

## Consumers' Choice Award latest distinction earned by DirectBuy of Ottawa

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When Bobby Jordan and Suzanne Weatherton first learned of DirectBuy, they dismissed it as too good to be true. After one year as members, they couldn't have been happier about their experience with the company.

"We were very skeptical," says Mr. Jordan, who first looked into DirectBuy because the couple needed to purchase appliances for their new home.

DirectBuy, founded in 1971 and with 130 locations in North America, enables its members to buy products directly from more than 500 manufacturers at insider prices. Often, customers save up to 50 per cent of the price they'd pay at a retail store. Recently DirectBuy's Ottawa location was named a recipient of the Consumers' Choice Award for Business Excellence in the category of "Blinds and Shades." The Consumers' Choice Award is the latest distinction earned by DirectBuy of Ottawa, which has been recognized as one of the company's top performing locations in sales and customer service. Franchisees Frank Andree and Chantal Lapalme say that the Consumers' Choice Award holds special significance because it reflects not only the positive standing of their showroom in the Ottawa area, but also the satisfaction of their members.

"Because the Consumers' Choice Award is recognition from an outside entity based on public opinion, it reflects a strong perception in the minds of consumers in terms of quality," says Frank Andree of DirectBuy Ottawa. "Blinds are one of the most marked-up products in a traditional retail store, and this shows that our members are happy with the savings, service and selection they experience at DirectBuy." DirectBuy offers draperies, appliances, kitchen cabinets, electronics, jewelry, toys, sporting equipment, furniture, flooring, windows, doors, paint, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, to name a few.

"We're eliminating all the hidden middleman costs, and mark ups in the stores," says Mr. Andree. Members pay DirectBuy an annual membership fee for the service.

Bobby Jordan and Suzanne Weatherton are one couple who have found it well worth the membership fee. "We figured if there was ever a time it was worth doing it, it would be now," says Mr. Jordan. "But the numbers themselves were not enough to convince us, we were very skeptical of the whole thing. We went in for an orientation and after that we sat down with Frank and kept him there until almost midnight. It was one of those things that seemed too good to be true." Ultimately the couple took what Mr. Jordan describes as a "leap of faith," and purchased a three-year membership to DirectBuy. "The sheer numbers, comparing them, kind of speak for themselves. But there was something that we were just skeptical about," he says. "But by the end of the night we signed it, and we're very happy that we did now." The couple has since purchased two new sofa sets, all the paint for their house, central air conditioning, and several appliances.

"We didn't have any faith in it until we got our first few things. It's not for everybody, but if you're planning on doing any kind of major purchasing then it's definitely worthwhile," says Mr. Jordan. "Our savings have paid for the membership probably five times over." Mr. Andree acknowledges that DirectBuy isn't for everyone; if your most major upcoming purchase is a toaster, you probably won't make your money back. But, as he puts it, "if you're planning on making any significant purchase over \$1,000 it's probably worth looking into DirectBuy before going in and spending money at retail stores." So how does one get more information about DirectBuy? The first visit is always by appointment only. "That's where we take a couple of hours with you to go through how DirectBuy works, cover off things like warranty, installation etc.

What we do when you come in is we break it all down. We show you the types of things people will buy," says Mr. Andree. "If it looks like you're going to save money, you become a member. If you're not, then you don't. There's no catch.

It is what it is." DirectBuy is located at 1392 Cyrville Rd. and is open six days a week. For a personal consultation with a DirectBuy staff member, please call 1-800-939-0109.

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