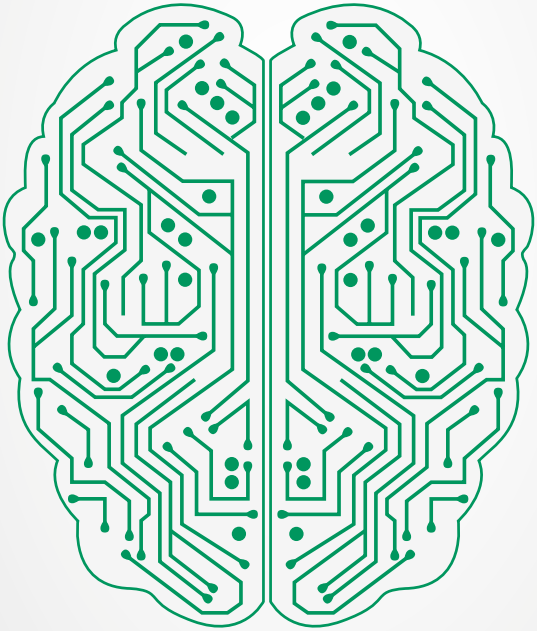
# CEO IMPERSONATION FRAUD

## PROTECT YOUR COMPANY AND YOURSELF



**THE PERSON YOU ARE DEALING WITH MAY NOT BE WHO HE OR SHE CLAIMS TO BE**

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# What is CEO impersonation fraud?

CEO impersonation fraud, or social engineering, is the art of **fraudulently extracting information without the victim's knowledge**, using psychological manipulation techniques in order to **embezzle funds**.

## THREATS TO THE COMPANY

- Execution of a transfer to a fraudulent account
- Impersonation
- Information theft

"This is your manager speaking."
"I won't forget your help." "I trust you."
"Don't let me down..." "It's an order!"
"You'll be rewarded."
"Don't tell anyone about it."
"This project must remain confidential."
"It's a matter of the utmost importance."
"Help us trap the fraudsters by making the transfer!"

# Modus operandi

## 1 INFORMATION GATHERING

The fraudster makes contact with the company and **gathers information** on its organisation, projects, procedures and key people in financial services.

## 2 IMPERSONATION AND CHOICE OF VICTIM

The fraudster impersonates an **influential person within the company** (manager, CEO) or a supplier and on the basis of the information gathered, he or she then contacts a person authorised to make payments (the target).

## 3 PRESSURISING

The fraudster gives instructions to **urgently transfer** a significant amount of money to a bank account unknown to the victim (often abroad). The fraudster may also request a **change to the IBAN account number** to which an invoice is to be paid.

## 4 MANIPULATION

Fraudsters are very good actors and extremely **manipulative**. They are very deft at playing on people's **deference to authority, flattering the victim**, while stressing the need for discretion and confidentiality.

## 5 EXECUTION OF THE PAYMENT ORDER

Under pressure, but **acting with complete confidence**, the target **transmits a payment order** in due form to to the fraudster's bank. The fraudster insists on receiving proof of execution.

## 6 FRESH ATTEMPT

If the fraud attempt is foiled, the fraudster, who is used to this scenario, may spring back into action and **pretend to be the fraud squad and ask for the transfer to be executed for the purpose of the investigation**. If this is done, the fraudster achieves what he or she wanted.

# Good to know

The above modus operandi is the most widely used, but fraudsters have many ways of extracting information and defrauding you. Remain vigilant!

**85%** of the data gathered on the target come from **public sources** (Internet, media, etc.) and from information obtained via the fraudster's network.

The **telephone** and **e-mail** are the favourite channels used by fraudsters, **but they have other ways** of obtaining valuable information.

**20%** of social engineering attacks are carried out via **compromised websites**, as well as the **falsification of e-mail addresses** of individuals and public administrations.

In order to lend credibility to their request, fraudsters will not hesitate to give you the maximum amount of information obtained fraudulently and will go as far as to **send you purportedly official confirmation e-mails** by stealing e-mail addresses.

Initially, the amounts embezzled were fairly significant. In the face of the vigilance of companies and banks, fraudsters are now trying to embezzle **smaller amounts** in order to slip under the radar.

# How can you protect yourself from an attack?

- **Don't expose your data** in public places (trains, etc.), on websites, on social networks or even within your company: protect access to your confidential documents, make sure that your digital professional information is kept only on the company's hardware.
- Establish **internal procedures** based on double-checking and restricting access to sensitive data.

- **Raise employee awareness,** especially in your accounting and finance departments.
- **Don't click on unknown links** in e-mails or online.
- What should you do if you don't know the person with whom you're dealing? **Ask him or her for more information** about his or her identity, company and how he or she obtained your contact details.

# How should you react to an unusual request?

**Fraudsters never give up**. They are capable of calling up various victims and imitating a range of people in order to achieve their goal.

- **Ask yourself the right questions** about the reasons for the call**.**
- **Resist pressure** and be wary when dealing with an overly insistent caller; if needed, confer with a colleague or line manager.
- **Follow your intuition:** if a request seems suspicious, it probably is!
- **Check that the request is legitimate** by calling back to a number that you already have on record.
- **Be vigilant** when faced with a very insistent, urgent, confidential request or one that does not comply with your internal procedures.
- **Beware** of any unusual transfer request that you have to sign or countersign if it is to a country with which the company does not do business.

Where fraud is established, notify your line manager **immediately** and alert your bank.

The Bank has systems in place to deal with this type of fraud attack, but your vigilance is crucial in order to make these systems even more effective.

**Raise employee awareness and, above all, remain vigilant!**

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