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Avoiding Scams & Identity Theft – *for you and your business*

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Today we will discuss:



FREE MONEY



- What is business identity theft and how it can happen
- How to protect yourself and your business
- What to do when it happens to you
- Popular Scams

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What is Business Identity Theft?

Business identity theft happens when criminals pose as owners, officers or employees of a business to illegally get cash, credit or loans. This leaves the victimized business with debt. Thieves may open lines of credit or other business loans and leave behind damaged credit and reputation!



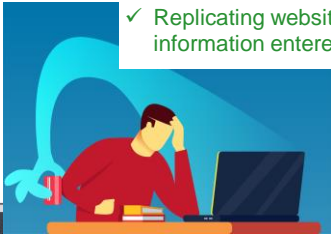


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How does it happen:

- ✓ Theft of businesses financial information (bank accounts, credit cards, EIN, etc.)
- ✓ Dumpster diving, file surfing, or mail theft
- ✓ Replicating websites – stealing information entered



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How can I protect my business?

- ✓ Sign-up for digital statements for bills, banking, etc. – turn off mail service to your business if you can
- ✓ Purchase a high-quality, cross-cut shredder – and USE IT
- ✓ IF you must have paper files, secure the filing system



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How can I protect my business?

- ✓ Maintain strong digital security practices by using firewalls, VPN (if you're accessing network offsite), automatic updates, etc.
- ✓ Give access to those who need it, not everyone needs access to everything
- ✓ Require strong passwords and change them often



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Score.org has a great article about Business Credit Bureaus!

www.score.org/resource/article/understanding-three-major-business-credit-bureaus

Experian, Equifax, and Dun & Bradstreet offer business credit reports.



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Check your business credit report

- Business profile or information about the company
- Business credit profile contains information regarding the financial status of the company
- Public record information has any legal filings, collections or unemployment filings

- A business credit score is calculated using the criteria above

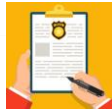
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Is your business a victim of ID Theft?

1. Respond to notices from the IRS, or other government entities
2. File a police report with your local police
3. Review and reconcile account statements as soon as you get them



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What else do you do?

- 4. Review business registrations for open and closed businesses
- 5. Monitor personal and business credit reports
- 6. Place a fraud alert on your credit report



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FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
IdentityTheft.gov

Here are more steps!

- 7. Close accounts that have been tampered with or opened in error
- 8. File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission
- 9. Update anti-virus, malware, and other security programs on computers
- 10. Take notes, track conversations, dates, etc.



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1.888.567.8688

or

www.OptOutPreScreen.com

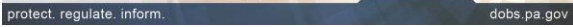
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State:
1.888.777.3406
www.attorneygeneral.gov
(do not call)

National:
1.888.382.1222
www.donotcall.gov



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**If it sounds
too good to
be true...
it probably
is!!!**




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**Notorious Scams
(just a few)**

- Imposter
- Investment
- Counterfeit Checks

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Jan Lewan stole about \$5 MILLION from his fans and investors in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey...

He was sentenced as follows:

- PA – 5 years & 11 months
- DE – 5 years
- NJ – 7 years

Lewan served a total of 5 years, his sentences ran concurrently!



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Affinity Fraud

Relies on trust and friendship within groups of people who have something in common.

- Church organizations
- Civic clubs
- Community groups
- Athletic organizations

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Red Flags of Affinity Fraud

- Someone you just met quickly develops a strong relationship within your organization
- They encourage you to invest in a “new investment” that is making big returns
- Push you to invest because “everyone else” is doing it

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Tips to Avoid Affinity Fraud

- Check out everything – no matter how well you know the person
- Don't fall for promises of high returns
- Be wary of any “opportunity” that isn't made in writing
- Know that fraudsters use email and other virtual connections to entice investors

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Free Lunch Seminar

- The mailer invites you to a free “no strings attached” gourmet meal
- The promise of a “guaranteed” a higher rate of return than normal
- High pressure sales at or shortly after “dinner” is served



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Free Lunch – Red Flags

- ▣ Glossy bright, expensive invitations
- ▣ Advertised in local papers (no expense spared)
- ▣ “Free” advice by experts who will “guarantee” much higher returns than anywhere else



- ▣ Strictly educational, no sales – *until the follow up calls*
- ▣ Expensive meal at a high class restaurant
- ▣ “No market risk” to you, “you cannot lose money”

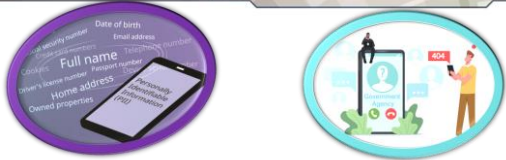
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Small business grant scams

- Fake government agencies
- Social media, "you won a grant"
- Send money to get your grant



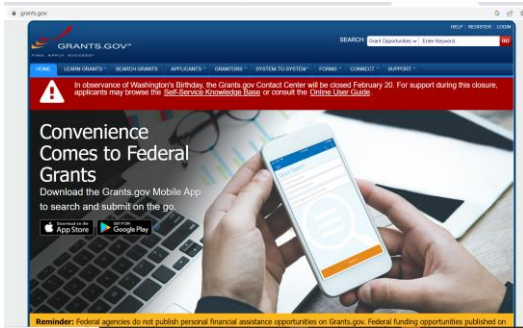
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More on grant scams

- Asking for your personal information in order to get the business grant
- Calls from Washington D.C. – claiming you won a grant

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Small business scam prevention resources:

www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/scams-your-small-business-guide-business

www.business.com/security/business-scam-guide/

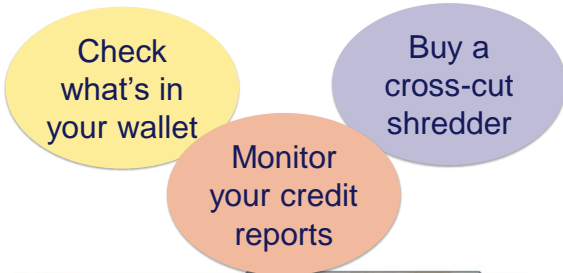
www.usa.gov/common-scams-frauds



Signs it might be a scam...

- ✓ Today only opportunities
- ✓ Threats of excessive fines, arrest, or loss or licensure
- ✓ There is a sense of urgency - very few true “emergencies”

Protect yourself and your business



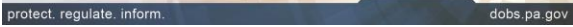


Protect yourself and your business

Question Opportunities

Opt-out of solicitations

Register with "Do Not Call"



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State Resources

Department of Banking and Securities
1.800.PA.BANKS (722.2657)
dobs.pa.gov

Attorney General
1.800.441.2555
attorneygeneral.gov

Department of State
1.800.822.2113
dos.pa.gov



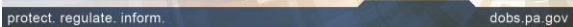
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Federal Resources

Federal Trade Commission:
1.877.987.3728
idtheft.gov

U.S. Postal Inspection Service
1.877.876.2455
uspis.gov



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