

Additional Social Engineering Attack Examples:

Here are two more real-world social engineering attacks with their tactics and psychological principles analyzed:

1. The \$100 Million Google and Facebook Spear Phishing Scam (2016)

Tactics & Techniques:

- **Impersonation:** Attackers created a fake company posing as a legitimate vendor for Google and Facebook.
- **Spear Phishing:** Targeted emails with fake invoices were sent to specific employees responsible for handling payments.
- **Social Engineering:** Emails created a sense of urgency and used familiar business language to appear genuine.

Psychological Principles:

- **Authority:** The fake company claimed to be working with trusted partners (Google & Facebook).
- **Trust & Familiarity:** Emails mimicked legitimate business communication, lowering victims' guard.
- **Time Pressure:** Urgent language in the emails pressured employees into acting quickly without proper verification.

Consequences:

- **Financial Loss:** Millions of dollars were lost by Google and Facebook before the scam was discovered.
- **Reputational Damage:** Both companies faced criticism for their internal security protocols.

2. The Target Data Breach (2013)

Tactics & Techniques:

- **Phishing Emails:** Malicious emails containing malware were sent to Target employees.
- **Watering Hole Attack:** Hackers compromised a website frequented by Target vendors, infecting devices that visited the site.
- **Data Exfiltration:** Hackers used the compromised systems to steal customer payment information.

Psychological Principles:

- **Curiosity:** Phishing emails often contain intriguing subject lines designed to be clicked.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Employees may not be trained to identify phishing tactics.

- **False Sense of Security:** Employees visiting seemingly legitimate vendor websites might not suspect a threat.

Consequences:

- **Privacy Violation:** Data of millions of customers was compromised.
- **Financial Loss:** Target incurred significant costs to address the breach and compensate victims.
- **Reputational Damage:** Consumer trust in Target was shaken.