

Top Tips For Safeguarding SMEs Against Identity Theft

Prevent Prying Eyes with Fellowes

To mark **Fellowes'** annual security campaign this October, the security experts, have partnered with [Bennett Arron](#) – award-winning writer, stand-up-comedian and one of the first major victims of identity theft in the UK – in a pursuit to protect businesses from the serious threat of online and paper-based identity fraud.



Identity theft was the reason for Bennett Arron owing serious amounts of money to phone companies, banks and department stores which left him penniless and homeless, leading him to produce a TV documentary called; *'How To Steal An Identity'*, and a book entitled; *'Heard The One About Identity Theft?'* as well as a stream of comedy programmes.

With the new EU Data Protection Directive coming into force in 2018, organisations will now, by law, be held responsible for their own data protection and with this mind, will need to be more security savvy and compliant.

From why document disposal is an essential component of doing business to the importance of securing sensitive information, even on the go; Bennett Arron share's his tops tips, advice and guidance on how to prevent prying eyes in the workplace.

1. Shred, Shred, Shred...

In my TV documentary *'How To Steal An Identity'*, I uncovered a thrown-away bank statement and PIN which enabled me to directly access an account. So, don't put any documents, bank statements, company data, credit card applications etc. into the rubbish bin. Shred them – ideally with a Fellowes cross-cut shredder, as dedicated fraudsters have been known to painstakingly stick bits back together – and then put them in a recycling bin.

2. Don't click the link!

Everyone has received a panicked email with the words 'Please don't open that link.' Those emails that look so genuine, offering everything from free sunglasses to a tax refund. Or the ones from a



bank, PayPal, or Apple to name a few, stating there is a problem with an account. Look at the email address carefully. It's unlikely to be a genuine one. A recent one I had was from the Inland Revenue informing me I was owed a £435.89 refund. It did look genuine. The only give away, apart from the email address, was that it was signed 'Love and Best Wishes, Inland Revenue.' Clicking on one of these from a work account can instantly give access to a whole database.

3. What's The Password?

Incredibly one of the most popular passwords is PASSWORD and one of the most popular PINs is 1234. It's important to be creative, knowing that fraudsters set up automated mechanisms to unlock passwords. So the more obscure you make it, with upper and lower case letters and numbers, the more difficult it will be to unlock. You can still use a football team, a pet, or a favourite child – just add numbers to it.

4. Use Protection And You Won't Get A Virus

Make sure you have anti-virus protection on your computers. Fraudsters are always that one step ahead but once a new virus is detected, most anti-spyware and anti-virus companies can add a protection update. If you sell company devices such as a mobiles, tablets or laptops, be sure to wipe the memory clean.

5. Careful What You Share, Like and Poke

Social media, especially Facebook, has given cyber criminals a whole new way to steal identities and access work accounts. Fraudulent links, scam offers and fake accounts are just one way of accessing data – in just a click. However, people are also putting too much information out there themselves. If you want to post your holiday photos – even though no one is really interested in seeing them – then do it when you are back home, not whilst you're still away. Especially when you're personal details show where you live! Lastly, on the subject of sharing, make sure you use a privacy filter on all devices, such as a Fellowes PrivaScreen™, when working in a café or on-the-go to keep those prying eyes and 'shoulder surfers' at bay.

Commenting on his experience, Bennett Arron concludes: "As a victim of identity theft – in fact the first major victim of the crime in the UK – I have experienced first-hand the devastating impact of losing everything to fraudsters. I also now know how easy the crime is to carry out and understand the importance of protecting businesses from it happening. Hopefully these tips to go some way to help increase workplace vigilance and encourage safe practice."



Fellowes offers a range of specialist products designed for keeping company information confidential, secure and away from prying eyes. From a choice of cross-cut shredders to discreet PrivaScreen™ privacy filters for desktop, laptops, tablets and mobiles; Fellowes provides security solutions for business you can trust.

Darryl Brunt, UK & Ireland Sales and Marketing Director at Fellowes, comments: “Corporate identity fraud and not taking basic precautions can cause substantial damage to a business, its people and its assets. Bennett Arron’s top tips are essential steps towards protecting and detecting the serious risk of identity fraud.

“Businesses should always be wary of their security and remain vigilant and alert of suspicious, unusual activity. Fellowes provides a range of security solutions for the workplace to ensure a safer, securer workplace.”

Businesses that want to know more about Fellowes’ product solutions which protect employees from prying eyes can visit www.fellowes.com.

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About Fellowes

- [Fellowes](http://www.fellowes.com), Inc. offers an extensive range of products and workspace solutions, including paper shredders and privacy screens.
- Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries.
- Visit [fellowes.com](http://www.fellowes.com) for more information.