

Don't Get Ripped Off By A Rebate!

Think you're getting a great deal thanks to that unbelievable rebate? Think again...

The offers are irresistible but misleading; retailers advertise after-rebate prices on hardware and software to grab your attention and get you to buy. But are you really getting the bargain you expect?

They're Counting On You To Forget

According to the NPD Group, a global market research firm, almost one-third of all computer products and twenty percent of all consumer electronics are sold with a rebate. Manufacturers use rebates as an easy way to offer discounts without actually having to take the full financial hit; that's because thirty to fifty percent of the buyers never attempt to redeem them and therefore end up paying full price for the merchandise.

Multiple Hoops, More Hassle

But they're not just counting on you to forget. To further tip the scales in their favor of not having to make good on their promise, some manufacturers and retailers are imposing impossible restrictions, complicating the process to request a rebate, delaying payments, and creating other barriers that make it difficult to get your money. All of these are delaying tactics to get you to give up the good fight.

Will These New Rules and Regulations Protect You?

With consumer complaints to the FTC and Better Business Bureau piling up, regulators have tightened the rules around advertising rebates.

Last year, the FTC settled its first dispute with a Dallas-based CompUSA store for knowingly advertising rebates from computer peripherals manufacturer Qps Inc., even though they knew this manufacturer wasn't fulfilling on the rebates advertised.

After this settlement, CompUSA was not only required to advertise the time frame for securing the rebates advertised, but also had to take financial responsibility for any rebates not paid during the promised time frame.

Event though the government is on your side, getting stuck in the middle of a rebate war is very frustrating and a huge waste of time. If you are going to try and cash-in on a rebate, here are some tips that will help.

5 Ways To Get The Rebate Check You Were Promised

1. Follow the rebate instructions carefully. Many manufacturers will reject a rebate over a tiny technicality. That means reading the small print and following the instructions to the letter.
2. Make a copy of all the paperwork, receipts, and documents before mailing them off. Some manufactures may request the original receipt; if you mail in your only copy, you could be out of luck if it gets “lost” in the mail. Which brings me to tip #3...
3. Mail your rebate via certified mail to have proof of delivery.
4. Schedule a reminder to yourself to call the company if your rebate doesn't show up within the time frame promised. Most companies will have a website or toll-free number to call to track your rebate.
5. If the manufacturer rejects your rebate or is holding your check, let them know you plan on contacting the FTC or the Better Business Bureau. Ask the people you speak to for their names and ask to speak to their supervisor.

As a final word of advice, only purchase things you can afford without the rebate. Many rebates take months to process.