

How to Spot a Scam Artist



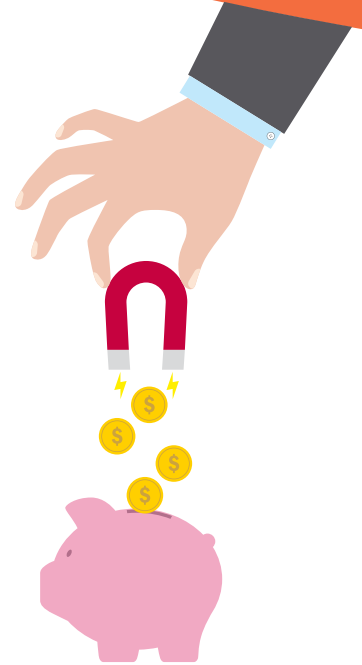
It's scary the number of ways fraud can come at you. Online, over the phone, even at your doorstep – fraud can be anywhere. To help protect yourself from scam artists, learn to spot these red flags:

Scam artists are chameleons

Scam artists are great actors. They may pretend to be anything from a financial professional to a relative. They might pretend you have things in common to gain your trust. They may have a nice website or work out of fancy offices. Don't judge a book by its cover! Scam artists will do and say anything to trick you into handing over your savings. Do some serious investigating before you part with your money.

Scam artists play to your fears

Scam artists can bring out our worst traits, including greed, fear and insecurity. They're trying to get us so worked up that we don't think too much about their offer. Scammers may play on fears of not being able to "keep up with the Joneses" or our fears about leaving our family with debt after we're gone. They may try to scare you into believing your computer is about to be hacked or your identity is about to be stolen. If you feel yourself having an emotional reaction (fear, excitement, heart racing) then you should stop and really think about what they're offering. Chances are it's a scam.



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Scam artists focus on the big score

Scam artists are great at making everything sound like a jackpot. They're trying to get you to act quickly before you miss out. Trust your instinct and walk away if you hear claims like these:

- Your return is guaranteed.
- I just got a hot tip. Earn big working from home.
- It's so easy to make big money.
- This deal is so great I invested in it myself.

Be especially careful if the salesperson doesn't want to talk about costs, downsides or risks.

Scam artists are short-term friends

Scam artists are your new best friend – until they get their hands on your money. Then it gets harder and harder to get in touch with them. If you try to get your money back, they'll have all kinds of excuses as to why you can't or why you should re-invest with them instead. Once they've gotten as much money from you as they can, they'll stop answering your calls or emails altogether. The scam artist is long gone with your money.



Scam artists pressure you to act fast

Scam artists want your money and they want it now. They know that if you don't say YES right away, you will probably not fall for their scam. They do a lot of fast talking so you won't ask questions. They think if you're listening to them you won't hear your inner voice screaming "IT'S A SCAM!" If you say you want to think it over, they will tell you the deal won't be available for much longer.

