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CYBER CEO SCAM
By: SUE DETERS

Your boss sends you an email and requests your immediate response. She wants to know if you are available because she is in a meeting and needs you to do something for her. You quickly respond, "What can I do to help you?" The next email instructs you to wire funds to an account and provides the bank account number and routing number, along with sincere gratitude that you can take care of this right away. You follow her instructions and wire the money. You then look up from your computer and see your boss walk into her office…BAM! You've been scammed!

It's referred to as the CEO fraud scam, but it is not limited to the CEO. Scammers often target the CFO, Controller or Accounting Manager, anyone that would have the authority to make such a request. The thieves look at your website and social media accounts to determine who they want to target. Then they will begin phishing their victims or figure out a way to gain access to their email accounts. They'll set up a fraudulent domain account very similar to their victim's domain with possible one digit off. So similar that the receiver doesn't realize it until it's too late.

Most companies will lose between $25,000 and $75,000 before realizing they have been taken. According to the FBI, the losses due to this scam are in the billions every year. So what can you do to protect yourself? First, be cautious about what you post about your company on social media. Second, implement procedures for your wire transfers. Handle them more strictly than you handle your checks. Make it so that wire transfer requests must be done in writing and approved by more than one person. Implement a policy that the person that initiates the wire transfer is not the same person that can approve it. The FBI also recommends two-factor authentication, which mean a verifying email or phone call will be sent when a wire transfer is requested.

The crooks are successful because they rely on tricking employees into side-stepping the organizations procedures. Educate your staff and empower them to ask the questions. Sometimes a little inconvenience now will save you thousands in the future!

If you have any questions about this or any other technology issue, please contact your Account Manager or Sue Deters, IT Manager, at (314) 205-2510 or via email at sdeters@connerash.com.