

# Commitment to Consumer Choice and Other DMA Requirements.

If you shop direct—by mail, online, telephone, or home shopping TV shows—chances are the companies that you are ordering from are members of the Direct Marketing Association (DMA). DMA wants the nation's consumers to feel confident when purchasing from a DMA member.

DMA, the leading trade association for business organizations using direct marketing techniques, advocates industry standards for responsible marketing to ensure that your rights are protected. We hold our members to a stricter code of ethical standards that in many cases goes above and beyond legal requirements. To ensure that companies are marketing to you in a fair and honest manner, DMA has a formal complaint handling committee to enforce DMA guidelines.

The information that follows explains the ethical standards that DMA members adhere to as well as the role DMA plays in protecting these standards.

## **DMA members are governed by:**

1. DMA Member Principles
2. DMA's Commitment to Consumer Choice
3. Guidelines for Ethical Business Practice
4. Committee Complaint Resolution Process

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## **Member Principles**

### **A DMA Member:**

- Is committed to its customers' satisfaction.
- Clearly, honestly and accurately represents its products, services, terms and conditions.
- Delivers its products and services as represented.
- Communicates in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Responds to inquiries and complaints in a constructive, timely way.
- Maintains appropriate security policies and practices to safeguard information.

- Provides information on its policies about the transfer of personally identifiable information for marketing purposes.
  - Honors requests not to have personally identifiable information transferred for marketing purposes.
  - Honors requests not to receive future solicitations from its organization.
  - Follows the spirit and letter of the law as well as DMA's Guidelines for Ethical Business Practice.
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## Commitment to Consumer Choice

The Commitment to Consumer Choice (CCC) is a public assurance that all members of the DMA, including DMA nonprofit members, will follow certain specific practices to address the preferences and concerns of consumers and policymakers. It also provides a pro-active approach to environmental and privacy issues. Information about the CCC, approved by DMA's Board of Directors in May 2007, can be found at [www.DMACCC.org](http://www.DMACCC.org). Specifically, the CCC requires our members to:

1. Provide (by October 2009) existing and prospective customers and donors with notice of an opportunity to modify future mail solicitations from their organization. The notice should contain access to an option to eliminate future commercial mailings, and may also offer additional modification options.
2. Accept and maintain consumer requests to be on an in-house suppress file to stop receiving solicitations from organizations you do not currently do business with. This means that if you ask a DMA member to stop sending you marketing promotions, the member is required to honor this request.
3. Provide customers with annual notice of their ability to opt out of information exchanges.
  - This provides you an opportunity to let companies know if you don't want your name, address or other information shared with other companies.
  - This requirement is even stricter for online marketers, which are required to provide notice of their own online privacy practices on their website.
4. Honor customer opt-out requests not to have this contact information transferred to others for marketing purposes.
5. Upon request by a consumer, disclose the source from which it obtained personally identifiable data about that consumer thus explaining why a marketing communication from that company was received.

6. Use the DMAchoice suppression files on a monthly basis.
  - If you wish to reduce marketing and nonprofit promotions, you can sign up for DMAchoice. One option is that you can get your name removed from most national mailers. You can also choose specific organizations/brands you would like to hear from, or not hear from.
  - DMA has a Deceased Do Not Contact service to help family members, friends, and caregivers with the process of removing the names of deceased individuals from commercial marketing lists, and a Do Not Contact Service for Caregivers who wish to assist those they care for in reducing the volume of mail received.

All members that market directly to consumers are encouraged to view an instructional Web-based training video on the details of the Commitment to Consumer Choice, and complete an online test. Members are asked to display the DMA member logo to demonstrate their adherence to the principles underlying the Commitment to Consumer Choice (CCC) and signaling their compliance with the DMA's Ethical Guidelines.

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## Guidelines for Ethical Business Practice

A DMA Member is required to honor DMA's ethical guidelines, which reflect high levels of standards based on fair and ethical principles ([www.dmaresponsibility.org/Guidelines](http://www.dmaresponsibility.org/Guidelines)). Our members are also encouraged to ask other industry members that they work with to follow these self-regulatory guidelines. DMA's guidelines cover all modes of marketing, most notably online, telephone, and mail. And in many cases our guidelines go beyond the law. Some key provisions, in addition to the principles pointed out above, include:

- **Authenticating Marketing Emails:** Marketers that use email for communication and transaction purposes should adopt and use identification and authentication protocols to reassure consumers that the email they send is actually from them, and not from a fraudster. Authentication helps prevent spam, which can harm consumers by causing problems such as ID theft.
- **No Marketing Calls To Cell Phones:** A marketer should not knowingly place a call or send a voice or text message to a wireless telephone number for which the called party must pay the charge. The exception is in instances where the consumer (or business) provided the number to the marketer for that purpose. (Federal law only bans calls to cell phones if automatic dialing systems are used.)

## Committee Complaint Resolution Process

DMA takes very seriously any violation of our Principles, Commitment to Consumer Choice or Guidelines. A Committee made up of DMA members investigates consumer complaints, works with marketers to resolve problems, and if necessary, censures companies publicly and refers possible illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

If you believe that a member of DMA has employed a questionable marketing promotion or practice, please fill out our online complaint handling form at: [www.dmaresponsibility.org/ComplaintForm](http://www.dmaresponsibility.org/ComplaintForm).

Staff will review and contact you if follow-up information is needed before referral of the case to the Committee on Ethical Business Practice. For more information about the Committee, please visit us at: [www.dmaresponsibility.org/Committee](http://www.dmaresponsibility.org/Committee).

You may always contact the DMA Corporate & Social Responsibility (CSR) staff at:

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Tel: 202-955-5030

Fax: 202-955-0085

Online: [ethics@the-dma.org](mailto:ethics@the-dma.org)