



## Avoiding These Mistakes Can Help Your Credit Score

(NAPSA)—There's good news for consumers who want to improve their credit score. There are a few practical steps they can take that will help them avoid future problems and correct mistakes of the past.

That's one of the key findings of a report released by free credit report and score provider Quizle.com. The report found that despite the fact that the unemployment picture is slowly improving, consumers' average credit scores continue to decline.

Says Quizzle.com CEO Todd Albery, "This is no small issue. Tight lending standards and a lack of understanding about credit reports have held many people back from buying a home, getting a new car or making other large purchases."

Here are a few common mistakes consumers are making that hurt their credit score. Avoiding these mistakes can contribute to a better score in the future:

**•Not checking their credit report:** A Federal Trade Commission (FTC) study shows that 20 percent of Americans have errors on their credit report and 5 percent have mistakes that could lead to them paying more or being denied credit.

**•Closing their lines of credit:** Closing credit card accounts no longer in use decreases the amount of credit that's available to the consumer. This, in turn, impacts their credit utilization—or how much credit is used compared to how much credit is available.

**•Negotiating a lower amount for past-due accounts:** Negotiating a lower balance on past-due accounts can put an additional long-term blemish on your



**Don't let simple mistakes hurt your credit score or turn it into a house of cards.**

credit report. Not only do you get dinged for missed payments, you will also be marked as "settled" (meaning the creditor was forced to take less than full payment) versus "paid in full."

**•Missing payments:** This happens more than you think. Things often slip through the cracks, and many folks get sloppy and miss payments by a few days here and there.

**•Overshopping for credit:** When shopping for the best credit card, avoid applying to several cards at the same time just to see who will approve you. Doing so results in "hard" credit inquiries done by creditors or lenders on your report, which have a negative impact on your credit score.

"Taking charge of your credit report and score is so important when it comes to meeting your financial goals," said Albery. "Small things can really add up to help folks."

To learn more, visit [www.quizle.com](http://www.quizle.com).