



Better Business Bureau of Vancouver Island

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For Immediate Release

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SCAM ALERT

DIRECTORY SCAMS TARGETING ISLAND BUSINESSES

VICTORIA B.C. — The Better Business Bureau (BBB) warns Vancouver Island businesses to be wary of solicitations to advertise in illegitimate business directories.

BBB has recently received numerous calls from local businesses stating that they are receiving unsolicited invoices (via fax and email) requesting payment for advertising in suspicious business directories. The majority of these business directories appear to be web and DVD based. The invoices to advertise in these directories have an official appearance, contain the correct mailing address, phone number and website of local businesses and often request payment by cheque or bank transfer. Some businesses claim that prior to receiving these invoices they received a phone call from an unidentified source, confirming their company contact information.

Every year the BBB finds local companies being targeted by similar business directory scams. The scams usually take place at the same time legitimate phone and business directories are updating their publications. Illegitimate business directory scams usually request payment by cheque, money order or wire transfer. Local businesses send money to never hear from scammers again. In some instances business and financial information is collected and local companies find their identities have been stolen. In other instances, the business directory scammers mis-represent the advertising opportunity by promising a wide consumer distribution of the directory, when in reality only companies that have advertised in the directory receive copies of it.

To protect your business from becoming a victim of fraud consider the following tips:

- Stay informed on current scams targeting businesses. Visit vi.bbb.org for regular updates;
- Educate your staff about the business directory scam and other scams targeting businesses;
- Do not give out private business information without confirming who you are giving it to;
- Carefully review all invoices and cross reference them with your company expense records before making a payment;
- Before doing business with any other company check them out at bbb.org;
- Make a list of specific directories that you wish to advertise in each year and only advertise and make payments to those specific companies.
- If you receive a suspicious invoice – don't send money. Take the time to do some research first. Is the company legitimate? Where are they located? Have you heard of them before? What services are they offering? Does the offer affectively address your needs?
- If you think you're the target of a business scam inform the BBB.

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**To schedule an interview,
please contact:**

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About BBB: BBB is an unbiased non-profit organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behaviours. Businesses that earn BBB accreditation contractually agree and adhere to the organization's high standards of ethical business behavior. BBB provides objective advice, free business BBB Reliability Reports™ and educational information of topics affecting marketplace trust. Please visit vi.bbb.org for more information about BBB.