

Spam For Dummies

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Boss: An internet scam boss. Can be played by either gender.

Boss is writing/typing.

“...to collect your five million dollar prize...” No. “Fifteen million dollar prize” – that’s far more convincing – “please reply to this email and supply your bank details within twenty-four hours. Yours sincerely, Google.” No. “Google International Headquarters.” Way classier.

Ah, Muhumbo isn’t it? How’s my brother from the udder of another mother’s love rudder? How’s the work coming along? Yeah? Super – let me take a squiz.

Boss takes and reads from a laptop (mimed), mouthing along. He nods approvingly, frowns, laughs, then becomes stonily sincere.

Okay Muhumbo, few things. You’ve never met this person before, right, yet you refer to him with “Hello firstname.” Little too familiar, buddy. Why don’t you try “Dear respected Sir” instead? He’ll open your email and straight away get a little confidence boost. Then you go on to say, “Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mularm... Muharn...” [*frowns in concentration*] etcetera, but you don’t acknowledge the shock he would *obviously* be feeling while reading this. Okay? Type this: “Dear respected Sir. You must be surprised to hear from me today.” That’s better, isn’t it? See the emotional rollercoaster you’ve put that guy on? He’s going to be ready for anything.

Boss turns as someone approaches him.

Ah, Tatiana. There’s my little lovebird. Found the man of your dreams yet? That rich, handsome and, well, *rich* man?

Boss laughs heartily at his own wit.

Alright, let’s see it. Hmm, yep. Yep. I see. That looks about right. Good. Very good. Ooh, I like that.

Okay Tatiana, this whole thing is terrible. Do you want this man to fall in love with you and give you all his money? Then you need to ditch this whole subtlety thing. “I found your profile online and we have a lot in common.” *A lot in common?* I have a lot in common with my dog, Tatiana. We both pee on trees and hump anything that doesn’t get away in time but I don’t want to pay fifty K to fly him out of Russia. You should say “...found your profile and I have fallen deeply and irreversibly in love with you.” Imagine the pure exhilaration he’ll feel knowing an Eastern European beauty is in love with his bland arse.

On paragraph two you say, “I am just average girl looking for the man of dreams.” Love the syntax Tati, but no one wants an average girl. Rich, confident men have pride: they know

what they want and that is *not* humbleness. Change it to, “I am beautiful Russian girl with D-cup and limited inhibitions.”

Boss turns suddenly.

Ah, David. How’s your appeal going? Good good. Give us a gander.

Boss starts reading, muttering phrases like “tiny penis”, “woeful sex life”, “pathetic excuse for a male specimen.” Excited, he hustles everyone in.

Alright people, come on in. Have a listen to David’s email. “Do you suffer from a chronic limp dick? Do women laugh at you when your pants are down? Don’t be an impotent loser any longer. Get your hands on Cialis and have her moaning for more all night. Buy in bulk – you need it.”

That’s poetry, David. Fucking Shakespeare. Can you imagine how ashamed any man reading that would feel? The first thing *I’d* do is go straight out and buy a crate of that shit. David, you should add in an on-sell. Drop in some links to penis enlargement surgery and we’ll cut a deal with that hospital in Thailand.

Team, this is the kind of approach we all need to be taking. You know how much this project is costing me? Flights, accommodation, hiring this [*looks around distastefully*] *charming* work space, your twenty thousand dollar fees. *Hundreds of thousands*, is how much. You know what hundreds and thousands means? It means I want goddamn results! You are supposed to be the best spam email authors in the world but I am not seeing world-class work.

You there, Fong isn’t it? Fung? *Fuong?* [*pause*] Stephen, right. Hand me your tablet Stephen; show me what you’ve done.

Boss takes a tablet and reads for a moment. He shows the tablet to his audience.

