

THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF PHISHING

What could one click cost your business?

Phishing is a people risk with financial, operational, and commercial consequences. Continuous training helps close the gap your security tools cannot fully recover.

R19 million

average cost of a ransomware incident for a South African business – ransom, downtime, remediation, and recovery.

Sophos State of Ransomware SA Report 2025

Continuous training changes the risk equation

Once-off awareness fades. An ongoing programme builds habits, tests behaviours, and creates usable evidence.

	Do nothing	IronTree managed SAT
Annual cost	R0 up front	From R65 per user per month for a team of up to 25 staff, plus a once-off onboarding fee. The bigger your team, the lower your cost
Time cost to your team	Zero – until an incident consumes days or weeks	Near zero. IronTree schedules, runs, and reports
Phishing susceptibility	About 1 in 3 staff click a simulated phishing link	Fewer than 1 in 20 after 12 months; improvement visible within 3 months
Financial exposure	R19m average ransomware incident cost (Sophos 2025); R44.1m average total breach cost (IBM 2025)	Materially reduced, and documented
POPIA position	Hard to show you took reasonable steps if a breach occurs	Ongoing, evidenced training programme – the documented reasonable steps regulators look for
Cyber insurance	Most insurers now ask for SAT evidence. Absence is a risk you carry at claim time – 27% of claims globally result in partial or no payout due to undocumented controls	Ongoing logs, simulation results, and risk score trends – the documentation most insurers ask for
If the worst happens	Downtime, recovery, lost client trust, possible POPIA penalty, many multiples of the training cost	The single most cost-effective human-layer control already in place

3-5

hours of monthly scheduling, simulations, completion chasing, and reporting can be taken off your team's plate with the managed option.

The business case is bigger than security

POPIA

Documented, ongoing training helps show that reasonable organisational measures are in place.

CYBER INSURANCE

Training records, simulation results, and risk trends are increasing expected at underwriting and claim time.

GROWTH PROCUREMENT

Evidence of staff security controls can support RFP's and enterprise supply-chain requirements.

POPIA requires	Cyber insurers increasingly ask for
"Appropriate technical and organisational measures" to protect personal data	Documented SAT programme
Staff training on data handling and breach escalation	Phishing simulation results and completion logs
Documented incident response capability	Evidence of ongoing training (not a once-a-year session)
Proportionate protection across the whole organisation	Measurable risk reduction over time

ROI

Training your staff to avoid a breach costs significantly less than recovering from one – financially, operationally, reputationally, and commercially.

PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

Six actions to reduce your phishing risk

Phishing risk reduces when people know what to do, processes make the safe choice easy, and technical controls limit the impact of a mistake.

1**Train throughout the year**

Use short, regular training to keep new threats front of mind.

2**Run tests with simulations**

Run phishing simulations to give employees practical experience identifying suspicious messages.

3**Make reporting simple**

Give employees a clear, blame-free way to report suspicious messages quickly.

4**Verify sensitive requests**

Confirm payments, bank detail changes, and unusual requests through a trusted second channel.

5**Strengthen technical safeguards**

Require MFA and use advanced email security to reduce exposure and limit the impact.

6**Improve the programme**

Review training, simulation and incident trends regularly, then adapt your programme based on what you learn.

Before SAT, 1 in 3 employees click a phishing link

After 12 months: fewer than 1 in 20. An 86% reduction.

KnowBe4, 2025 – 67.7M simulations

Know your Phishing Risk Score

Take the free five-minute Phishing Risk Check, or speak to an IronTree expert about a fully managed SAT programme.

[TAKE THE PHISHING RISK CHECK](#)[BOOK A 30-MIN CONSULTATION](#)