



## **Printing Industry of Illinois/Indiana Association**

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### **IF IT AIN'T GREEN, IT DON'T MEAN A THING**

By Andrea Schlack, President  
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d/b/a Printing Industry Credit Bureau

In these troubled financial times, when all of us have experienced anger and frustration at greedy Wall Street executives who have profited from our tax money, we have to wonder *Where's our stimulus package?* When we continue to struggle to maintain our own financial security and to stabilize our business' earnings without government intervention, we wonder *What Can We Do Right Now?*

Many times, the business owner will exhort the sales force to Bring in More Sales—NOW! This may be viewed as our solution and salvation, yet we oftentimes forget the critical importance of performing a proper risk analysis to better ensure that the sale actually 'turns green'.

When times are good, opportunistic con-men (and, in deference to political correctness, con-women) look to prosper at our expense. When times are tough, the con-man, much like a vulture, is looking to pick our bones completely clean. The cons always seek out the easiest target and they know desperate people make the best victims.

In a recent collection case that was successfully recovered by PICB, a customer presented herself as a print broker. She managed to pirate the name of a 50 year old company where she had been previously employed. The 'so-called' company registered itself as a 'woman owned minority business' in another state and then obtained a sizable government contract because of that purported minority status. Upon completion and delivery of the print job by the printer to the government agency, the debtor-broker informed her government liaison and 'inside contact' that the company had 'moved' and provided the agency with a new address for remittance—her home address. The debtor-broker obtained full payment from the government agency/customer shortly thereafter, but told the printer that she was still 'waiting' on her payment from the government and promised to 'pay in full' as soon as she received her money. Many months went by and she continued her scam until finally, the printer sensing 'something wrong', reached out to the end-customer—only to confirm their suspicions that the broker had been lying to them for more than six months. The printer then engaged Printing Industry Credit Bureau for assistance and thankfully, PICB was able to recover the printer's money.

**REMEMBER:** even in the best of times, when the con gets you, more than likely, your hard earned money is lost.

**Here are a few simple—and FREE—solutions to better protect your bottom line**

- 1 Obtain signed credit agreements that clearly state your terms & conditions.
- 2 Use personal guarantees when applicable.
- 3 Verify the facts.
- 4 Use your industry's credit reporting service to see if any other member has had a negative experience.
- 5 Learn how to use Google Map ([www.googlemaps.com](http://www.googlemaps.com)) and its satellite mapping system to verify that the address provided is actually a 'bricks & mortar' location.
- 6 Use the web to verify that the company is properly registered in the State, City, & County where they say they are doing business.
- 7 Use the web-based phone directory services and verify the phone number supplied is registered to the customer (legitimate businesses do not operate with non-published phone numbers or cell phone numbers).
- 8 Verify the customer's references and determine if they are 'with value'.
- 9 Verify the principal's and business' financial stability by checking local court records. If there are recorded lawsuits against either, then know that your money may be in jeopardy.
- 10 Remember, credit granting is not about what the customer wants or needs; it should always be about what your company can afford to lose should the customer fail to pay.
- 11 Don't be afraid to ask for cash when there is doubt.

Many of the links referenced in this article may be found at the PII website at [www.pii.org](http://www.pii.org) > Credit & Collection > State Links.

Should you need the expert assistance of Printing Industry Credit Bureau, the licensed and bonded collection agency dedicated to the Graphic Art industry, you may contact Andrea Schlack at (847) 265-0400.