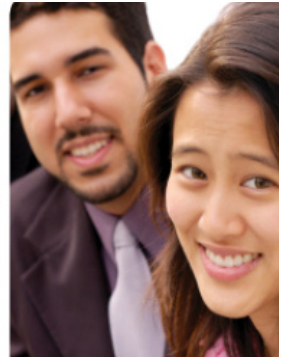


2011 Year in Review

Adapting to a Changing Marketplace | westflorida.bbb.org



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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; and denouncing substandard marketplace behavior.

Better Business Bureau serving Florida's West Coast Area

Offices located at:

2655 McCormick Drive
Clearwater, FL 33759

P.O. Box 7950
Clearwater, FL 33758

Office Hours:

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM Monday - Friday

Phone: (727) 535-5522 / (239) 334-4648 (24 Hours)

Toll Free: (800) 525-1447

Fax: (727) 539-6301

Email: info@bbbwestflorida.org



westflorida.bbb.org/find-us-on

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Adapting to a Changing Marketplace



Start With Trust

We exist - and always have - to ensure that consumers and businesses have an unbiased source to guide them on matters of trust. In a grey world of what is right or wrong, BBB provides concrete, objective information. BBB is a champion for trust, and our torch is an international symbol people can believe in.

Our BBB information, investigative reports, consumer alerts and tips on buying wisely are developed to better inform consumers and businesses. BBB proactively disseminates information through a variety of avenues including web alerts, emails, press releases, media interviews, trade shows, community events and social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. In 2011, BBB introduced its newly developed BBB iPhone App - now the power of BBB is available at your fingertips when traveling or on the go.

In 2011, your local BBB generated **898** local media mentions (nearly tripled since 2008), including stories specific to unethical business practices, protecting your identity, to topics regarding enhanced BBB reporting procedures and services.

Request a Quote from an Accredited Business

In an effort to bring consumers and Accredited Businesses together, the BBB Website offers a "Request a Quote" service. This allows consumers to specify the service or product they desire from a given business(es) and receive a quote via their selected method (i.e. phone, email, or fax). This service has been utilized **6,479** times in 2011 (up from 4,582 in 2010) and continues to grow in popularity.

Accredited Businesses by Industry

Consumers may obtain categorical listings of BBB Accredited Businesses in any given industry at no cost. These Accredited Business listings may be requested via telephone or obtained over the web. This service generated **351,940** listings in 2011.

Promoting Trust on the Internet

Internet commerce is booming. Yet many people are nervous about actually purchasing goods online. Websites are easy to set up and maintain. Prospective customers struggle to know which online business is legitimate, and which can be trusted? Accredited Businesses who use the BBB Seal online promote trust and confidence in today's marketplace.

Assurance on the Internet



RESOURCES

Internet at a Glance

westflorida.bbb.org

From the website, consumers may search a business by category, name, URL or phone number and read a specific business review. BBB Business Reviews on Accredited Businesses have been enhanced to include an expanded business description, hours of business, refund/return policy, map to their business location, and various business photos. This upgrade has virtually provided Accredited Businesses with their very own website within bbb.org. Of course, basic information such as the company's past market place performance, license verification, address, telephone numbers, and a direct link to the company's website remain available.

This website was visited **1,867,555** times with a total of **5,199,969** pages viewed in 2011. Website visits for 2011 have quadrupled since 2008. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The local BBB website generated **68.83%** new visits in 2011 from **204** different countries.

INQUIRIES

Pre-Purchase Reporting

BBB Business Reviews Requested

The marketplace has changed significantly since BBB's founding 100 years ago. Consumers are overwhelmed with choices - often being exposed to 3,000 to 5,000 advertising messages daily. And, despite thousands of free and subscription-based websites offering information, it's hard to know which ones can be trusted, and which ones can't.

Most inquiries to your BBB, primarily via the internet, are pre-purchase inquiries from consumers and businesses seeking Business Reviews on area companies. These consumers are seeking assurance that the company they are considering spending money with has no unresolved complaints or history of unethical practices in advertising or selling of their products and services on file at the BBB.

In 2011, your BBB provided information in response to **2,354,955** inquiries about local companies. Included in this statistic, **351,940** consumers requested we provide them with a listing of Accredited Businesses in a certain industry. Miscellaneous inquiries such as Spanish reports, general advice reports and agency referrals totaled **23,891**. Inquiries to your BBB have risen nearly 40% since 2008.



Most Inquired About Industries

- 1) Air Conditioning Companies
- 2) Roofing Contractors
- 3) Work-At-Home Companies
- 4) Insurance Companies
- 5) Timeshare Resales
- 6) Swimming Pool Contractors
- 7) Used Car Dealerships
- 8) Movers
- 9) Attorneys
- 10) General Contractors

BBB Services

Most Complained About Industries

- 1) Furniture Retailers
- 2) Air Conditioning Companies
- 3) New Car Dealerships
- 4) Timeshare Resales
- 5) E-Cigarettes
- 6) Used Car Dealerships
- 7) Work-At-Home Companies
- 8) Magazine Subscription Agents
- 9) Collection Agencies
- 10) Magazine Sales Departments



COMPLAINTS

Dispute Resolution Services

Complaints Processed

Consumers who want to present a complaint to a company through the BBB often begin by calling. These consumers are provided with instructions for filing their complaint in writing or online.

BBB processed **26,618** written complaints during the year. It should be of interest to both Accredited Businesses and consumers to know that BBB Accredited Businesses had a settlement rate of **98.21%** in 2011. The remaining 1.79% of unresolved complaints represent those filed against firms whose BBB Accreditations were revoked by the Board of Directors. By comparison, Non-BBB Accredited Businesses had a lower resolution rate of **77.23%**.

Your BBB also serves as the central service bureau for the AUTO LINE® program in the State of Florida. Staff in this department provide mediation and arbitration services for automobile manufacturing disputes - concentrating on Florida Lemon Law guidelines.

BBB has many fine volunteers who have received training and certification to conduct arbitration hearings held by the BBB offices. In 2011, the BBB conducted **75** arbitrations and formal mediations.