Look team, can you all see these email Feng wrote? An email from PayPal asking users to click on the link and verify their account details. Can anyone see what’s wrong with this? There’s not a single typo! Nobody writes a perfect email – other than Feng, clearly. PayPal workers are only human just like you and I. [*hands tablet back*] I want to see at least one spelling, grammatical or punctuation error per paragraph before you hand this back to me young man.

Alright you lot, get back to work. David, you were working on another piece were you not? Can I have a geez? Ta. [*reading the highlights*] “Elsie Mueller. Fifteen year old girl. Waiting to collect my inheritance. Mum died in a car accident. Dad died during childbirth.” *Dad* died during childbirth? [*pause*] I guess it *is* a pretty rough thing to watch. “German law won’t allow me to inherit until I’m eighteen. Need an adult to help.”

You know what I like about this, David? Not only is this an original spin on the old Nigerian scam, but you’ve set her in Germany. *Everyone* trusts the Germans. The only thing you can

do to improve this one is put a bit of stress and emphasis in the right places to make it look really urgent and serious. Rewrite the whole thing in caps and it's good to go.

Boss walks away from David and sighs deeply.

Pack of idiots. David's the only one with any creative nous. Really starting to wonder if they're the right people to make me rich. Stupid people are so unpredictable.

Oh, hello Tatiana. Did you need something? *[pause]* Well of course you haven't been paid yet – you haven't completed the work I'm paying you for! *[pause]* I promised you payment *on completion*. *[pause]* I paid for your flights, food and accommodation. *[pause]* Okay, but you'll be reimbursed for the flights when I pay your fee and you can't say unlimited Fanta and Snickers isn't proper food. Snickers has the goodness of nuts. *[pause]* Forget about the due date; that stuff lasts for decades. Look, I know you've all been here for a week and you're keen to wrap it up. I get that. I'll sort something out soon.

Boss sees someone going by and catches their attention.

Ah, Alejandro! I was looking for you. How's the R&D project going? Can I take a peek?

Boss reads something for a few seconds, nodding along.

So let me get this straight – you email a physiotherapist and tell him you have a sporting team coming from overseas who need a whole stack of appointments while they're here and you ask to pay in advance to secure their places. Then after they provide their bank details you hack into their accounts. *[pause]* Love it. It's brilliant. But you should make one little adjustment to seal the deal. Add a sentence about how beautiful the athletes are and that they're willing to do *anything* to secure their bookings. No matter how reputable any physio is, he won't be able to resist that offer.

Boss turns as someone gets his attention.

Muhumbo! You startled me. What's going on? *[agitated]* Didn't I make it perfectly clear that you would be paid on completion? Get back to bloody work. I really need everyone to email me their final scripts ASAP so I can start sending them out to the world.

Oh now what? Feng, I suppose you want to complain about your pay as well? Great.

Boss claps his hands loudly and gets everyone to come in.

Okay everyone. I really thought we'd moved past the pay disputes but clearly it's still on your minds. I'm going to put this to rest once and for all. I told you all I'd pay on completion, and I will. I told you all I'd reimburse your flights as soon as you arrived; when I said "as soon as", like, I mean *really soon* after. Look here, see this email? It clearly shows that I'm expecting a huge tax return any day now from the Federal Bureau of Taxation.

What's that, Feng? The hotel owner kicked you out? Well why didn't you pay the man? What kind of a human being are you staying in someone's hotel and refusing to pay?

Boss is very frustrated now and takes a moment to settle himself down. It doesn't work.

Okay guys. I've had enough. Email me your work and I'll pay you now. Screw it – you've worked hard enough. I can make the final edits. Happy with that, David? Of course you are; you're the reasonable one. What about you, Tatiana? Have you emailed me your latest draft? No? Well hurry up and send it through! And you, Muhumbo. Press the damned forward button and enter in my email address. Come on, you want to be paid? Then deliver the goods I'm paying you for.

Is that it? Anyone else? No? So everyone's forwarded me the emails they were working on? Yes? Good, good.

Boss nods a few times to himself. He looks down at the ground musingly. Without warning, he spins on his heels and runs off stage.