

Title:

Buyer Beware: Free Magazine Trials

Word Count:

663

Summary:

Retailers know the best way to pique a potential customers interest is to offer a free item. Bargain shoppers are always searching for a great deal and think they are receiving more for their money when businesses offer merchandise free of charge. Would be buyers should always look at an offer for free items with a discerning eye. The old edict almost always holds true "if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Retailers know the best way to pique a potential customers interest is to offer a free item. Bargain shoppers are always searching for a great deal and think they are receiving more for their money when businesses offer merchandise free of charge. Would be buyers should always look at an offer for free items with a discerning eye. The old edict almost always holds true "if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

Business owners are in business to make money; something nearly impossible to do if all merchandise is given away for free. Unscrupulous businesses have started to sprout up offering free subscriptions on a trial basis to popular magazines. These dishonest companies dupe customers into believing their false claims of free trial issues and the unsuspecting customers often end up with bills and unauthorized credit charges for these "free" items.

The premise sounds pretty straight forward. Receive a specific amount of magazine issues free of charge. It is supposed to be a win-win situation for both publishers and consumers. Consumers get to try out the magazine free of charge to see if the magazine suits their tastes. If it does they can purchase a subscription, if not they have not lost any money in the process. Publishers get to expose their brand to customers in hopes that they will commit and purchase the subscription. Unfortunately things rarely work out this way.

Consumers may find that agreeing to this free magazine trial unwittingly means signing up for book of the month or record clubs without their knowledge. This information is only divulged once they see a charge on their credit cards that they are unfamiliar with. These charges can be recurring, even though customers rarely get the merchandise they are being billed for.

Customers signing up for these free trials must divulge personal information such as their name, address, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc to qualify for their free trials. The reason for this is soon apparent as individuals see an increase in the number of unsolicited telephone calls, marketing material sent to their home address, and SPAM sent via e-mail. These companies generate large profits by selling customer information to mass marketers, who have dozens of advertisers interested in more customers to purchase their services.

Most surprising to customers is usually the first bill they receive in the mail for their free magazines before the first issue has even been received. Customers are expected to make a decision as to whether or not they would like to continue with the subscription sight unseen. Should they not respond in send in payment to the first bill, the second bill with a late notice is usually received soon after.

Those unhappy with the magazine or the service they receive find that the bills received do not stop even after canceling the free magazine trial. They often find themselves in collections for failure to pay. The dishonest magazine subscription service hopes that those affected will not want to risk harming their credit scores and pay for the subscription instead.

Unfortunately, the shopper out looking for a bargain find themselves charged yearly as many of these subscriptions automatically renew. Trying to contact the firm usually proves futile as there is usually no contact information or phone number published.

When trying to decide if purchasing a magazine subscription or any other merchandise consumers should be very wary of such offers. In most instances you never get something for nothing. In the case of magazine subscriptions, it may be best to purchase one or two issues at the newsstand. There should be enough information to gauge whether or not a magazines editorial focus is worth the cost of a subscription.

Most magazine publishers have developed comprehensive websites as a compliment to their print magazines. Some areas are only open to current subscribers, but there is enough information for customers to make a decision; free of charge and

without receiving any bills in the mail.