

# W4C GR CYBERSECURITY WOMAN PROFILE OF THE MONTH

INTERVIEW WITH AGGELIKI!



**Name:** Aggeliki Delga

**Job Position:** Cybersecurity Director

**Current Employer:** EY in Greece

**Cybersecurity areas of interest:** Governance, Risk, Compliance, Resilience & Privacy

**Previous career(s):** 13 years of experience in the cybersecurity field in consulting firms

**Educational background:** Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Master's degree in Information Security

**Favourite quote:** "Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground."

**Network with me:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/aggelikidelga/>

**Are you hiring? :** Yes

- Security Engineer: <https://careers.ey.com/job-invite/1529300/>
- Data Privacy and Protection - Cyber GRC Professional: <https://careers.ey.com/job-invite/1529301/>

# Intro & Inspirational

## **1. Which values are guiding your life and work?**

*My guiding principles in both my personal and professional life are respect, empathy, teamwork, positive mindset, authenticity, and continuous learning.*

## **2. What's the most important life lesson you've learned?**

*One of the most important lessons life has taught me is the power of resilience when confronting challenges. Life's trajectory is rarely linear and is full of obstacles that can throw us off course. Through experience, I've realized the importance of flexibility and determination in navigating difficult times. Embracing this lesson has enabled me to stay optimistic, treat setbacks as learning opportunities, and understand the value of asking for help when needed. It's truly amazing how much help we can get from people, simply by taking the initiative to ask for it.*

## **3. Success mean different things to different people. How do you define success?**

*I define success as the achievement of meaningful goals which positively impact both myself and others around me. It's not just about hitting targets but also about staying true to your values, evolving, learning and creating long-standing relationships along the way.*

## **4. What's the best advice that you can give about success?**

*Success, to me, is a multidimensional concept that includes personal fulfillment, the positive impact one has on others, and the achievement of professional goals. It means finding a career that I'm passionate about, where I can innovate and solve problems, while also ensuring that my work contributes in a meaningful way to society.*

*One of the most impactful pieces of advice on success that I received from a person that I really admire, which I now pass on to people just starting their journey, is that true success is achieved when you stop comparing yourself to others and, instead, concentrate solely on your own growth and the fulfillment of your personal goals. When you manage to do that, everything else will follow.*

## **5. Do you think your job makes a difference? How?**

*Yes, I firmly believe that my role in cybersecurity makes an impact by protecting critical data and preventing breaches that could affect countless individuals and organizations. By ensuring digital safety, I help maintain trust and I support our increasingly technology-dependent society.*

## **6. What is the best and the worst piece of advice you received? (+How did you unlearn the latter or use it to your favour?)**

*The best advice I've received was to "focus on what I can control and let go of what I can't". I certainly have a long way to go, but having this in mind, I try to direct my energy toward my actions and reactions and not toward external factors.*

*As for the worst, I would probably say it was to "always say yes to every task and opportunity to get ahead". Initially, that worked, but in the long run it resulted to overcommitment and burnout. However, I used this experience to learn the power of setting boundaries and the importance of prioritizing tasks according to my career goals and personal values.*

## **7. Can you name a book that has influenced your journey?**

*Although it is a book that I've read many years ago, in a very personal situation, I believe it's the one that made me believe in the power of mindset to influence behaviours and outcomes. It is called "The Secret" and it is based on the belief of the pseudoscientific law of attraction, which claims that thought alone can influence objective circumstances within our life.*

# Cybersecurity General

## **8. How can someone stand out in a competitive cybersecurity job market?**

*If I had to give one advice, this would be “stay relevant”. To stand out, one must combine technical expertise with soft skills, but also continuously monitor emerging technologies and trends in the field, earn certifications and actively engage in cybersecurity communities.*

## **9. What trends in the technology & cybersecurity industry are you keeping an eye on for the future?**

*I think that in the age of all things AI, the answer is rather straightforward: artificial intelligence! AI has the power to transform the way we work and create value, but it also holds many risks, especially cybersecurity-wise; there are many examples already of its misuse, as with advanced deep fakes for fraud and phishing attempts.*

## **10. What is the most common mistake someone could make when applying for a role in the cybersecurity industry? What do you believe makes a successful candidate/application?**

*A common mistake is the “one-size-fits-all” approach to job applications, without candidates highlighting how their unique skills align with the specific cybersecurity role. Successful candidates present tailored resumes that reflect relevant experiences, express their enthusiasm for the cybersecurity domain, and clearly articulate how they can contribute to the team and the role.*

## **11. From your point of view, do you believe that there are misconceptions people have about working in the cybersecurity industry?**

*Definitely! I believe that this is one of the leading factors behind the lack of professionals in the field and, especially, female professionals. Many think cybersecurity is solely about hacking when, in reality, it encompasses much more. It involves a range of activities spanning from building the cybersecurity strategy of an organisation, performing risk assessments, examining policy developments, and educating users, to protecting data and systems from a variety of threats. This narrow view can deter those who might otherwise be interested in the broader, multifaceted opportunities available in the cybersecurity profession.*

## **12. Which concrete recommendations would you give to women who want to change career and join cybersecurity?**

*Women seeking to enter the cybersecurity field should begin by building a robust technical baseline, acquired through targeted certifications and coursework in their areas of interest. Engaging actively in networking initiatives is crucial for forging connections with industry professionals and fostering a community for knowledge sharing. Additionally, involvement in mentorship programs is essential to gain insight and guidance from experienced mentors who can significantly contribute to their professional development within the cybersecurity landscape. Finally, be confident in the unique perspective they bring to the table; diversity strengthens cybersecurity teams and is increasingly recognized as a valuable asset in the field.*

