

CUSTOMER DATA SECURED THROUGH RAPID RESPONSE

1. Multiple Servers from our retail were able to identify that hackers were able to penetrate our database
2. Approximately 2.3M records were leaked from our customer database
3. The hackers movement was detected across 3 server locations including our physical server
4. Forensic team has been deployed and will take an estimate of 72 hours to assess the situation
5. We recommend the use of external team to assist in responding to the breach with a estimated cost between R2.4 million - R4.1 million
6. Response to information Regulators is to be decided from the response of legal review
7. We are awaiting executive response until we are able release any information to our customers

STRUCTURE UNIT:

1. Customer data accessed through system weakness
2. System secured: Investigation and containment in progress
3. Notify regulators and customer within 48 hours

THE COMMUNICATION TIMELINE: WHERE IT ALL WENT WRONG

THE EARLY HOURS: TECHNICAL DISCOVERY

02:47 — BREACH DETECTED

Automated systems trigger an alert. IT Security Lead **Ruan Botha** receives the notification.

04:15 — BREACH CONFIRMED

The security team confirms the scope. Botha drafts a technical email to CIO **Pieter van der Merwe**.

THE MORNING: COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

05:30 — THE "TECHNICAL" FORWARD

CIO forwards the technical report to CEO **Nomsa Dlamini**. He fails to simplify the jargon or call her directly to explain the severity.

06:15 — LOST IN TRANSLATION

The CEO reads the email on her phone. Confused by technical terms like "SQL injection," she forwards it to her PA to handle and does not treat it as an emergency.

08:00 — FAILED CONTACT

The PA tries to call the CIO, but he is unreachable in a "war room." She leaves a voicemail.

THE MIDDAY: PUBLIC FALLOUT

10:30 — TOTAL SILENCE

Six hours post-notification. No internal updates, no public statement, and the Head of Corp Comms (**Ayanda Moyo**) is still in the dark.

11:15 — THE LEAK

A junior contractor leaks the breach on X (Twitter). The post goes viral across Reddit and WhatsApp within 40 minutes.

11:45 — MEDIA INQUIRIES

News24, eNCA, and Business Day call the switchboard. With no prepared statement, calls are routed to Ayanda Moyo's voicemail—who still doesn't know there is a breach.

THE AFTERNOON: ESCALATION & CRISIS

1 12:00 — MARKET REACTION

The JSE opens; RetailCo's share price drops **8%** in one hour.

2 13:00 — REGULATORY PRESSURE

The Information Regulator sends a formal demand for answers with a 48-hour deadline.

3 14:00 — DELAYED CRISIS MEETING

The CEO finally meets with leadership. Critically, the Head of Corp Comms is still not invited. The meeting ends with no public statement.