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LESSON 04 OF 04 · 7 MIN · ESSENTIAL

CEOs, IT and payroll

Three impersonation scripts that work again and again, and the sentences that stop them.

The three scripts

The boss: a message from a new number or personal email, urgent, confidential, asking for gift cards, a transfer or payroll data. **IT:** a call about a problem you didn't report, asking for a code or remote access. **Payroll:** a routine-looking request to change an employee's bank details just before payday.

Each relies on a real relationship and a moment of pressure. Each is defeated by the same habit: verify on a channel you control.

Secrecy is the tell

Legitimate requests rarely require you to keep them secret from colleagues, especially where money is involved. “Don't tell anyone yet” isolates you from the person who would spot the problem.

Authority is the other lever. Being asked by the owner doesn't remove the need for a callback, it makes the rule more important, because the owner is the most impersonated person in the business.

Give people the words

Scripts reduce awkwardness:

- “I'll call you back on the number I have for you.”
- “IT never asks for my password or a code, so I'm going to hang up and call the helpdesk.”
- “I can't change payroll details without a quick call, it's the same for everyone.”

Practise them once. People are far more likely to use a sentence they've said out loud before.

> **THE OWNER IS NOT EXEMPT**
>
> If the owner can authorise a payment by text, attackers will impersonate the owner by text. The rule has to apply to the top of the business, or it isn't a rule.

Key takeaways

- ✓ CEO, IT and payroll impersonation use the same levers.
- ✓ Secrecy around money is a red flag.
- ✓ Verify on a known channel, even when the request appears to come from the boss.
- ✓ Give staff simple scripts and practise them.

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