

BBB Warns of Phony Acai Berry Weight Loss Products

Arlington, VA – May 2, 2011 – In conjunction with the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) recent lawsuits on acai berry weight loss products, Better Business Bureau is warning consumers to be wary of phony "news" announcements of free trial offers for online diet pills.

According to the FTC, millions of consumers are being lured to websites that imitate those of reputable news organizations. The "reporters" on these sites have supposedly done independent evaluations of acai berry supplements, and claim that their products cause major weight loss in a short period of time with no diet or exercise. In reality the websites are deceptive advertisements placed by third-party or "affiliate" marketers. The websites are aimed at enticing consumers to buy the featured acai berry weight-loss products. These fake news operations are the subject of a nationwide law enforcement initiative.

Ubiquitous deceptive online ads for the acai berry weight loss products can be found posing to be from popular outlets like ABC, Fox News, CBS, CNN, *USA Today* and *Consumer Reports*. According to the FTC, the defendants collectively have paid more than \$10 million to advertise their fake news sites, and have likely received well in excess of that amount in ill-gotten commissions.

In 2010, the FTC filed an action against acai berry marketer [Central Coast Nutraceuticals](#) which has an F rating with BBB. According to the more than 2,800 complaints to the Central, Northern and Western Arizona BBB the company deceptively marketed acai berry supplements as weight-loss products, and "colon cleansers" along with a variety of refund and exchange issues.

"Fighting deceptive free trial offers online continues to be a game of whack-a-mole," said Stephen A. Cox, President and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus. "Just as soon as one company is put out of business it's replaced by another with the same model of ripping consumers off under the guise of a no-risk free trial offer."

"Before signing up for any free trial offer, read the fine print carefully and always check the company out with BBB. You'll save time and money by avoiding the hassle and recurring charges of some unscrupulous offers," added Cox.

Additional advice on signing up for free trial offers is available at www.bbb.org/us/article/free-trial-offers--are-they-good-deals-425. Consumers who believe they have been misled by a free trial offer can file a complaint online with the BBB at www.bbb.org.

Reporters: for more information or to schedule an interview with a BBB spokesperson, **contact Kelsey Owen at 703-247-9376.**

About Better Business Bureau

As the leader in advancing marketplace trust, Better Business Bureau is an unbiased non-profit organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Every year, more than 65 million consumers rely on BBB Business Reviews® and BBB Wise Giving Reports® to help them find trustworthy businesses and charities across North America. Visit www.bbb.org/us for more information.