



Annual Report 2014

Better Business Bureau®
Serving West Florida

2655 McCormick Drive • Clearwater, FL 33759
(727) 535-5609 • (877) 535-5609 • Fax (727) 539-6301
www.bbb.org • info@bbbwestflorida.org

Serving the following counties: Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco,
Hernando, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Hardee,
Lee, Sarasota, Manatee

20 BBB Board of
14 Directors

Chairman
Mark Vernick
*Vernick Financial Planning &
Florida Construction's House Doctor*

Vice Chair
Joell Pollio
Cadence Bank

Treasurer
Jim Alex
Drexel Metals Inc.

President
Karen Nalven
BBB of West Florida, Inc.

Terry Chapman
Just Tires Tire Discounter

Thomas Cleary
*Sihle Insurance
Group, Inc.*

**Leslie M. Conklin,
Esq.**
Attorney at Law

Judie Glenn
Judie Glenn Inc.

Jack Joyner
*Jack Joyner Heating &
A/C Company*

Steven Klein
*Klein & Heuchan Inc.
Realtors*

Patrick O'Connell
Landmark Pools, Inc.

Ronald Ricardo
CBIZ MHM, LLC

John Richard
Consultant

Patricia White
BBB of West Florida, Inc.

For more than 100 years, BBB has helped people make smarter buying decisions and is evolving to meet fast-changing marketplace needs.

Consumers today are overwhelmed with choices and often unsure about where to find verified, unbiased information. There are more than **30 million** businesses in North America alone and hundreds of thousands of websites around the world where they shop online. Confusion abounds because of the numerous free and subscription websites that offer a range of information including reviews, reports, directories and local business listings.

BBB is the one place consumers and businesses can find it all.

There are 112 local BBBs serving communities across North America, evaluating and monitoring more than 3 million local and national businesses and charities.



BBB sets standards for ethical business behavior and monitors compliance. Almost 400,000 Accredited Businesses meet and commit to our high standards.



BBB helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses, and those that aren't, through more than 4 million BBB Business Reviews.



BBB sets standards for and evaluates thousands of advertisements each year to ensure that people can trust what advertisers say.



BBB sets standards for and evaluates the practices of thousands of charities so that donors know where their money is going.



BBB coaches businesses on ethical behavior and how to build stronger, more trusting relationships with their customers.



BBB helps people find and recommend businesses, brands and charities they can trust.

In 2014, BBB's relevance continued to grow in leaps and bounds. Most notable for BBB Serving West Florida, were the number of website visits and BBB Business Reviews requested by both consumers and businesses.

In addition, BBB provides consumer and industry tips, media reports, timely scam alerts and offers help in bringing businesses and consumers together when problems arise. As a result, thousands of consumers and businesses are building solid relationships based on trust.

Facts about BBB Serving West Florida Website

3,675,069	BBB Website Visits
4,429,222	BBB Business Reviews Provided
7,358,444	BBB Website Page Views
708,119	Type of Business Rosters Requested
17,037	Request a Quotes Processed

Industries with most complaints

1) Auto Rental & Leasing Companies
2) Collection Agencies
3) Furniture Retailers
4) Air Conditioning Companies
5) Cable, CATV & Satellite
6) New Car Dealerships
7) Used Car Dealerships
8) Untested Medical Product Providers
9) Health Diet Retailers
10) Skin Care Suppliers

Industries with most inquiries

1) Air Conditioning Companies
2) Furniture Retailers
3) Collection Agencies
4) Insurance Companies
5) Roofers
6) Used Car Dealerships
7) Swimming Pool Contractors
8) Movers
9) General Contractors
10) Plumbers

OUR VISION:

An ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers can trust each other.



OUR MISSION:

BBB's mission is to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust. BBB accomplishes this mission by:

- Creating a community of trustworthy businesses
- Setting standards for marketplace trust
- Encouraging and supporting best practices
- Celebrating marketplace role models
- Denouncing substandard marketplace behavior



Dispute Resolution

Helping Consumers and Businesses

A leader in the industry, BBB incorporates the best practices for dispute resolution providing transparency, accessibility, fairness and due process. As indicated below, there is a relatively low percentage of disputes not resolved through voluntary mediation and conciliation. BBB's focus is on reaching mutually agreeable settlements for both consumers and customer-focused companies - a preferred method for resolution over arbitration hearings. BBB arbitrators provide the final word for the relatively few cases not resolved through voluntary mediation and conciliation.



Quick Facts

Complaints • Mediation • Arbitration

21,502	Total Complaints Handled
27.8	Average Days to Settle Complaints
99.3 %	Accredited Business Resolve Rate
72.5 %	Non-Accredited Business Resolve Rate
1,512	Informal Mediations via Telephone
109	Arbitrations & Formal Mediations

Our BBB team keeps their ears to the ground on issues affecting trust in the marketplace.



OUR JOB?

Helping You Find Businesses You Can Trust

Advertising Review

BBB regularly monitors local advertising to foster truth and transparency in advertising claims. The self-regulatory review process promotes advertiser compliance to increase public trust in the credibility of advertising. It also creates a level playing field for settling disputes among competing advertisers.

185

Ad Review Cases

Investigations into Business Practices

Once BBB is made aware of a business whose practices are called into question, we contact the business itself, their consumers and in many cases state and local agencies to gather information. When warranted, we forward our findings to, and collaborate with, local law enforcement to expand the investigation. BBB also issues a press release and updates the company's Business Review to alert the community.

361

Investigations

Media

BBB keeps you informed of scams and provides marketplace tips through:

- BBB's web-based News center
- Blogs on local sites such as Patch.com
- Local Media Interviews through TV, Radio and Newspaper
- Trade shows and presentations
- "LOOK FOR THE SEAL" campaign
- Postings on social media

1,065

Media Mentions



LOOK FOR THE SEAL.



ACCREDITED BUSINESS

bbb.org

BBB Standards for Trust

BUILD TRUST:

Establish and maintain a positive track record in the marketplace.

ADVERTISE HONESTLY:

Adhere to established standards of advertising and selling.

TELL THE TRUTH:

Honestly represent products and services, including clear and adequate disclosures of all material terms.

SAFEGUARD PRIVACY:

Protect any data collected against mishandling and fraud, collect personal information only as needed, and respect the preferences of customers regarding the use of their information.

EMBODY INTEGRITY:

Approach all business dealings, marketplace transactions and commitments with integrity.

BE TRANSPARENT:

Openly identify the nature, location, and ownership of the business, and clearly disclose all policies, guarantees and procedures that bear on a customer's decision to buy.

HONOR PROMISES:

Abide by all written agreements and verbal representations.

BE RESPONSIVE:

Address marketplace disputes quickly, professionally and in good faith.

bbb.org
Find businesses you can trust!