

Advertising Do's and Don'ts

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Do's

- Do avoid fine print disclaimers; they usually don't change the general impression given by an advertisement. If you do use disclaimers, make sure the overall impression created by the ad and the disclaimer is not misleading.
- Do fully and clearly disclose all important information in the advertisement.
- Do avoid using terms or phrases in an advertisement that are not meaningful and clear to the ordinary person.
- Do charge the lowest of two or more prices appearing on a product.
- Do ensure that you have reasonable quantities of the product advertised at a bargain price.
- Do, when conducting a contest, disclose all important details required by the [Competition Act](#) before potential participants are committed to it.
- Do ensure that your sales staff is familiar with these "Do's and Don'ts". Advertisers may be held responsible for representations made by employees.

Don'ts

- Don't confuse "regular price" or "ordinary price" with "manufacturer's suggested list price" or a term of the sort; they are often not the same.
- Don't use "regular price" or "ordinary price" in an advertisement unless the product has been offered in good faith for sale at that price for a substantial period of time, or a substantial volume of the product has been sold at that price.
- Don't use the words "sale" or "special" in relation to the price of a product unless there has been a significant price reduction.
- Don't run a "sale" for a long period or repeat it every week.
- Don't increase the price of the product or service to cover the cost of a free product or service.
- Don't use illustrations that are different from the product being sold.
- Don't make a performance claim unless you can prove it, even if you think it is accurate. Testimonials don't usually amount to enough proof.
- Don't sell a product above your advertised price.
- Don't unduly delay the distribution of prizes when running a contest.
- Don't forget that no one actually needs to be misled for a court to find that an advertisement is misleading.

Source: Competition Bureau, Industry Canada

For further information regarding starting a business, contact the

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