



Quick cautionary tales for a better practice

Episode 74

Crisis averted

Email fraud is not a new issue for solicitors; it remains a persistent threat. However, with effective measures in place to contain and control this risk, legal practices can mitigate the threat and avert potential disaster.

By now it's well-known story. An email impersonating a practice was sent to clients advising them that the practice bank details had been changed due to an audit process. When the practice became aware of the fraudulent email, they took immediate action and contacted cyber security professionals for advice. Consequently, the practice sent an email to their entire client network warning them of a potential breach. The email reinforced existing messaging that the practice would never change their bank account details and warned clients to be vigilant of scams.

A short time later the practice was completing a property settlement, and the client received a fraudulent email. The email contained the correct date of settlement, the settlement sum, the method of transaction and the date that the final inspection was to occur. The client was about to pay the funds into the fraudulent bank account when they recalled the email warning that had been sent earlier by the practice. The client promptly phoned the practice to check details and the fraud was averted.

Warning clients about email fraud is a powerful preventative measure that helps reduce the risk of cyber-related loss and fosters a sense of trust and transparency. By informing clients of the potential risks, legal practices empower clients to be vigilant and proactive in protecting sensitive information.

Clear communication around security protocols, such as verifying payment requests by phone, strengthens the defence against fraudulent attacks. This not only mitigates the chance of successful attacks but also reinforces the firm's commitment to safeguarding clients' interests.

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