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## Dear Mike...I've been a bad boy.

If you've been wondering why I haven't been using many laser cartridges this might explain it.

I've been contacted about four times in the past twelve months by telemarketing companies trying to sell me toner cartridges for my laser printer. Strangely, they all seem to use the same script with a slightly different promise each time.

The first time they told me that their cartridges were of superior quality to mine (how they knew how good mine were, I don't know) and the reservoir was bigger so they would last longer. They told me that if their cartridge wasn't of superior quality to the one I was using and didn't last longer "...no money will change hands and we'll part friends." I couldn't make them understand that if my cartridges lasted 3 months I couldn't trial theirs for one month and know that it would last longer. But eventually I got through to them and they gave me a 90 day account and I tried them out. One month later when I told them that one of their cartridges printed grey and the other left a black stripe down the page they tried to get me to pay half price ... I kept them as spares.

The next time I got a call, it was from a different company name with the same script. But this time they were using finer toner so the cartridge would last longer and it was guaranteed superior quality.

I declined this time, but they weren't to be deterred.

A month or two later another company (that's what they said anyway) rang with the same pitch, but this time they wanted to get me into new cartridges at double the price. After telling them I was happy with what I was getting from Australian Laser Charge, they dropped the price by almost a third and I agreed to try a "new" cartridge to see whether there was any difference. There was no difference.

In fact it wasn't even new. It may have had some new parts, but tell tale signs like sticky tape instead of the usual seal convinced me that it was a refilled cartridge. Not that there is anything wrong with properly remanufactured cartridges of course, but when you're paying extra for a new cartridge, you expect it to be new. When they called to find out why I hadn't paid the account I told them that the two cartridges they sent me were not new. They told me that refilled cartridges had been sent in error and perhaps I would pay half price. I told them that consumer affairs might be interested in taking them off my hands and they rushed off to get me a refund number and asked me to courier them back. I told them that I would happily pack them, but if they wanted them couriered back they would have to send their own courier. They never turned up.

Now it's happened again. This time the pitch was "...we've done something (they didn't say what) to the cartridge to reduce heat so that it doesn't cause problems when you print. I've never had any problems but I was curious to find out the truth, and this time a young friend of mine was working for the company and I didn't have the heart to tell him he was working on something dodgy. So I had one sent down plus a colour cartridge for my bubble jet. They weren't cheap, but they were shoddy. The laser cartridge was leaking toner all over the place and there doesn't appear to be anything different that might "stop heat problems" and the bubble jet cartridges print a completely different colour to my screen images. I'll drop them off next time I'm passing.

Thankfully my friend doesn't work there any more and he confirmed that they do use about 8 or 10 company names when they ring.

You'll get every one of my cartridges from now on ... I promise.

Regards



David Dennis

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