

Credit Reports Worth Checking Before Making Holiday Purchases

(NAPSA)—Holiday shopping season is officially here and if you have your sights set on that latest plasma TV, digital camera, video game system, household appliance or maybe even a year-end auto deal, you're about to be treated to numerous holiday-timed promotional offers that may just be too good to pass up.

Getting the best of these deals requires being viewed as credit-worthy by those making the offers. So, if you'll be making even one purchase this holiday season using a promotional offer, checking up on your credit in advance is a good idea. Experts frequently advise checking your credit reports and scores at least three times every year. Doing so, they say, allows you to view yourself in much the same way a creditor or lender will.

"The higher your credit score, the greater chance you'll qualify for the offers and the best rates," says Lucy Duni, Director of Consumer Education at TransUnion's TrueCredit.com. "That's the way the system works." Notably, the consumer-friendly www.truecredit.com is the only credit site to offer unlimited access to all three of your credit reports and scores and comes bundled with a nifty credit management and ID theft-detection tool that notifies you by e-mail every time a critical change takes place on your report.

Here are some quick tips to help keep your personal credit in good standing:

1. Pay at least the minimum amount due on each of your credit cards on time, every month.



2. Maintain a balance of no more than 35 percent of the limit on each of your credit cards.

3. Monitor each of your three credit reports regularly to ensure they accurately reflect your credit activity.

As you consider all the promotional offers this season, it's important to realize that applying for multiple accounts in a short period of time can make you look credit hungry. So be sure to prioritize your promotional purchase decisions because they'll often require a new account application to get the deal. Also, checking your three credit reports and scores at a major credit reporting company site such as TrueCredit.com, which is part of TransUnion, has no impact on your score, regardless of how often you do it. Although, the same may not be true of some other sites out there, so be careful.

The bottom line? Take control of your own credit health. Know where you stand and you'll put yourself in a position to maximize your holiday buying power.