## **13. And any tips for those who are still very young and might be considering it?**

*To begin, they should raise their understanding of cybersecurity to confirm their genuine interest in it. Once they're committed to pursuing a career in this area, it's crucial to deep dive into the subject early on. They should start by mastering fundamental concepts through online courses, enrich their knowledge by participating in webinars and workshops related to cybersecurity, and gain practical skills through hands-on experimentation in lab environments. Moreover, working on soft skills is key. Qualities like enthusiasm for the field, an inquisitive nature, a strong sense of ethics, flexibility in dynamic environments, and analytical thinking can make a memorable impression during an interview. It's important to note that recruiters often look for candidates with potential, acknowledging that passion and competence often outweigh experience.*

## **14. Do you (or did you) have a mentor or someone who guided you?**

*Back when I started there were not many mentoring opportunities, as there are now. However, I feel privileged enough, that I had the opportunity to meet very competent and influencing professionals/leaders in my work life, that not only provided me with knowledge and advice, but also encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and take on new challenges. Their support was instrumental during difficult times and key decisions.*



**15. What is your opinion on mentoring as well as on getting a start via an internship/traineeship?**

*Embarking on an internship program provides newcomers with essential insights into the day-to-day operations of cybersecurity roles. Mentorship can complement this practical experience by providing guidance, insights, and support. It can help young professionals navigate their career paths and accelerate their growth.*

## You & Your job

**16. What was your childhood dream job (and why you liked it)?**

*Growing up, I aspired to follow my father's footsteps as a mathematician. My natural aptitude for numbers and a strong knack for problem-solving always pointed me in that direction. However, witnessing the technological boom of our time, I decided to channel my problem-solving ability and logical reasoning into enhancing my capabilities in the field of computer science and at a later stage in Cybersecurity.*

**17. Can you summarise your career path for us? What of those would you say were key steps you took to help you get to where you are today?**

*Upon completing my postgraduate degree in Computer Science, I embarked on a dual path by simultaneously beginning work as an IT help desk technician and pursuing a Master's degree in Cybersecurity. With a clear vision for my future in the cybersecurity world, I made the transition to a consulting firm few months prior to completing my Master's. Since then, I have been immersed in the consulting sector, engaging in diverse projects that mainly focus on Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC), as well as Resilience and Privacy. Key steps throughout my 13-year career, included earning international certifications and cultivating a strong presence within cybersecurity networks. These experiences have promoted me into successively more influential positions that have been instrumental in shaping my professional journey. Reflecting on the choices I have made, I see a deliberate path of decisions that have collectively guided me to my current standing. However, the most critical decision – the one that catalyzed my entire career – was without a doubt my commitment to the field of cybersecurity.*

**18. Did you face any challenges related to your gender, race, visual appearance, or background, or any stereotypical biases? How have you overcome these?**

*There have been individual incidents that I have dealt with biases related to age and gender early in my career and I must admit they were disheartening. However, I managed to overcome these by focusing on professional development, taking on leadership roles, and proving my capabilities through results. Over time, I've established a reputation that moves beyond superficial judgments.*

**19. Do (did) you ever experience imposter syndrome and self-doubt about your career and skills?**

*Impostor syndrome has definitely been a challenge for me, particularly during transitions to roles with greater responsibility. I found that open discussions with peers and mentors often reveal that these feelings are common and can be mitigated by focusing on one's achievements, continuous learning, and positive reinforcement from successful outcomes. Moreover, engaging in a professional business coaching program has provided significant support in overcoming self-doubt and boosting my confidence.*

*This tailored approach to guidance has equipped me with strategies to silence the inner critic and embrace my professional growth with conviction and self-assuredness.*

**20. What has been your most exciting project or role?**

*The projects I found most exciting were those in which I collaborated with government agencies to safeguard security and privacy of numerous applications created in response to the COVID-19 health crisis. Contributing to the greater good during a time of crisis was one of the most demanding, but also professionally fulfilling tasks I've ever undertaken.*

**21. Are you planning to mentor or coach others in the future, or have you been mentoring already?**

*Apart from the mentoring/coaching that I am providing on a daily basis to young professionals in our teams, I had the pleasure to participate as a mentor in one of the Women4Cyber mentorship initiatives and it was truly a great experience. Being able to help other women to join or grow in the cybersecurity space, is a really fulfilling way to contribute to the community.*

**22. How do you handle criticism?**

*I approach criticism with an open mind, assessing whether it's constructive and applicable. By detaching personal feelings and focusing on how it can help me improve, I turn criticism into a driver for personal growth and professional enhancement.*

**23. Cybersecurity is considered a very demanding and “intrusive” career in someone’s life (takes a lot of hours, lots of learning, you are “seeing” cybersecurity triggers everywhere). How do you balance work and personal life? How do you manage stress?**

*Cybersecurity is indeed an intensive field that requires dedication. I'm still in the process of mastering the ideal balance between my work and personal life. My strategy involves an early start to my day, followed by a careful prioritization of tasks, concentrating on the most critical issues during my work hours. This allows me to disengage and recharge after. Despite my packed schedule, maintaining regular physical activity is a non-negotiable for managing stress and staying healthy.*

**24. How do you set boundaries in the workplace?**

*I've found that clear communication of my work boundaries is essential for maintaining a healthy work environment. This means negotiating manageable deadlines, avoiding over-commitment, and openly discussing my needs for work-life balance with my employer.*