

# How to Spot a Scam Artist



Scams come in many forms, and it can be tricky to tell the difference between a scam and a legitimate offer. To help protect yourself from scam artists, watch out for these warning signs:

## Scam Artists Like to Blend In

Scam artists know they have to disguise their true motives. Whether your first contact is over the phone, by email or in person, the scam artists take great pains to look and sound familiar. They like to blend in with others in your union or association. They will quickly get to know a lot of people in the group and count on this common bond to spread the word about their scam and reel in unsuspecting targets.

## Scam Artists Dress for Success

Even though scam artists want you to believe that they are “just regular folks like yourself” they know that’s not enough to get you to part with your money. They’ll work very hard to come across as smooth, professional and successful. They may dress like they are wealthy or work out of impressive looking offices. Your best bet is to look beyond the surface and do some serious investigating before you part with your money.

## Scam Artists Bring Out the Worst in You

Skilled scam artists can bring out our worst traits, including greed, fear, and insecurity. Scammers hope that by pushing our emotional hot buttons we will react on impulse without taking the time to think through our purchase and investment decisions. They may try to scare you into buying from them by suggesting that not buying their products or services may put your family’s health and safety at risk. They know that investment opportunities promising huge returns with no risk will get your attention. They hope it will get your money too! Con artists will try to make you feel inadequate or even stupid if you don’t believe them or ask too many questions.



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## Contact us

**Financial and Consumer  
Services Commission**  
Toll Free: 1 866 933-2222  
Facsimile: 1 506 658-3059  
[info@fcnb.ca](mailto:info@fcnb.ca)

85 Charlotte Street,  
Suite 300  
Saint John, NB  
E2L 2J2

[fcnb.ca](http://fcnb.ca)



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### **Scam Artists Focus on the Silver Lining**

We have all heard the saying “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is”. Trust your instinct and walk away from any sale or investment opportunity that sounds too good to be true. Every investment involves risk. Trust your instinct and inner voice if you hear claims like these: “Your return is guaranteed. There’s no way you can lose money.” Be especially careful of sales that offer high end products at extremely low prices. The product may be defective, lower quality than advertised, or may never be delivered.

### **Scam Artists Are Fair Weather Friends**

Before you hand over your money, remember scam artists are very friendly. They take a personal interest in you, out of the blue. They call back when they promise they will and each time you talk they tell you even more great things about the investment opportunity, product or service they are offering. But, be on guard. Despite the kind words, a scam artist will do anything in his or her power to make a sale. Once your money is in their pocket, contacts with the scam artists slow down and eventually stops altogether. By then, the scam artist is long gone with your money.



### **Scam Artists Pressure You to Act Fast**

Scam artists use this tactic to get you to make a quick decision before you have time to research the product or investment they are selling, ask questions, or get a third-party opinion. They may use promises of insider tips or other secret information that the general public doesn’t have or stress that their great deal won’t last for long. Always take time to investigate. Don’t be blinded by the enthusiasm or charisma of the salesperson – they may have more to gain by taking your money than you know about.

