

encrypted shortcode that can only be sent to the registered phone number on the

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About Jodi Chavez, President, *Randstad Professionals, Randstad Life Sciences and Tatum*

With more than 22 years' experience in the staffing industry, Jodi oversees the field organization and provides strategic direction for Randstad Life Sciences, Randstad Professionals and Tatum. Throughout her career, Jodi's entrepreneurial drive and strong business acumen have enabled her to increase revenues, grow profits and improve ROI. Along with a proven track record of building high-performing teams, she has a wealth of knowledge spanning strategic planning and execution, mergers and acquisitions, brand strategy, social media and multi-generational leadership.

Firm Management

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