SAIC Independent R&D; Investment for Cyber Innovation

SAIC

VALUE / SCOPE **$2M IRAD → $45M in wins (22.5X ROI)**

SITUATION

As Vice President of Cyber at SAIC, I was responsible for all Cyber Programs, Cyber Capture, and the company's entire Cyber Internal Research & Development (IR&D;) portfolio. The organization included more than 600 cyber professionals, 16 Cyber Solutions Architects, and 6 senior Cyber R&D; SMEs responsible for advanced research, prototyping, and supporting growth.

We faced a significant challenge: our cyber IR&D; investments were fragmented, not aligned to growth priorities, and not producing scalable intellectual property that could be moved into programs or proposals. In parallel, we faced a major talent shortage across cleared cyber roles, and we needed a strategy to simultaneously advance R&D; innovation while developing and growing cyber talent.

TASK

I needed to:

1. Transform SAIC's cyber IR&D; portfolio into a more strategic, outcomes-driven program tied to customer missions (DOD, IC, Federal Civilian).

2. Align R&D; with revenue, ensuring our prototypes fed capture strategies, BD, and proposal solutions.

3. Create a talent pipeline using IR&D; as the hands-on innovation environment for early career hires, junior analysts, and solution architects.

4. Build repeatable processes for ideation, proposal integration, and technology transition into active programs.

ACTION

1. Re-aligned all IR&D; efforts to federal mission priorities

I conducted a full audit of the IR&D; portfolio and identified three areas with the highest strategic leverage:

- Zero Trust and Identity/Access orchestration
- Cloud defense and automated incident response
- OT/ICS security detection and analytics

I shut down low-value projects and reoriented investment toward mission-driven objectives tied to active captures (DCO, DISA, Air Force, DHS).

2. Built a structured R&D; governance model

I created a governance board with myself, senior R&D; SMEs, finance, BD, and solutioning. We introduced:

- Quarterly IR&D; investment reviews
- Roadmaps tied to capture milestones
- TRL (Technology Readiness Level) checkpoints
- "Proposal-ready" technical artifacts for solution architects

3. Integrated IR&D; directly into active capture pipelines

I assigned R&D; SMEs into specific captures (IC agencies, Army DCO, Air Force, DHS CISA), where they created:

- reusable architectures
- prototypes
- lab demo environments
- past performance surrogate materials

This significantly strengthened technical volumes and differentiated us from competitors.

4. Used IR&D; as a talent development engine

I established structured apprentice rotations allowing early-career cyber hires to shadow senior R&D; SMEs. Participants learned:

- malware analysis
- red team automation
- cloud defensive lab engineering
- analytics model development

This fed a pipeline of cleared talent into billable roles across SAIC's major cyber programs.

5. Turned R&D; prototypes into reusable enterprise assets

We productized two internal prototypes into reusable delivery tools:

- Automated Incident Response Workflow Engine
- OT Network Mapping & Passive Sensor Toolkit

These tools were later used in proposals and demonstrations across multiple customers.

RESULT

Within one year:

IR&D; Impact

- 42% increase in R&D; deliverables transitioned into active programs

or proposals.

- Produced 3 prototypes that were reused across nine proposals.
- IR&D; content directly influenced three major competitive wins,

contributing ~$90M in new work.

Talent Development

- Established a repeatable annual R&D; talent rotation model, becoming

a feeder for SAIC's cyber programs.

- Reduced early-career attrition by 18% due to stronger career

development and mentoring.

- Significantly strengthened our pipeline of cleared junior cyber

analysts and engineers.

Organizational Growth & Reputation

- Improved SAIC's standing in the federal cyber ecosystem through

thought leadership, demos, and stakeholder engagement.

• Positioned IR&D; as a strategic differentiator rather than an isolated technical activity.

COMPLEX PROJECT DELIVERY

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