

Understanding **SOCIAL ENGINEERING ATTACKS**

And the complex
nature of how
hackers attempt to
gain unauthorized
access to sensitive
information.



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A **social engineering attack** occurs when a cybercriminal tricks someone into giving them information that can then be used to gain unauthorized access to data, systems, or financial assets.

This does not necessarily mean the attacker's goal is to directly obtain password or account information from the victim however.

Instead, a successful social engineering attack generally relies on the victim's **willingness to give information or access** to the attacker.



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The attacker may first **establish a level of trust** with the victim. Often this is accomplished by first gaining information about them or their company. ○

▶ With this information, the attacker will trick the victim by pretending to be someone they are familiar with. The information used to carry out the attack may come from public sources or private information that has already been fraudulently accessed.

From here, the attacker exploits the victim after gaining their trust.



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An example of this type of attack may be a hacker that impersonates a company's CEO. The attacker might then send an email to someone in the business's accounts payable department authorizing a fraudulent charge or requesting sensitive information.



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Another example of a social engineering attack might involve a hacker pretending to be a company's IT support. Information the hacker used to impersonate the IT company might have come from public or private information.



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It is important to be aware of social engineering attacks and the research cybercriminals might undertake to carry them out, as well as how to **recognize, prevent, and respond** to them if they occur.



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