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Biz owners - do you want a satisfactory rating? Pay the BBB.

I want to agree with the business owners who have posted about their experiences with the BBB's method of recruiting members.

I ran a small business for a few years from my home. When I first opened, I received a call from the BBB - 'This is from the Better Business Bureau. We have received a few inquiries about your business. Don't worry, the good news is that there weren't any complaints. However, we couldn't give them any recommendation about your business because we don't have any records about you. We would like to come to your office to get to know your business.' At first, I was interested, but after I found out from my other colleagues who owned businesses that they wanted me to pay \$320 to become a member, I backed out.

A year later, I received a message in my office from a female rep from the BBB. This time, she used a very stern tone - 'This is from the BBB. I need the owner or an officer to return my call right away.', and she left her number. I did not return her call because, as luck would have it, I was listening to a local talk show, and one of the callers identified himself as a 'BBB salesperson' as his profession, and his job was to sell memberships. He said that the technique that they use to get the business to call back is to leave stern messages so the businesses think that someone reported them to the BBB!

Consumers may want to think twice about using the BBB as a source to investigate a company. They are better off using their state Attorney General or their local consumer reporters because there is no conflict of interest.