

THE LEGITIMATE SCAM

After spending the last 2 months talking to people who don't know anything about "our" type of mail order, I found it evident that every one of them was introduced to mail order through "The Legitimate Scam!" What is this scam and why can't it be stopped? Basically, because it IS a legitimate scam!

Now come on Victoria, who ever heard of a legitimate scam?

Example 1. Collect names for us. We pay \$20 each. Guaranteed!

The truth is, this company WILL pay you \$20 for each name you collect for them. What they don't tell you is that each person has to spend \$100 or more by placing an order before you get your \$20.

The beginner is led to believe that all they have to do is get out their phone books and start sending the company names and addresses. In return, the company will send them \$20 for each name and address they send them.

When they send away for the details they discover the "Legitimate Scam" and think everybody in mail order is operating this way. Result: Mail order is labeled as a scam and illegal business activity.

Here's another example:

Example 2. How to flood your mailbox with \$1 bills. Just send \$1 for information.

To the seasoned pro, he or she can recognize this scam as very obvious - but to the beginner it's very intriguing. Besides, it only costs \$1 to find out.

What the beginner finds out is that they are expected to run the same ad in newspapers and tabloids. Other people will send \$1 for information and their mailbox is "supposedly" flooded with \$1 bills. This ad is NOT illegal. It asks you to send \$1 for information and you DO get the information.

These types of ads are all a bunch of paper-passing - and I classify them under the heading of a "Legitimate Scam." You can't complain that your order was not filled. You can't complain the idea is not possible. You can't complain the ad promised something it didn't deliver.

Around 1965 a guy ran an ad in 1,000's of national magazines that said: "How to make \$10,000 a year. Send \$1 for the complete answer." A co-worker I knew responded to the ad and in return received a piece of paper that said: "Get a job."

So friends, if this type of activity has been going on since 1965 - and I suspect it really started in the Garden of Eden, why do you think we can put an end to it in the 1990's?

However - don't confuse the "Legitimate Scam" with "Lead-Generating Ads" A mail order buddy of mine will run an ad that states: "Want to make a lot of money? Call (his telephone number)" This is NOT necessarily a scam or rip-off. Since there is no cost involved - it might be worth your time and effort to call the number and see what this dealer has to offer.

Also, some dealers run ads that don't tell you what the product is because they have an entire package of information they want to send you. It would be too costly to advertise the complete information in a small 1" or 2" ad, so they run "Lead-Generating Ads" to bring them inquiries. This is also NOT illegal and is common business practice. You'll also find that real "Lead-Generating Ads" DON'T ask you for a lot of money up front. They only tell you enough about the product to entice you to send in a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) or \$1 for more information. They are unlike the "Example 2" (above) that basically tells you the scam before you order it! (It may take a little time for you to make the distinction between these fine lines.)

However, our duty as good mail order dealers should be to ban together and inform the public that "normal" mail order is NOT a part of the "Legitimate Scam." And when we see one - we should cut it out and send to a mail order publisher to expose. So many people overlook the power of the PRINTED WORD. Instead of complaining, people should be writing their mail order publishers when they are ripped-off, providing them with documentation and a 2 or 3 paragraph summary of the "Legitimate Scam."

Use wisdom. Get your facts straight. Have documentation to back-up your findings and submit them! Wouldn't it be great if everybody in the world were honest? What a wonderful world this would be!