

SOCIAL ENGINEERING FOR BOSSES


BY QS2 Writing Labs

Hi boss, we
kept it
really simple!

*“This book contains
everything you
need to know...and
more!”*



QS²POINT



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ENGINEERING

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1.	Introduction to Social Engineering	1-2
1.1.	What is Social Engineering?	1-2
1.2.	The Basics	1-2
1.3.	Examples of Social Engineering	1-3
2.	The Shortest Summary Ever	2-4

1. Introduction to Social Engineering

1.1. What is Social Engineering?

Social engineering is a technique of manipulating individuals into divulging confidential information or taking actions that benefit the perpetrator. Social engineering exploits psychological weaknesses, unlike traditional hacking, which exploits technical vulnerabilities. It relies on human error and often involves tricking people into breaking standard security procedures. The goal is typically to gain unauthorized access to systems, data, or physical locations or to commit fraud.

1.2. The Basics

Social engineering is grounded in the science of psychology. Attackers use several strategies, such as:

- **Trust Exploitation:** Gaining the victim's trust and then betraying it.
- **Phishing:** Sending fraudulent communications that appear to come from reputable sources to steal sensitive data like login credentials and credit card numbers.
- **Pretexting:** Creating a fabricated scenario (pretext) to engage a targeted victim to steal their valuable information.
- **Baiting:** Offering something enticing to the victim in exchange for information or access.
- **Tailgating:** Following someone authorized to enter a secure area without proper authentication.

These methods exploit the natural human tendencies of trust, fear, urgency, and curiosity.

1.3. Examples of Social Engineering

Phishing Emails

Phishing involves sending emails that appear to come from trusted sources but aim to extract personal data like passwords and bank information. For instance, an email disguised as an alert from a bank asking users to confirm their account details.

Pretexting

An attacker might pretend to need sensitive information from a target to perform a critical task, such as a fake IT tech claiming they need passwords to perform necessary updates.

Baiting

Similar to phishing, baiting involves offering something enticing to steal personal information. An example could be a flash drive labeled "Executive Salary Information" left in a visible area to lure individuals into inserting it into a computer, thereby installing malware.

Tailgating

An individual might follow closely behind an employee at a company into a restricted area by pretending to be a fellow employee or a service person without the proper authentication.

2. The Shortest Summary Ever

Social engineering involves manipulating individuals into giving up confidential information or access by exploiting psychological vulnerabilities rather than technical ones. It operates through trust exploitation, phishing, pretexting, baiting, and tailgating, among other methods. This strategy leverages the human elements of trust and emotion, making it highly effective against even the most technologically secured systems.