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TicketNetwork Sues Ct Better Business Bureau For Deceptive Practices

By [George Gombossy](#) | Last updated Sep 9, 2010, 4:19 pm

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Under the category of about time, the Better Business Bureau was sued this week by TicketNetwork, Inc., which provides marketing and software solutions to ticket sellers and resellers.

The suit against the Connecticut chapter – which follows the same deceptive practices that most other chapters use nationally, is accused of ‘pay to play’ ratings system by which businesses who pay the BBB fees for membership may in turn receive ratings that are better than those businesses who do not pay to join the BBB. TicketNetwork, however, has a no rating from the BBB which claims it doesn’t have enough information on the company to provide a rating.

“TicketNetwork also claims that the BBB’s website misleads consumers from perceiving this favoritism and encourages them to engage fee-paying Accredited Businesses over unaccredited businesses that have not paid fees to the BBB. The lawsuit is pending in the Connecticut Superior Court, and through it TicketNetwork seeks a court order to enjoin BBB’s practices, as well as recovery of its costs of the lawsuit,” says a release from Ticketnetwork.

This BBB practice has been the subject of numerous columns I have written, including the [last ones](#) in which a group of California businessmen set up bogus companies including one named “Hammas” and were given top ratings because they paid fees. The group – whose members are secret – are attempting to show that the BBB, despite its claim of thoroughly checking out accredited (paying) businesses before giving them a rating, do little or no checks sometimes.

State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal has been claiming that he is investigating the BBB’s practices for more than a year, however my sense is that it is on the back burner. It doesn’t take a year to figure out the BBB is doing something improper.

My sense was confirmed a couple of hours after publishing this column where Blumenthal’s office released a copy of a letter he wrote last month to the Conn BBB saying he is not comfortable with the letter grading system. It only took him a year to reach that conclusion after that was pointed out by several consumer columnists including myself. At the end of the column is a copy of his August letter.

TicketNetwork said “The BBB claims on its website that it is “an unbiased organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior,” “an unbiased source to guide [consumers] on matters of trust,” and the “most objective expert on the topic of trust in the marketplace.” Until the last few years, the BBB graded businesses using a “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” system. However, it now uses letter grades based on point totals, and a company’s status as a fee-paying “Accredited Businesses” may alone earn it enough points for a grade bump. Those surprising facts are not clearly disclosed on the BBB’s website.”

TicketNetwork said it decided to pursue a complaint for the simple reasons that the BBB is not upholding its tenets based on the biased information it provides to consumers and the resulting penalty it imposes on those business who do not pay its fees.

“The current BBB system gives consumers an unfair shake when it comes to providing an objective view of how businesses perform and how they treat their customers,” said Don Vaccaro, CEO of TicketNetwork. “Consumers should feel confident that the information provided by the BBB is accurate, unbiased and a clear depiction of how every business operates. The BBB’s practices call into question whether it can be used as a trusted resource prior to buying products and services. Consumers should be aware that the BBB favors paying, member businesses—this is outright favoritism influenced by payments,” added Vaccaro.

TicketNetwork was founded in 2002 and is headquartered in Vernon, Connecticut.

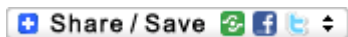
The following is a copy of the suit:

[TicketNetwork Complaint aga. BBB](#)

[Ms. Paulette Scarpetti](#)

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10 Responses for “TicketNetwork Sues Ct Better Business Bureau For Deceptive Practices”

1.  *Eric* says:
[November 10, 2010 at 1:12 pm](#)


I hope the scum at both TicketNetwork and the BBB fight a court battle that lasts for years and eventually bankrupts the both of them. Neither one has a place in an honest society. Both are useless bottom feeders providing no value at all to their customers, but are money sucking leeches who would only improve the marketplace should they fail.

[Reply](#)

2.  *Gayl* says:
[September 18, 2010 at 12:03 pm](#)


I just went through a situation where a business owner actually became physical with my husband and caused physical injury. When reported to BBB, we were told that since we were not looking for a resolution, the matter was considered closed. So, if a person calls now, they won't even know there was a complaint.

