

“Trust, but verify”

“Trust, but verify” is an expression you may have heard or seen

It became widely reported in the mid 1980's after a political advisor - **Suzanne Massie** - translated an old Russian saying which the US President liked the sound of

It has since gained widespread traction & influence across many sectors: political, commercial, technological & beyond

“Trust, but verify”

“Доверяй, но
проверяй”

“Doveruyai, no
proveryai”



Expert on Russian culture & history
Suzanne Massie, 1986

Consider the following...

“Trust, but verify” is an example of a proverb

Proverbs are:

“a short sentence, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice”

Cambridge Dictionary (2024)

Consider the following...

Proverbs are usually short, easy to recall and share

People tend to *like* things that are easy... we usually default to patterns of behaviour & thought which are familiar to us

We often perceive the familiar as being more comfortable than the unknown

The problem...

Just because advice may be easy to remember does *not* mean it is guaranteed to always either be relevant or right

Phishing attempts use social engineering principles - modifying behaviours - coupled with **malicious** and / or **illegal** intent

They are efforts to exploit people into failing to critically think about the intent *behind* messages & their content

About that message...

1 of 2

E-mails or texts & attachments may contain code which carries malware or viruses

Links within messages may redirect you to untrustworthy sites

When speaking over the phone you may unknowingly give away data or information about you, your business or others

About that message...

2 of 2

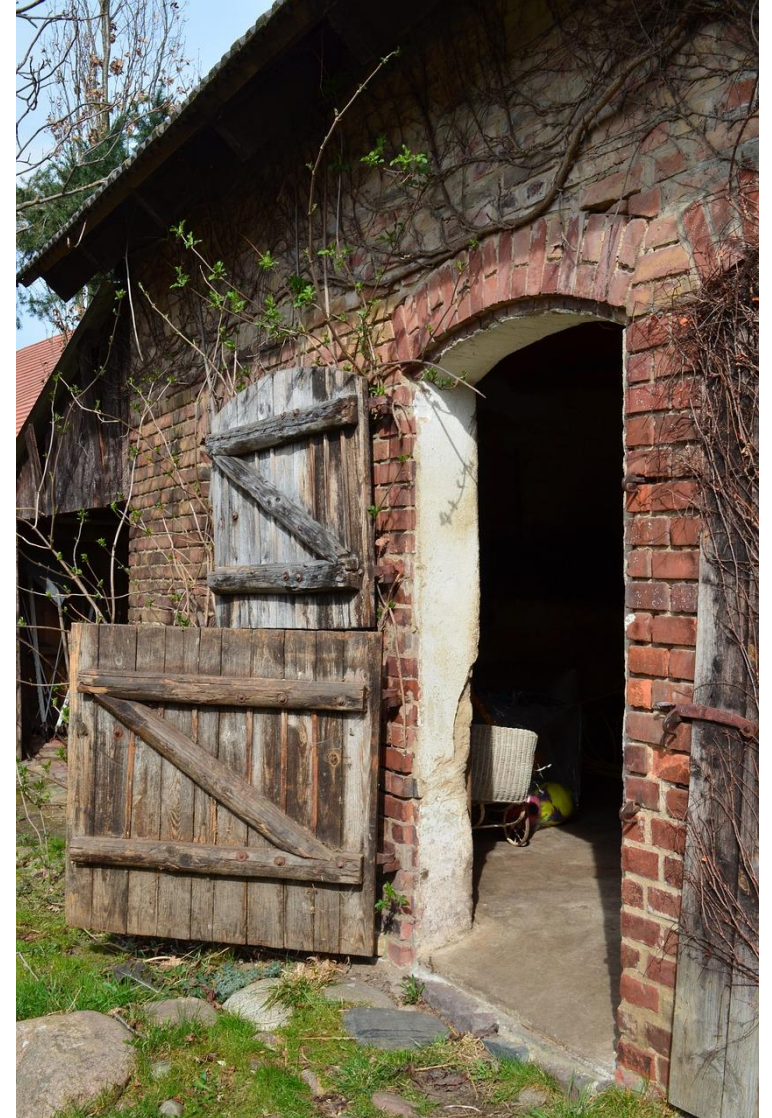
It may not occur to you at the time to consider the senders intent

Even if it *does* occur to you to verify things later you may forget, become distracted or simply be too late

You may have already exposed you or your organisation to the risk of becoming compromised

“Shutting the barn door after the horse has bolted”

Meaning: to be so late in taking action to prevent something bad happening that the bad event has already happened



Pause for thought...



A cautionary word for leadership...



Leaders should consider carefully what they say, how it is said & to whom

Whatever you say or do, encourage or permit to happen becomes your organisational culture

Keeping things simple is good... but ensure your messages are **relevant** & are **understood**

About trust...

Trust *is* fundamental to building relationships with colleagues, peers and other stakeholders

“Trust, but verify” *may* be a useful approach... sometimes... to a point

Consider the risks of assuming first & verifying later

We're all in IT together...



The modern age *is* the information age

Security breaches, service interruption, data loss etc can have massive time, financial & reputational costs

Sometimes the right thing to do is to verify first

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