

How a lying 'social engineer' hacked Wal-Mart

By Stacy Cowley @CNNMoneyTech August 8, 2012: 12:54 PM ET



PHOTO: STACY COWLEY/CNNMONEY

LAS VEGAS (CNNMoney) -- A Wal-Mart store manager in a small military town in Canada got an urgent phone call last month from "Gary Darnell" in the home office in Bentonville, Ark.

Darnell told the manager Wal-Mart had a multi-million-dollar opportunity to win a major government contract, and that he was assigned to visit the handful of Wal-Mart stores picked as likely pilot spots. First, he needed to get a complete picture of the store's operations.

For about 10 minutes, Darnell described who he was (a newly hired manager of government logistics), the outlines of the contract ("all I know is Wal-Mart can make a ton of cash off it") and the plans for his visit.

Darnell asked the manager about all of his store's physical logistics: its janitorial contractor, cafeteria food-services provider, employee pay cycle and staff shift schedules. He learned what time the managers take their breaks and where they usually go for lunch.

Keeping up a steady patter about the new project and life in Bentonville, Darnell got the manager to give up some key details about the type of PC he used. Darnell quickly found out the make and version numbers of the computer's operating system, Web browser and antivirus software.

[Link](#)

Phishing

A modern version of social engineering

''The criminally fraudulent process of attempting to acquire sensitive information [...] by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.''' Wikipedia