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3.  *Anna* says:
[September 13, 2010 at 8:52 pm](#)

When I posted the article that was referred to (the one with the bogus 'hamas' company) on facebook and commented “don't necessarily believe the great ratings you see” my cousin, a small business owner, got pretty upset with me because as she said, their company has an excellent rating and they didn't buy that rating and and was I saying they were a bad company etc. etc. etc.
But when I told her that companies that do buy their rating dilute the meaning of that rating and that's doing a good company like hers a disservice she calmed down and ultimately saw my point.

[Reply](#)

4.  *Cam* says:
[September 13, 2010 at 9:10 am](#)

Wow! This is so very disheartening. I have always heard that the BBB was ineffective and I always dismissed the claims. Now, I view this institution in a whole new light.

Thank you for the article. Keep up the great work. 😊

[Reply](#)

5.  *Susan Laun* says:

[September 13, 2010 at 6:58 am](#)


This is just more support for my long-standing gripe against the BBB, and the fact that they are not a true consumer protection or advocacy group. They are a facade to make people think they are being protected, but the consumer needs to know the truth.

About 6 years ago, I had my furnace (boiler) replaced by a yahoo who phenomenally bungled the job. Luckily it was not winter. He did not follow the manufacturer's installation requirements, and left off a few critical pipes. I read the manuals, and had to call him back, whereupon I was told how "stupid" I was, and that HE was the professional.

Long story short, I filed a complaint with the BBB. They did their thing, and I eventually got the guy to "fix" his work. However. I also had to get the manufacturer's technical people to intervene on my behalf. The final result is an incredibly amateurish installation, with crooked pipe joints. It works, but it screams "half-baked job" to any potential future house-buyer.


Once the issue was "resolved," the BBB removed all record of this incident from their records. Anyone else researching this moron will find "no complaints" and no record of his incompetence. That's just not right.

[Reply](#)

6.  *Barry* says:
[September 11, 2010 at 7:41 am](#)

Glad I'm not the only one who sees the irony here!


[Reply](#)

7.  *Dot Khan* says:
[September 9, 2010 at 9:14 pm](#)

It takes a crook to know a crook.

Before scalpers, I saw many great concerts including some at the Yale Bowl for \$4.00. When bands like the Eagles saw how much fans were willing to pay scalpers, they wanted a bigger cut. The face value of many tickets are now 100 times what they were back then even before the scalpers add their take.

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8.  *MikeUMA* says:
[September 9, 2010 at 1:41 pm](#)

Hard to feel sorry for ticket scalpers, they've been robbing consumers for years.

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9.  *Ben Dover* says:

[September 9, 2010 at 1:41 pm](#)

ironic that a company that basically scalps tickets at outrageous prices would sue the BBB

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10. [Tweets that mention TicketWorld Sues Ct Better Business Bureau For Deceptive Practices / Connecticut Watchdog -- Topsy.com](#) says:
[September 9, 2010 at 9:40 am](#)

[...] This post was mentioned on Twitter by George Gombossy, George Gombossy. George Gombossy said: TicketWorld Sues Ct Better Business Bureau For Deceptive Practices <http://bit.ly/c2KiN7> via @AddToAny [...]

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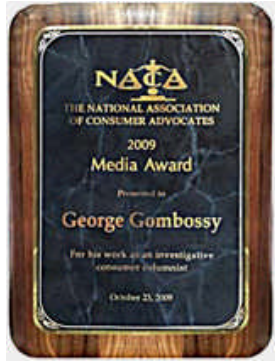


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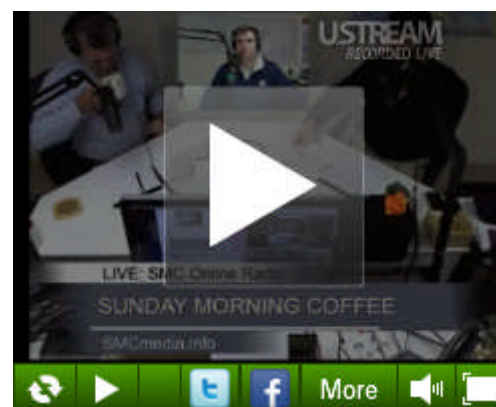
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