

A Smart Consumer

Written by

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The term ♦Caveat Emptor♦ means ♦buyers beware♦ and the term ♦Caveat Venditor♦ means ♦sellers beware♦. When there were only a few laws protecting consumers, consumers were asked to beware when purchasing goods and services. Now that there are more laws protecting consumers, sellers have to beware as consumers can bring claims against them by going to the Consumer Claims Tribunal. However, to be a smart consumer and to protect themselves, consumers can use their common sense when making purchases.

Usually, it is not wise to buy something in haste without thinking through especially when the item happens to be expensive. The following tips are useful:

Learn about the product or service by comparing similar products of different brands or makes in different shops in your area.
Decide whether you really need the item. Buy only when it is really necessary.
Find out exactly (a) how to work the item (b) how long it should last; (c) How it should have been taken care of (d) what does its guarantee include and whether it needs any maintenance or service.
Check on the seller. Ask friends or neighbours about their experiences concerning the seller's reliability, honesty and reputation. Find out whether the seller accepts returns of faulty goods and gives refunds.
Be sure that you understand the terms of the sale. This means that if it is a credit sale, you need to know (a) the total price of the item (b) any hidden costs (c) any conditions and delivery charges (d) the length of the guarantee and what the interest will be if you buy under a credit agreement.

What smart consumers should consider:<p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - obtain information about the product they plan to buy</p><p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - obtain information about the service they plan to buy</p><p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - compare prices of goods and services</p><p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - compare quality of goods and services</p><p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - understand terms and conditions of the sale.</p><p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - speak out if they are given poor quality goods and services</p><p>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ - take action if they feel they have been cheated</p>