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BBB Sales Techniques

I owned/ran a two-man carpet cleaning business in the California South Bay area. I advertised in the local 'throw-away' papers that are distributed at shopping centers and liquors stores in the areas that I chose to work in. These were enough to supply me with a number of leads to keep two people busy cleaning carpets about 6 or 7 days a week.

One day I received a call from the Local Better Business Bureau that went something like this:

'Hello Mr. Murray. This is John Smith and I'm a representative of the Torrance/South Bay BBB, and we have received a number of inquiries concerning your business. There have been no complaints, you understand, but we are unable to give out any information on your business.'

At which time the call turns into a 'information collecting call' on hours of service, rates, etc.

Then, the closer: 'Would you like to become a member of the BBB and advertise in our directory?'

I think he wanted a \$120.00 for the membership, then the standard display rates were quoted, yada-yada-yada.

I declined at the time, and didn't give it any more thought. Until a month later when I got another call from yet another 'John Smith' type with the same sales lines that I now recognized as being read from a prompt list.

It all dawned on me that the BBB was a shake down company. They couldn't supply me with the names of the 'several inquiries to my business,' of course...I wasn't a member, you understand. And I would loose out on the new level of respect commanded by a company with membership in the BBB, unless I coughed up my fair share.

BBB. They are a Business, but they are not a Bureau (whatever that attempts to convey) and they are certainly not Better.

BBB. Baloney, Baloney, Baloney.