

# Business Alert:

## ***Fraudulent Phone Pitches Target Businesses***

Fraudulent telemarketers rob people every day, using phones as their weapons. Consumers aren't the only victims. According to the nonprofit National Consumers League, which operates the National Fraud Information Center, these criminals also target businesses, large and small.

Be Careful When You Hear These Pitches:

### **Prize Promotions**

The pitch: You won a prize, but you have to pay or buy something to get it. The scam: You pay but never get anything, or you get a cheap trinket.

### **Charities**

The pitch: Help the disadvantaged, support your local police, aid disaster victims, etc.

The scam: The charity doesn't exist, or most of your money goes to a professional fundraiser.

### **Office Supplies**

The pitch: Your supplier calls and offers a great deal before prices rise.

The scam: The caller is an imposter and the supplies are inferior, or you get none at all.

### **Telephone Slamming**

The pitch: You are offered a new billing plan for your phone service.

The scam: You agreed to switch your service to another company without realizing it.

### **Nigerian Money Offers**

The pitch: Help me move a fortune from Africa, and I'll give you a big slice of it.

The scam: You pay "transfer" and "legal" fees to move the money to your bank account, but it never materializes.

### **Advance Fee Loans**

The pitch: We'll get you a loan, guaranteed, for an up-front fee.

The scam: You pay, but you never get a loan.

Many telemarketing offers are legitimate. How can you tell if they're not? All employees should be familiar with these warning signs:

- Promises of easy money;
- Pressure to act immediately;
- Refusal to send written information;
- Scare tactics;
- Instructions to send payment by wire or courier.

To protect your business from scams, designate specific employees to handle orders and bills. Before paying, confirm that the purchases were authorized and that you received the products or services. Check unfamiliar companies and charities with your state or local consumer protection agency and the Better Business Bureau. For more information, contact the NFIC at 800-876-7060 or go to [www.fraud.org/scamsagainstbusinesses](http://www.fraud.org/scamsagainstbusinesses).