

Social Engineering Red Flags



CONTENT

- Is the sender asking you to click on a link or open an attachment to **avoid a negative consequence** or to **gain something of value**? Is there a sense of urgency?
- Is the email **out of the ordinary**, or does it have **bad grammar** or **spelling errors**?
- Is the sender asking you to click a link or open an attachment that **seems odd** or **illogical**?
- Do you have an **uncomfortable feeling** about the sender's request to open an attachment or click a link?
- Is the email asking you to look at a **compromising or embarrassing picture** of yourself or someone you know?
- Is the salutation odd, incorrect, or missing?



ATTACHMENTS

- The sender included an attachment that you **were not expecting** or that **makes no sense** in relation to the email message. (This sender does not ordinarily send you this type of attachment.)
- There is an attachment with a possibly **dangerous file type**. The only file type that is **always safe to click on is a .txt** file.



HYPERLINKS

- Hover your mouse over any hyperlink that is displayed in the email message, is the **link-to address is for a different website?** (Major red flag.)
- You received an email that only has **long hyperlinks with no further information**, and the rest of the email is completely blank.
- You received an email with a **hyperlink that is a misspelling** of a known web site. For instance, www.bankofamerica.com — the “m” is really two characters — “r” and “n.”



DATE

- Did you receive an email that normally you would get during regular business hours, but it was **sent at an unusual time** like **3 a.m.**?



SUBJECT

- Did you get an email with a subject line that is **irrelevant** or **does not match** the message content?

- Is the email message a reply to something you **never sent or requested**?



- You do not recognize the sender's email address as someone you **ordinarily communicate with**.
- The email was sent from **someone inside the organization** or from a customer, vendor, or partner and is **very unusual or out of character**.
- The email is from **someone outside your organization and it is not related to your job responsibilities**.
- Is the sender's email address from a **suspicious domain** (like micorsoft-support.com)?
- **You do not know the sender personally** and they **were not vouched for** by someone you trust. Can you call to verify?
- **You do not have a business relationship or any other relationship** nor any past communications with the sender.
- The email is **unexpected or unusual and has an embedded hyperlink or an attachment** from someone you have not communicated with recently.



- You are cc'd on an email sent to one or more people, but you **do not personally know** the other people it was sent to.
- You received an email that was also sent to an **unusual mix of people**. For example, it was sent to a random group of people at your organization whose last names start with the same letter, or different job titles, or a whole list of unrelated addresses.