

CSI/ Credit Scam Investigations

Printer Beware:

There's a frantic call from a new customer who is in desperate need of a print job NOW! It's a huge job. The job's formatting is simple; it promises large profit margins, and you know you can provide a quick turn around. The caller promises immediate payment with a credit card but says that you have to pay for the shipping of the job. Of course, you will be reimbursed for that cost after the job is completed and shipped. It is a dream scenario for any businessperson and unfortunately, it is also the setting of a perfect storm for a scam.

What's at risk? You'll be paid with a credit card that you can process immediately. It looks like your only risk would be the shipping, and you're willing to risk that (besides, you have the credit card number, right?)

One of our members recently encountered this exact scenario. The potential customer was an organization that, on the surface, appeared to be legitimate.

The member (thankfully) asked the single most important question: *Why me?* Our member company realized that a job that simple could be done anywhere and that the added cost of shipping negated any possible cost savings from choosing a distant printer. Recognizing that this had all the markings of a potential scam, our member did not fall into the trap. He saw through the lure of easy money that is employed by many scam artists.

Since the birth of the global economy, these types of scam artists have gotten increasingly bolder. They employ co-conspirators who steal identities and then use them fraudulently. They use the internet and fax machines as their means of reaching potential victims. The documents these scammers provide may seem legitimate, but they are not. Their tales of certain riches to be had or their search for help in dealing with a disaster or tragedy could melt even the coldest heart. These scammers will attempt to fool you by any means possible.

The best defense against such nefarious actions is to be aware of the potential risks, to ask tough questions, and to remember the old caveat: if something seems too good to be true, it usually is!

PII's website, www.pii.org, and its Credit & Collection section provide the graphic art industry a way to better identify and minimize potential risk. To talk about how to protect your company from scammers, contact Andrea Schlack, Vice President, PII Credit Bureau at (847) 265-0400.

For more information and the wide scope of varying Nigerian scams (where many appear to generate from) the following link is very informative:

[Nigerian Fraud Email Gallery \(http://potifos.com/fraud/\)](http://potifos.com/fraud/)