

STOP Telemarketers Dead In Their Tracks

By Jim Edwards

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Picture this: you're sitting down to a quiet meal with your family one evening.

Just as you reach for the mashed potatoes the phone rings.

It might be your mother calling with news on the upcoming family reunion, so you make a mad dash for the phone just in time to catch it before the answering machine picks up.

As you wipe mashed potatoes off the front of your best shirt you hear an unfamiliar voice on the line start pitching you about aluminum siding.

You've just experienced what many call "telemarketer hell!"

But, thanks to a new service offered by the FTC (Federal Trade Commission), this little scenario should happen much less often in the coming year.

Telemarketers may finally face a law they can't bypass when it comes to calling consumers on the phone to solicit business.

By harnessing the power of the Internet to eliminate layers of paperwork and delays, the FTC created the "National Do Not Call" registry where consumers can register not to receive unsolicited sales calls.

Though the law exempts certain political, charitable and other organizations, it does cover professional telemarketing companies and those calling on behalf of those organizations.

After the plan gets fully implemented in October 2003, any company found violating the law will face fines of up to \$11,000 per call.

Despite the fact the registry does not eliminate all unsolicited calls, it does seem a wise move to sign up (unless you enjoy chatting with telemarketers over your mashed potatoes).

Log on to www.donotcall.gov and click the "Register a Phone Number" link.

The service allows you to register up to 3 phone numbers, so you can even put your cell phone on the do not call list.

Once you register a phone number, the website will send you a confirmation email with a link you must click before your phone number gets added to the database.

Some common questions people ask about the National Do Not Call Registry include:

How soon after I register will I notice a reduction in calls?

If you register by August 31, 2003, you will start receiving fewer telemarketing calls by October 1, 2003.

If you register after September 1, 2003, telemarketers covered by the National Do Not Call Registry will have up to three months from the date you register to stop calling you.

How long until my phone number shows up in the registry?

After you register, your phone number will be available for telemarketers to remove it from their call lists by the next day.

Telemarketers will have up to three months to get your phone number and remove it from their call lists.

What if a telemarketer calls me after I've signed up?

As long as you have the telemarketer's company name or phone number you can file a complaint online through the "File a Complaint" page on the www.donotcall.gov website.

For more information, log on to www.donotcall.gov today.

Jim Edwards is a syndicated newspaper columnist and the co-author of an amazing new ebook that will teach you how to use free articles to quickly drive thousands of targeted

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