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Better not trust the Better Business Bureau

Mark Lacter • November 12 2010 12:11 PM



Turns out that those letter-grade scores it hands out might be nothing more than a pay-to-play scam, according to [ABC News](#), which takes a look at the BBB tonight on "20-20." Business owners are accusing the organization of giving "A" ratings to anyone who pays membership fees and "F" ratings to those that don't. The head of the BBB denies such a connection, but just to prove the case, a group of L.A. business owners shelled out the \$425 fee for a non-existent company called Hamas, named after the Middle Eastern terror group. It received an A-. From ABC:

Errors seem to abound at the Better Business Bureau. As reported by an anonymous blogger the BBB also awarded an A minus rating to a non-existent sushi restaurant in Santa Ana, California and an A plus to a skinhead, neo-

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Kevin Roderick
Editor's blog

Farewell to an unfinished garden

5:16 PM Fri | Journalist and blogger about gardens and water policy Emily Green writes about leaving her garden in the city for a new challenge in the foothills, "half the house and twice the land...and has sandy loam instead of clay."

4:57 PM Fri | Harris re-takes the lead in attorney general race *

2:02 PM Fri | Stardom is coming back for Louis Zamperini

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Nazi web site called Stormfront. Each listing cost \$425. "They ran the credit card and within 12 hours they were an approved, accredited member," said the anonymous blogger, who runs a site called bbbroundup.com. "They're more interested in the money than their credibility," he said.

[CUT]

As part of the ABC News investigation, an ABC News producer with a camera was present as two small business owners in Los Angeles were told by Better Business Bureau tele-marketers that their grades of C could be raised to A plus if they paid \$395 membership fees. Terri Hartman, the manager of a Los Angeles antique fixtures store, Liz's Antique Hardware, was told only a payment could change her grade, based on one old complaint that had already been resolved. "So, if I don't pay, even though the complaint has been resolved, I still have a C rating?" Hartman then read off her credit card number and the next business day the C grade was replaced with an A plus, and the one complaint was wiped off the record.

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4:10 PM Fri | It'll be on the same site of a Chrysler dealership that was abandoned six years ago

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1:06 PM Fri | Bad day for *everything*

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