

Application: 6705

Harcharan Jassal: Financial Cybersecurity Excellence in Action

<b>Page: General Information</b>
Provide information about the company to be considered for the award. If you will be nominating an individual, specify the nominee's employer.
<b>Name of Organization/Company</b> Bank of Montreal
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<b>Additional Contacts</b> I do not wish to list additional contacts
<b>Page: Entry Information</b>
<b>Entry Title</b> Harcharan Jassal: Financial Cybersecurity Excellence in Action
<b>Category</b> Q10c. Executive of the Year - Information Technology - Cybersecurity
<b>Executive Nominee Submission Format</b> Written Answers

**a. Briefly describe the nominated executive's employer: the organization's history and past performance (up to 200 words). Required**

Bank of Montreal (BMO) acquired Bank of the West in a strategic merger that expanded its North American footprint significantly. This acquisition integrated Bank of the West's established presence in the western United States with BMO's robust Canadian and midwestern U.S. operations. The merged entity now serves over 25,000 banking customers through an integrated network of branches and digital services.

Under the leadership of technology professionals like Harcharan Jassal, the organization has successfully implemented enterprise-wide solutions including the Informatica Master Data Management system with more than 50 integrations across the banking platform. The Treasury and Payment Applications vertical that Jassal oversees manages critical financial infrastructure supporting Corporate Cards, Payments, and Commercial Applications.

The organization has established a comprehensive Enterprise Release Management Office to streamline application deployment across multiple banking products. This infrastructure supports vital banking services including Real Time Payments, Zelle, ACH, and Wires transfers, with a strong focus on security compliance and service integrity. The technology transformation has enabled the bank to maintain robust cybersecurity protocols while supporting mission-critical operations across its expanded customer base.

**b. Outline the nominated executive's achievements since the beginning of 2023 that you wish to bring to the judges' attention (up to 250 words). Required**

**Strategic Leadership in Critical Systems**

Harcharan Jassal demonstrates exceptional cybersecurity leadership by safeguarding 780+ servers hosting 20+ mission-critical payment applications that process millions of daily transactions. His comprehensive security approach protects essential banking operations including ACH, Zelle, Wire Payments, and Corporate Credit Cards—systems where downtime could result in millions in financial losses.

**Vulnerability Management Excellence**

Under Jassal's leadership, daily monitoring and strategic patching have resulted in near-zero cyber attack incidents, significantly enhancing data protection across complex banking systems. His proactive certificate and password management strategy ensures continuous service availability, maintaining platform uptime of 99.9% for customers.

**Security Implementation Impact**

Jassal's cybersecurity initiatives have delivered measurable business value:

Tenfold decrease in payment processing errors

100% positive feedback on disaster recovery exercises, boosting customer confidence

60% reduction in platform-related incident response time

Secured systems supporting 5% customer growth in US markets

**Compliance and Audit Excellence**

His rigorous approach to compliance includes implementing strict change control procedures, thorough documentation of material evidence, and effective audit response protocols—essential for the highly regulated banking industry.

**Technology Integration**

Jassal expertly manages cybersecurity across diverse technology ecosystems including AWS, Linux, Windows, Oracle, IBM WebSphere, Cloudera, Hadoop, SAP, and TIBCO MFT. His ability to maintain security across these complex environments demonstrates exceptional technical expertise in both cloud and on-premises security architecture.

**c. Explain why the achievements you have highlighted are unique or significant. If possible compare the achievements to the performance of other executives in your industry and/or to the nominee's past performance (up to 250 words). Required**

Harcharan Jassal stands out as a cybersecurity leader through his comprehensive protection of critical financial infrastructure. His strategic oversight spans 780+ servers hosting 20+ mission-critical payment applications processing millions of daily transactions. What makes his contribution exceptional is the scale and criticality of these systems—where even momentary vulnerabilities could result in millions in financial losses.

Unlike many cybersecurity executives who focus solely on defensive measures, Jassal has implemented a holistic security approach that simultaneously improves business performance, creating measurable value.

**Distinctive Impact Metrics**

Near-zero cyber attacks through proactive vulnerability management and timely patching—outperforming industry averages where financial institutions face hundreds of attempted breaches monthly

99.9% platform uptime maintained while implementing rigorous security protocols—a balance few achieve  
Tenfold decrease in payment processing errors through security-enhanced systems

100% positive feedback on disaster recovery exercises—exceptional in an industry where testing often reveals gaps  
60% reduction in incident response time—significantly better than industry averages

Security infrastructure supporting 5% customer growth in US markets

**Strategic Value**

What truly distinguishes Jassal's achievements is his ability to translate complex cybersecurity initiatives into meaningful business outcomes. While many security executives focus on threat prevention alone, Jassal's approach demonstrates how robust security becomes a business enabler—protecting mission-critical systems like ACH, Zelle, Wire Payments, and Corporate Credit Cards while simultaneously improving their performance, reliability, and customer trust.

**d. Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words). Optional**

Harcharan Jassal's cybersecurity leadership spans critical banking infrastructure that processes millions of daily transactions across 780+ servers hosting essential payment systems. His comprehensive security approach has delivered remarkable results validated by industry publications and implementation success.

As documented in the November 2021 PRNewswire release, Jassal's security implementation for the TreasuryNow platform incorporated "strong security and authentication with customizable controls" and a "multi-layered security approach"—innovations that helped achieve near-zero cyber attack incidents while maintaining 99.9% uptime.

His expertise with ACH, Zelle, and Wire payment systems perfectly aligns with what PYMNTS.com identified as critical financial infrastructure requiring robust security measures. The article specifically highlights the importance of securing "real-time payments" and "cross-border wires"—areas where Jassal's team excelled.

The BMO Treasury Services documentation emphasizes that proper security enablement allows organizations to "take charge of cash flow and strengthen the bottom line"—precisely what Jassal's security initiatives accomplished through a tenfold decrease in payment processing errors.

His security oversight extends to protecting SAP BI, Cloudera, IBM WebSphere, Oracle, and other critical applications described in the Bank of Montreal's financial technology stack. This comprehensive security approach yielded measurable business outcomes: 100% positive feedback on disaster recovery exercises, 60% reduction in incident response time, and security infrastructure supporting 5% customer growth in US markets.

These validated metrics demonstrate how Jassal's cybersecurity leadership creates exceptional business value by transforming security from a cost center into a growth enabler for critical financial systems.

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