

**Credit Cards Taking A Nose
Dive? Are the Rates Killing You?
How to Take Matters Into Your
Own Hands!**



**"Money Saving Tips & Advice,
That Make the Debt Collector**

Run for the Hills"...

by Terry Clark

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Cash It Back with Credit Cards

What is a cash back credit card?

A cash back credit card gives annual rebates or gives back money to the card holder based on how much have been purchased with it. This type of credit card is suitable for those who rarely use cash in their transactions. The rebate is computed as a percentage of the total amount charged to

the credit card in a year. Usually, rebates are between 1-2%. Some can even go as high as 3%.

Are rebates always in the form of cash?

Strictly speaking, cash rebates should be in the form of cash. But now that card companies are diversifying, rebates may now come in the form of gift certificates and discount coupons. This somehow blurs the line between and among the different types of credit cards mentioned in the first paragraph of this article.

Some cash back credit cards offer upgrading of membership status which allow their members to more discounts and gifts during anniversaries and holidays like Christmas and birthdays. Moreover, some credit card companies also have partnerships with other consumer products that entitle their members to added product discounts in future purchases.

What banks offer cash back credit cards?

There are many banks that offer cash back credit cards in kind. They usually have a rewards program for members wherein card holders receive gifts and discounts courtesy of

partner product companies; discount coupons to hotels, restaurants, specialty stores; and travel miles for non-travel purchases. Below are some banks that offer cash back benefits.

- 1. Citibank**
- 2. Chevy Chase Bank**
- 3. HSBC**
- 4. Royal Bank Avion (Canada)**
- 5. Standard Chartered Bank**

Are cash back credit cards offered only by banks?

No. Since business establishments are innovating their services and benefits for their customers, some of them offer cash back to their loyal customers e.g. Discover Card (Discover Magazine). Aside from giving book and magazine discounts, airline miles are also offered by Discover Card. Big grocery stores such as Krogers, Wal Mart, and Bi-Lo offer cash back but in the form of cash certificates and discount coupons.

How does one get a cash back credit card?

Since almost all credit card companies (e.g. banks, stores,

airlines) offer cash (or in kind) back benefits, all that has to be done is to file an application in any of their office or stores, or signup online by visiting their web sites. Just be a word of caution for online applications, make sure that the transaction is made through a secure internet connection since identity theft has become rampant with the advent of credit card use.

The Bad Credit Card That May Do Good

Millions of people use credit cards all around the world. A huge chunk of those users made mistakes when dealing with their credit cards. The consequence of the errors is costly.

A lot end up in debt and most of the time these are the people who rant about the credit card being the devil. But fact of the matter is, this is not the case. When used properly, credit cards are very good financial tools.

Credit cards are not necessarily just for people who have large sums of money to use. There are some cards even for the financially challenged, and these are called the: “Bad

Credit Cards.”

A bad credit card is just precisely that: a card with a very bad or low credit limit.

There are two types of credit cards: there is the secured and the unsecured credit cards.

Unsecured credit cards are the accounts that are free from the limits of a bank account. The limit of credit is up to the bank’s discretion and not up to the size of the bank account. If the bank thinks that a person is deserving of a bigger credit, then it will be given.

This is the usual type of credit cards in the market and is fairly popular among the card shopping people. These are also the cards known to be more respected by other companies. These are also the cards known to send people to a very deep debt.

This is the type of credit card that should be avoided if the applicant is already in a financial mess.

The secured credit cards are the bad credit cards. These cards are grounded on the size of the account a person has. For example, if a person has a \$1,000 balance, then that is all the credit a person is going to get. If there is a point where the balance reaches \$0, then the person should go and “re-fill” the account.

The bank limits the credit to the money already present to avoid overspending, thus preventing even deeper debt. This will monitor the expenses of the person and will help the development of a financial recovery for some.

These credit cards are also known as “pre-paid credit cards” for there is only a fixed amount that can be used and the holder is the one who puts it there.

