

BEWARE... SCAMMERS AT WORK

Hello, my name is Revered Joe and I am saving the children of the world (usually). I would like a quotation for printing 100,000 flyers in colour containing (nothing much), some 150,000 labels containing less and 250,000 business cards with the wording "save the children". I also need 150 banners of an unspecified size with similar wording. I will accept your quote (although I may request a discount). You will need to pre-pay shipping via Western Union to a destination in Ghana but I will give you my credit card details (stolen and fake) as security.

By the way, I also have a second hand 2009 Ford car for sale very cheap. Are you interested?

Does anyone smell a scam brewing?

Hopefully the smell is as rancid as the insidious intent behind such requests in a scam targeting printing companies, initially in Australia and now around the world. *Printing Industries* has received hundreds of accounts from unwitting victims of the scam who did little more than respond to a print quotation request.

The majority of companies have a trail of correspondence with the scammers as they submitted their quotes and discussed specifications. In many cases poorly constructed artwork was re-done to press quality. In some cases production was undertaken. In all cases there was a cost to the companies concerned even if it was only in the time taken corresponding with the scammers.

FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

The industry cost has been significant. Internationally it would be astonishing. Since *Printing Industries* exposed the scam in February this year, the scammers have targeted companies in the US, Canada and the United Kingdom. *Printing Industries'* launch of its ScamWatch Business Guard website on <www.printnet.com.au> in April has become the international first line of defence for companies seeking guidance. Printing Industries of America, British police and UK print companies, American and Canadian print and supply companies are among the groups accessing information and providing more.

This knowledge base has been expanded through the inclusion of names being used by the scammers to help print companies to identify them. Some of the most recent additions include Dr Fred Williams, Rev. Francis Cooper, Rev. Bill, Jackson Lennon, Bill Carter, Tony

Hundreds of print companies around Australia and thousands around the world are being targeted by an international print quotation scam which centres on print job freight pre-payment. Every company targeted has had to pay a cost, even if only in time wasted.

Printing Industries has become the centre of the fight against the scammers, identifying them and working with authorities worldwide to expose their fraudulent activities. *Joe Kowalewski* explains.

- Often the scripting is in non-standard novelty fonts (Comic Sans is popular).
- Where artwork is supplied it is poor quality (Word document or PDF) sometimes containing only two or three words and a clip art image on an A4 sheet.
- There will be a request for freight pre-payment—the scammers centerpiece.
- Credit card information will be provided 'for security' and for your payment once the job is completed and freight pre-payment made by you. The credit card information is usually fake or stolen. Either way you lose out if you try to process payment. An example of scammers'

correspondence:

"Thanks A lot For The Deligency And Concern With My Order And The Units I Am Purchasing Is For An Orphanage School In Accra Ghana And I Will Like You To Contact The Cyprus Shipping Company With The Total Quantity Of The Units And Your Location Address And Ask Them For The Shipping Cost Because they have picked the same item for me before so they already know the weight. So what they would need from you now is the Pick Up location address, delivery address and quantity and type of material to be picked up. The Shipping Company contact informations is below."

False shipping company and website information is supplied. You will usually get a response from email contacts as part of the scam. You may even get a phone call and be given a local street contact address (also false). Sometimes you may receive a legitimate quotation request from a church or charitable institution. A member recently contacted me about a quote request from a priest for a World Youth Day project. It was legitimate. Remember the tell-tale signs.

Printing Industries is finalising a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). Information from companies that have suffered specific financial loss as a result of this scam will be treated confidentially and should be sent to <joe@printnet.com.au>.

Examples of scam correspondence should be emailed to <scamwatch@printnet.com.au>. ●

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Way, John Larry, Fred Hitches, Steve Tom, Terry Tomson, Father Anthony, The Annex Company Ltd, Daily Orphanage Centre, White & Company Inc, and Save the Children. Very often the scammers sign themselves as a church minister representing a charitable institution.

Although the scammers use regular names (often misspelt) and business names that may sound legitimate or similar to some known institutions, there are several tell-tale signs to look out for:

- The scammers always use non-traceable, free public email addresses such as Yahoo and Gmail (Google).
- Contact names often include use of a 'reverend' or similar church-related title.
- The majority of quotation requests purport to be on behalf of a church or other charitable institution.
- The majority of print artwork (currently) is related to 'saving children'.
- Contact is always via email often showing poor written literacy.