

E-mail Red Flags

FROM:

- I don't recognize the sender's e-mail address as someone with whom I **ordinarily communicate**.
- This e-mail is from **someone outside my organization and it isn't related to my job responsibilities**.
- This e-mail was sent from **someone inside my organization** or from a customer, vendor, or partner and is **very unusual or out of character**.
- Is the sender's e-mail address **from a suspicious domain** (like micorsoft-support.com)?
- I **don't know the sender personally** and they **were not vouched for** by someone I trust.
- I **have neither a business relationship nor any past communications** with the sender.
- This is an **unexpected or unusual e-mail** with an **embedded hyperlink or an attachment** from someone with whom I haven't recently communicated.

SUBJECT:

- Did I get an e-mail with a subject line that is **irrelevant or does not match** the message content?
- Is the e-mail message a reply to something I **never sent or requested**?

CONTENT:

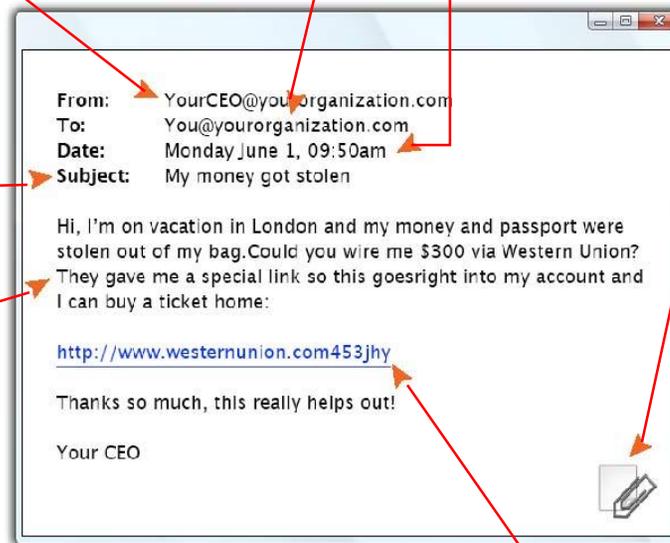
- Is the sender asking me to click on a link or open an attachment to **avoid a negative consequence**, or to **gain something of value**?
- Is the e-mail **out of the ordinary**, or does it have **bad grammar or spelling errors**?
- Is the sender asking me to click a link or open an attachment that **seems odd or illogical**?
- Do I have an **uncomfortable gut feeling** about the sender's request to open an attachment or click a link?
- Is the e-mail asking me to look at a **compromising or embarrassing picture** of myself or someone I know?

TO:

- I was cc'd or bcc'd on an e-mail sent to one or more people, but I **don't personally know** the other people to whom it was sent.
- I received an e-mail that was also sent to an **unusual mix of people**. For instance, a seemingly random group of people at my organization whose last names start with the same letter, or an entire list of unrelated addresses.

DATE:

- Did I receive an e-mail that I normally would get during regular business hours, but it was **sent at an unusual time** like 3:00 a.m.?



ATTACHMENTS:

- The sender included an e-mail attachment that I **was not expecting** or that **makes no sense** in relation to the e-mail message. (This sender doesn't ordinarily send me these types of attachments.)
- I see an attachment with a **possibly dangerous file type**. The only file type that is **always safe to click on is a .TXT file**.

HYPERLINKS:

- I hover my mouse over a hyperlink that's displayed in the e-mail message, but the **link to address is for a different website**. (This is a **big red flag**.)
- I received an e-mail that has only **long hyperlinks with no further information**, and the rest of the e-mail is completely blank.
- I received an e-mail with a **hyperlink that is a misspelling** of a known web site. For instance, www.bankofamerica.com - the "m" is really two characters - "r" and "n."