

To RE or Not To Re (bate)

Of the many ways there are for a consumer to save money on a product, and for a manufacturer to offer those savings, the rebate is certainly high on the list.

A rebate - an offer from the manufacturer to return money to you after the purchase of the product - is a great way for the manufacturer to offer a "perceived" discounted price with the full knowledge that they will not have to absorb the costs involved by simply cutting their price.

Studies have shown that the consumer use of rebates is actually anywhere between 5% and 60% depending on the value of the rebate. Other studies have indicated that combined with misdirected mail, receipts not being included, and time lapse, the actual payout that the manufacturers make is actually far less.

The onus for getting the "discount" is totally on the consumer's shoulders. The requirements to get your money back include getting the original rebate coupon, which you may have to request from the cashier. When you realize that you didn't get it, do you go back to request it? How many times has the package been discarded before you had the chance to clip the UPC label off? It must be the original or no rebate! What about the original receipt? What bag was it in? If you are like me, there is now a days worth of kitchen garbage on top of it. Was the rebate offer so good that you bought a few of the items? Limit one per household! Okay, who do you know that you can send the other rebates to? Can anyone get their whole address written clearly and legibly on the tiny little lines the rebate coupon provides? Manufacturer can't read it, rebate disallowed.

Finally, the legalese, please allow six to



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eight weeks for delivery. I forget what I had for lunch two days ago; will I really remember the rebate in two months? Clearly, advantage manufacturer!

I buy products with rebates whenever I can, especially if they can be tied to business usage. Look for store discounts on the products that the rebate will compound. Ask the store to print off an extra receipt for the rebate. Send the rebate in the same day you buy the product. Use a freeware program such as "Rebate Rebate" to keep track of all the information. It will remind you in six weeks about the rebate! Always print your name and address on the envelope so it is returned to you if undelivered, keep a copy of the completed rebate coupon and UPC in case the manufacturer loses it.

Finally, wait for the cheque. It may not look like a cheque when it arrives and you may not recognize the company that sent it. Put it in your wallet immediately so it doesn't get tossed with the junk mail. Take full advantage of rebate offers on items you can expense. A penny saved is a penny earned. Advantage consumer!

Jeff Bowman of Bowman Training Initiatives specializes in customized sales and productivity training. Call Jeff at 905-451-6525 to discuss your training issues. Or visit www.bowmantraining.ca