

## Expensive "Free" Samples Interview Script

- **Consumer protection officer (CPO):** Office de la protection du consommateur, good morning! How may I help you?
- **Consumer (Vincent):** Hello, I'm calling because I have a problem. A month ago, I ordered free samples of athletic products. I received the samples a few days later. And now, I've just received my credit card statement and I see that the company charged me \$453 for those products, even though it was written that they were free.
- **CPO:** What are these products exactly?
- **Vincent:** They're called PerforMax Plus. They're nutritional supplements for athletic types. According to their ads, they're supposed to increase muscle mass and strength, and melt away body fat. In addition to the samples, the company sent me three big jars of protein powder in the last two weeks.
- **CPO:** How did you order these products?
- **Vincent:** In my Facebook news feed, there was an ad on the right-hand side to order free samples. When you clicked on the ad, there was a form to fill out to order them.
- **CPO:** If the company charged you \$453 on your credit card, that means they got your credit card number. If the samples were free, why does the company have your credit card number?
- **Vincent:** Well, in the form, they asked to put in the credit card number to pay for shipping. The samples were free, but not the shipping.
- **CPO:** Before giving out your personal information and your credit card number, did you read the terms and conditions of the offer?
- **Vincent:** (slightly embarrassed) Um... Terms and conditions? No, I didn't read any of that when I filled out the order form... When I saw an image of a famous athlete in the ad, I figured it was trustworthy and I wasn't concerned... The contract and the conditions... I just looked at them quickly yesterday. The contract is 15 pages long and there's something in fine print on page 11 about shipping fees being charged for the samples and the consumer agreeing to pay for products that would be sent every month after that. It's not that easy to pick out from all of the information that's given.
- **CPO:** Indeed, this information is usually indicated, but it's often hidden at the bottom of the text. It's not always easy to find... You have to remember that nothing is free and offers that seem too good to be true... often are. Have you done anything to try to have the product shipments stopped?
- **Vincent:** My dad called the customer service number we found in the box with the products. He told them that I thought I'd be getting free samples and that I didn't know I would be subscribing to receive products every month... The customer service person said she couldn't do anything for me... that the terms and conditions of the offer were indicated and that I should have read them before ordering...

What can I do to stop receiving these products? I can't pay \$453 a month for a year!