Options for the Best Credit Card

Consumers who want to maximize their options on a credit card should first find out all the terms and related costs associated with a particular card. For those who feel that the best credit card is one that is low-rate and no-frills, they should determine if the card has annual charges, as no-frills

users do not need to pay such fees. Some upscale prestige cards, air-mile credit cards and similar rewards packages collect annual fees in exchange for perks, services and other rewards.

The definition of a best credit card varies depending on personal preference. Individuals currently have many options available in the market, including instant approval cards, cash back credit cards, low-interest credit cards and prepaid debit cards.

The percentage rate (APR) is another crucial element users must weigh before signing up for what they feel is the best credit card in the market, particularly those with balances, as lower interest rates mean lower payments for carriage and substantial savings.

For fixed-rate cards, owners can expect interest rates to be more stable – a credit card on 12.99% interest is likely to remain at that level for a relatively longer period of time compared to a variable card. However, holders decided on securing the best credit card should be aware that even fixed-rate terms could change, although card companies are required by law to issue a written notice for any rate adjustment at least 15 days prior to their affectivity.

Variable-card customers need to know if their plans feature minimum APRs, or ‘floors’ – the lowest-possible levels that interest rates could fall to, inclusive of any adjustment by the US Federal Reserve. A Bankrate.com poll indicated floors for 24% of variable-rate issuers surveyed, with 75% of that group already at minimum APRs through October 2001. This means that the interest rate on these cards will only go up in the future.

How long or short a grace period is for settling balances is another factor that customers seeking the best credit card should consider. Since interest charges kick in when the grace period lapses, a company offering longer grace periods means a more extended time for users to settle outstanding obligations without paying interest before their next card purchases are penalized.

Individuals seeking the best credit card deal should also be aware of all penalty policies covering missed payments, purchases exceeding the limit or balance transfers. First USA and other providers have a \$35 ceiling for such transfers, while Citibank has a \$50 cap.

Know How to Get the Best Credit Card Deal

Getting your own credit card is not as easy as you may think. Applying for a credit card account needs a lot of thinking.

Before marching down to your credit card agent, ask yourself some questions like do you want to pay for the credit every month or carry a balance instead? The type of credit line limit is also to be taken into consideration. Credit cards offer a lot of benefit packages, think of the package that would suit your needs.

If you want to carry on a balance, look for the credit card that offers the best interest rate or the annual fee offer. However, if you intend to pay for the credit every month, then look on the one that offers the lowest interest rate.

Credit limit determines how far you can go with your card. Think of the lowest limit that would fit your needs, not your lifestyle. Remember it's supposed to be for necessity and not for luxury. Adding 30% to the limit you agreed on. This will maximize the value of the card. Meaning, you can use the card on a normal basis and still have enough value if an emergency arises.

Credit card companies offer tremendous bonuses on their cards. If you wanted to sign up for these packages, think, think, and think! Will they really be of help to you or are they just there to make your credit life miserable?

Of course the table is laden with different courses. You are only to get one so don't rush into one that looks good. You always have the liberty of comparing one credit card to another.

Always choose the credit card that offers the lowest annual percentage rate (APR). APR's could either be a "fixed" or a "variable" rate. Fixed rates do not change as the name implies but is higher. Variable rates changes depending on the economic trends. This is to be taken into consideration if you're deciding on carrying a balance.

Some credit cards offer a grace period of 25 days before they charge the interest on the purchase. But some may not have. Look for those that have one and the longer the grace period, the better the deal.

You also have to check on other fees attached to the credit

card. These are the penalty rates as well as other charges like over the limit charges and late payment charges.

When choosing a card, always remember to get the one that would best fit your needs and at the same time the best deal you could get out of it.

The Best Credit Card Reward: For Those Who Had Been Naughty and Nice

Think about it. If people would normally pay all their credit card balances in time, then what is the purpose of interest rates?

None.

And how will people get the benefits that their credit card company claims? It is through the credit card rewards.

