

# CASE FILE 001: SOCIAL ENGINEER

Psychological Exploitation in Cybersecurity  
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# WHAT IS SOCIAL ENGINEERING?

Social engineering manipulates human behavior to extract information, access, or trust. It bypasses technology by exploiting emotion.

CONCEPT

## Preparing the ground for the attack:

- Identifying the victim(s).
- Gathering background information.
- Selecting attack method(s).

## Closing the interaction, ideally without arousing suspicion:

- Removing all traces of malware.
- Covering tracks.
- Bringing the charade to a natural end.



## Deceiving the victim(s) to gain a foothold:

- Engaging the target.
- Spinning a story.
- Taking control of the interaction.

## Obtaining the information over a period of time:

- Expanding foothold.
- Executing the attack.
- Disrupting business or/and siphoning data.



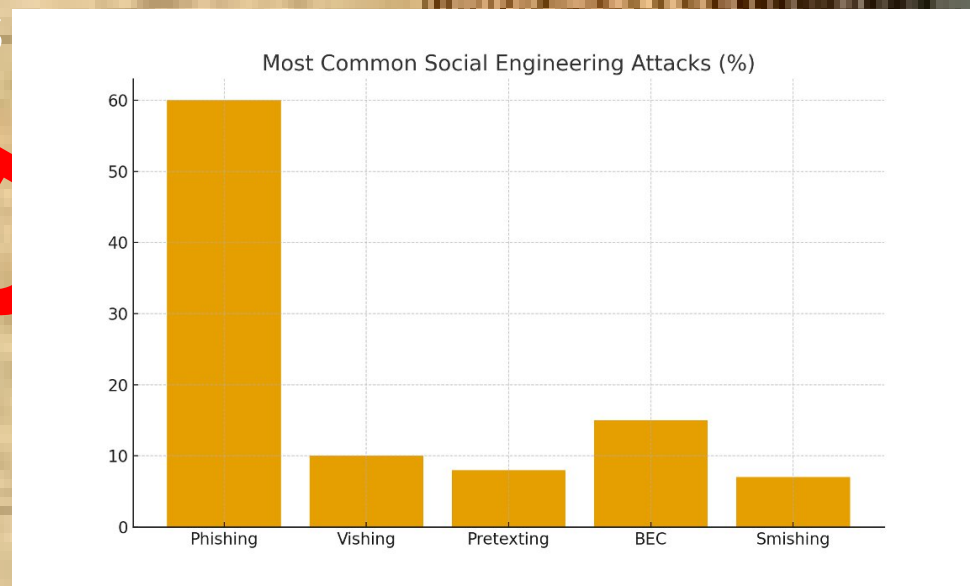
# WHY IT WORKS - HUMAN PSYCH

- Authority: Trust in power
- Urgency: Forced speed
- Fear: Emotional override
- Curiosity: Impulsive clicking
- Social Pressure: Desire to help
- Fatigue: Lower awareness



# COMMON ATTACK TYPES

- Phishing – fake emails
- Vishing – scam calls
- Pretexting – identity scams
- Tailgating – unauthorized entry
- Smishing – SMS scams
- BEC – executive impersonation
- Spear Phishing – targeted attacks

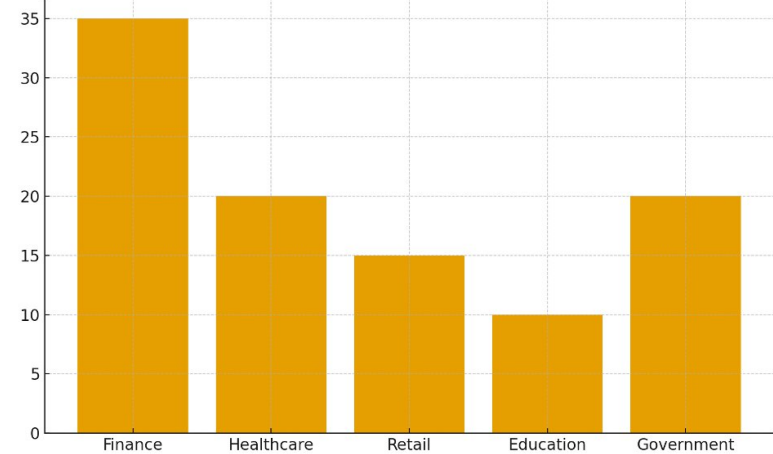


# MODERN SOCIAL ENGINEERING

- Deepfake voice impersonation
- AI-driven fake identities
- Social media profiling
- Fraudulent job listings
- Romance manipulation



Industries Targeted by Social Engineering (%)

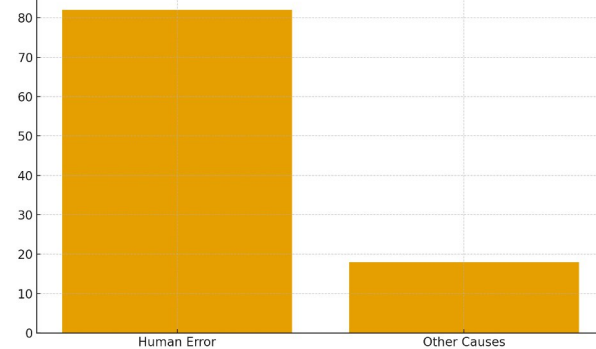


# DEFENSE STRATEGIES

- Verify identity ALWAYS
- Slow response = safer decisions
- MFA everywhere
- Ongoing training
- Report suspicious behavior

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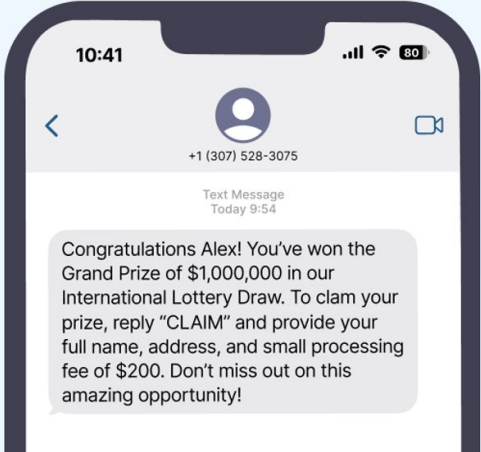
Percentage of Breaches Caused by Human Error



# WHY IT MATTERS

- 80%+ breaches begin with human manipulation
- Emotions are easier to exploit than systems
- Social engineering is high-impact
- Behavioral science = cybersecurity
- Billions lost globally

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**Prize and lottery scams**

TextMagic

10:41

+1 (307) 528-3075

Text Message  
Today 9:54

Congratulations Alex! You've won the Grand Prize of \$1,000,000 in our International Lottery Draw. To claim your prize, reply "CLAIM" and provide your full name, address, and small processing fee of \$200. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity!



# REFERENCES

- Verizon DBIR (2024)
- CISA Social Engineering Guide
- MITRE ATT&CK
- Hadnagy – Human Hacking

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# FINAL TAKEAWAY

“Cybersecurity fails when trust is misplaced.  
Human awareness is the ultimate defense.”

Cybercrime is criminal activity that entails the use of a computer system, computer technology, or the internet.

