

Teaching Security Lesson 3: Social Engineering

Assignment: Sketch a Scheme

Sample Response

1. Title: Spirit Polka
2. Targets: All students at Prince Rogers Nelson High.
3. Goal: Get the entire school to wear purple polka-dot gear on a random Tuesday that isn't during the real Spirit Week and there isn't a big game or anything coming up, in honor of a fake competitive dance team.
4. List of steps:
 - 1) Find out the names and email addresses of all the sports team captains and club presidents from the Prince Portal site.
 - 2) Find out if any of the sports teams or clubs have full member lists on Prince Portal, and find the email addresses for all those members.
 - 3) Send email to the team captains and club presidents and ask them to forward it to their members. Or maybe we could get email addresses like "PRNHS_soccer_capt@hotmail.com" and use them to send it to the member lists directly. (If we wanted to hide our identities -- but if we did get caught, we'd be in more trouble for impersonation.)
 - 4) Respond to any email questions with more hype about how awesome it will be, and suggest that the student forward the details to everyone in their contacts.
 - 5) Try to get the event posted on the school website or social media pages and club websites/social media. (With messages from our own email addresses or the fake addresses.)
 - 6) Hype it up to our own contacts on social media, pretending like we just heard about it and think it sounds fun.
5. Sample email:

Dear Team Members,

It's Spirit Day! Next Tuesday, we will have a PRNHS Spirit Day. We'll show our support for the PRNHS Piranhas by wearing school colors purple and puce -- but with a twist! In honor of our Square Dance Team winning the recent state championship, let's wear POLKA dots! Please pass the message along to your friends and everyone in your clubs, teams, or study groups! Let's show everybody how much we love our school.

GO PIRANHAS!!!

Sincerely,

The School Spirit

P.S. If you want to be in a group Spirit Picture, gather at the Red Corvette at the beginning of your lunch period.
6. What we'll gain: Do a funny prank that people will remember us for. Or maybe feel smart for fooling people.

7. Aspects of human nature:

- Social Proof: If your friends or team members tell you they plan to participate, you are more likely to participate. Especially if the activity is about showing solidarity with others.
- Authority: People will listen to team captains and club presidents who try to get them to show school spirit, because they're used to looking to those people as leaders.
- Liking: People who are picked as team captains and club presidents are usually well-liked, so it's probably easier for them to get other people to join in on things. People who participate in a lot of extracurriculars are likely to be outgoing, so it would help to get them to forward it to their friends.

8. Social engineering: If it looks like the email is only going out to people at the school, from someone at the school, people will think it's legit. Especially if it has details that people outside the school wouldn't necessarily know, like the Red Corvette statue. (We could even do the prank on a rival school, if we had friends there who could get us the information.)

It's normal to have Spirit Days sometimes, and not everybody would realize there wasn't anything big going on. It wouldn't necessarily seem weird that you didn't know there was a square dance team, because it's not something most people are interested in.

9. Aspects of the Internet: You don't have to prove who you are to get an email address like PRNHS_soccer_capt. Most services just let you make up whatever address you want.

Even if we used our own email addresses, it would still be easier than trying to spread the word in person because we wouldn't have to worry about keeping a straight face.

It's easy to get the word out because someone who has a whole email list or social media page for some group can forward them the message all at once instead of having to talk to each member in person or take up practice/meeting time with an announcement.