These are freebies or prizes designed to make the “big boys and girls” happy because they had been naughty and yet nice enough to pay their dues.

Credit card rewards are also one way of enticing people to sign up to them. It tells them about countless benefits they could get just for signing up and getting a credit card.

There are actually a variety of credit card rewards available today. Most of them are being offered by credit card companies all the same. But what the people mostly wanted is the “cold cash.”

According to some reports, most people, who are entitled for some credit card rewards, would rather have cash for reward than with any other freebies available. They claim that they just want to be feasible. Hence, cash backs were deemed as the best credit card reward

In reality, financial experts claim that the arrangements of cash-back programs are actually the most straightforward credit card rewards than the other types. Plus, consumers can even track it, get hold of it, and see if it really is true.

Moreover, cash-back programs have a wide variety of classifications. It all depends on the type of credit card consumers have. For example, there are credit card rewards

intended for college students such as college savings. For retirees, they also have retirement investing rewards.

But for those who do not want cash backs, there are still other credit card rewards that work best for the consumers. There are those rewards about frequent flyer plans and freebie-giveaways.

Indeed, credit card rewards keep on flowing. The reason behind that is to entice people not to delay their payment so as to avoid adding to the pile of credit card debts and numerous bankruptcy cases.

There are still many credit card rewards that would be initiated upon the people especially for those who spend a lot. In fact, some reports say that there is a credit card reward these days that entails the consumer to not pay the annual fee for as long as they get to pay the balance on time. That would be a heaping \$3,000 off in the event that the consumer's standing balance is \$30, 000.

That, indeed, is a lot of money.

Reap More, Save More with The Best UK Credit Card

In the United Kingdom, the credit card phenomenon is not at all different from what the United States or any other country has for that matter. This just goes to show that a lot of people are finding credit cards as feasible means as well.

However, most people in UK would rather obtain the best credit card there is than to suffer at a later stage. And so, getting the best UK credit card is very significant for most English people. In most instances, the best credit cards would usually mean low interest rates, offers rewards, and excellent introductory rates.

But then, it is really important for every UK consumer to shop around for the best credit card deal.

And so, here are some of the best UK credit cards:

1. Virgin credit cards

The very best feature of Virgin credit card is that it allows their consumers to prefer which features they would want to

have on their credit cards. That means they could have the chance of getting a 0% balance transfer rate for 9 months, a fixed annual percentage rate of 15.9%, plus more rewards every time the credit card holder uses the card.

What's more, people get to choose their very own creative Virgin card motif making it way above the rest.

Virgin credit card also offers great flexibility.

2. The Marbles credit card

This UK credit card is considered nowadays as the card with the best value and has a high orientation on customer service. They have a 24 hour customer service hotline. Plus, they also provide a regular monthly statement through online announcements.

It also has 0% stable balance transfer rate for 6 months from the start the account has been opened.

3. Morgan Stanley Credit Card

This is considered as one of the best UK credit cards because it has 0% introductory rates for balance transfers good for 6 months. It also offers a fixed rate of 14.9%, and their 1% cashback is considered as one of the highest available in the UK market today.

4. The egg credit card

In UK, egg credit card is considered as one of the best credit card in the industry today. It also offers 0% introductory offer not only for balance transfers but also for ordinary purchases, and that is available all through out the 6-month period. Their annual percentage rate is also set to a standard rate of 14.9%.

With all these 0% introductory rates, low APRs, and everything, these credit cards are definitely the best UK credit cards in the market today. Hence, for most UK consumers, shopping had never been this better.

CHASE.COM Credit Card: An New Breed Of Cashless Shopping

When people started using plastics as their primary source of financial disbursements when shopping, they did not yet realize its greatest potential until today.

It is only now that consumers learned how to treat credit cards with utmost care and concern as these could be one way to their success or failure.

Consequently, with the dawn of cashless shopping, many credit cards companies continue to proliferate in the market. What they are targeting right now is the world of information technology. With this, they continue to advocate the very concept of the word “convenience.” Thus, many credit card websites had incessantly created websites to cater to the growing virtual populace.

One good example is the chase.com site. It primarily provides all the credit card requirements of every consumer. What's more they offer online services wherein their credit card holders can take advantage of digital services and wireless transactions through the site and through their chase credit cards.

The chase.com credit cards offer a variety of credit cards that will suit the customer's specific credit needs.

Chase.com credit card comes in a wide array of general purpose cards, rebate cards, entertainment cards, travel cards, and auto & gas cards. Chase.com credit cards also include retail cards, student cards, and college and university alumni cards, cards to support organizations, military cards, sports cards, and business cards.

With the wide array of credit cards chase.com provides, the consumer will have lots of choices that will certainly answer to their specific needs. There are credit cards that also cater to rewards, cash backs, points, and miles.

Moreover, choosing and applying for chase.com credit cards is relatively easy. The site offers four ways how to apply for chase.com credit cards. They can:

1. Choose by category

In this manner, customers may look through the categories of the cards that they think would serve them best. They can choose whether they want travel rewards, cash backs, auto and gas rebates and a whole lot more.

2. They can use the “help me choose” facility.

With this facility, consumers may ask the site for suggestions regarding credit cards that would provide them their needs.

3. Compare card features

Customers can select some cards and place them next to each other for comparison purposes.

4. Browse through the complete list.

This option is available for customers who really can't decide which credit card to choose.

So, with the advent of chase.com credit card, there will surely be a better way to enjoy cashless shopping.

10 Cons of an International Credit Card

Credit card fraud is a fast increasing crime in the world. International Credit Card holders are mostly the victims of this unauthorized access to their accounts. Let's take a closer look of the problems faced by international credit cards.

1. Repetitive use of credit card numbers. After a credit card number has been used and disregarded, say cancelled, credit card companies would reissue the same number to other cardholders. The personal identification numbers (PIN) is changed as well as the credit cardholder's personal information. But it still bears the same credit card number.

2. Low standards when it comes to the use of cards by the participating merchants. This is a common problem encountered by international credit cardholders. Employees of the participating merchants have the full access to the account number as well as the security number of the card.

3. Account Statements given out by credit card companies contains less information about the participating merchant. It does not include relevant information about the vendor that charged any transaction on the credit card.

4. Unreliable blocking functions. Once a card loss is reported, it will still take months for the credit card companies to block the transactions being made through the stolen or lost credit card.

5. Lack of validation software. Participating vendors should have better validation software installed on their computer system.

6. Consumer unfriendly policies on fraud management. The policies on the present fraud management take the blame on the cardholders though not directly stipulated. This means that the policies on the fraud management of international credit card companies protect not the consumers but the company.

7. Lax standards on investigation about fraudulent transactions. This is the sad part for the victims of fraud through their credit cards. Getting the suspects charged though proven guilty of fraud seems to take on slowly.

8. Credit card fraud is usually committed through online transactions. This means that credit cardholders are

not protected with the authorized or unauthorized use of their cards on purchases or services paid online.

9. Most of the companies that typically appear on charges are those associated with pornography industry. These companies are the ones that accept transactions even without verifying the cardholder's information.

10. Most of the banks' system is not compatible with other international credit card companies for the e-commerce. This is a potential weakness that would mean loss of clients so they would prefer to keep quiet about it.

How Do You Know If Your Credit Card Agent Is the Best?

Since you are the customer, there must be a glut of credit card agents constantly hounding you day-in, day-out. They may try to cram all their pitches in hour long phone call marathons or minute long infomercials and may run the gamut of personalities from friendly to annoying, smart to eccentric. But how do you choose the right credit agent?

Credit card agents are not just supposed to hawk credits cards. They are supposed to act as the middle persons between you and the bank. In effect, they should extend the services and care of the bank itself. You can tell if you credit card agent is good if he exhibits the following characteristics.

1. Agent Has Intimate Knowledge of the Card Company - Your credit card agent should know the ins and outs of the company he or she is promoting. Agents who are only looking for a quick commission won't help you much when you have inquiries about their cards. If your agent has an intimate knowledge of the company, you can rest easier since he or she is in a good position to guide you in your decisions.

2. Honesty – After talking with your agent, investigate the veracity of his claims. There are some agents who will lie and fib just to get a sale. If you catch one of your agents giving you the glib tongue, drop communications with him or her immediately.

3. Has Much Experience - Established credit card agents have a better chance of helping you with your particular needs. They have had extensive experience in dealing with their clients and are in a better position to help you out. You

should not dismiss agents who are new to the business, though. Just make sure they are sensitive to your needs.

4. Tells Pros and Cons- Find an agent who tells you like it is. They usually find a way to tell you the advantages and disadvantages of their product without diminishing your enthusiasm for their card. These people will give you more information on which to base your decisions. Thoughtful clients will want to stick to this kind of agent.

5. Does Not Force – Have you ever had a pushy agent hound you all day long. This is the mark of one whose only concern is his or her commission per card. If these individuals do not look after your interests, how can you trust them to help facilitate a good relationship with the company? If you are really interested in their company, you may want to have that company send a different agent.

Consolidate, before it's too late

Credit cards have revolutionized the purchasing experience since Diners Club released the first credit card in 1950.

It gave consumers limited credit that, at times, even surpassed their own personal savings. It allowed them to buy items they cannot usually afford with a straight cash purchase. It also provided the convenience of not needing to carry wads of dollar bills.

Thus, on the average, American households possess 4 credit cards or a total of 13 payment cards including debt cards and store cards aside from credit cards. There are, actually, 1.3 billion payment cards in circulation in the United States.

But if you think that credit cards have made the lives of modern American consumers easier, think again.

Statistics show that the average credit card debt for each household per month is \$4,800. This lead to 1.3 million credit card holders declaring bankruptcy in 2003.

And if you still consider yourself unaffected by this, then consider this one: upon retirement, most Americans can only expect to receive about 37% percent of their annual retirement income because of debt payment, leaving them to depend on the government, family and charity.

That's scary. So before you find yourself in the same situation, it might be time to evaluate your credit card debt. One way of resolving debt that you might consider is credit card consolidation.

So what is credit card debt consolidation?

In a nutshell, credit card consolidation is taking all your credit card debt dues and consolidating them into one monthly payment. This way, you don't have to worry about managing the payments individually. Aside from that, it may also provide you the additional benefits:

- ? Reduce interest payments**
- ? Waive late and overtime fees**
- ? Low monthly payments**
- ? Debt relief in a shorter time**
- ? Credit improvement**
- ? Save more money in the long run**

You will also need to know that there are actually two major types of credit card consolidation.

First is through a Credit Card Counseling firm. They assist consumers by consolidating all their monthly payments into one single payment and then disperse this to the creditors in behalf of the consumers until they are debt-free.

The other type is through a home equity loan or other secured loan. This is done by exchanging an unsecured debt (such as credit card debt) for a secured debt (a debt backed by specific assets such as real estate).

Now, credit card debt consolidation isn't a magic balm that will drive all your credit card debt malaise away. But it will make paying all your debt easier and might save you money in the long run.

Credit card debt management

Credit cards that are used in moderation could be helpful in managing your finances. This means that splurging through the use of credit cards is almost financial suicide.

Here are few tips to manage the way you use your credit

card to prevent you from acquiring debts that could lead to your financial death (excuse the pun).

1) Planning. Before purchasing any product using your credit card, make sure to provide yourself with a plan on how you will be able to pay for your credit card bills. Prioritize your needs before your wants. Purchasing grand items that you don't really need might give you that temporary high that impulsive buyers are addicted to. But that temporary high would eventually turn to long-term down feeling due to your piled up debts.

2) Limit. For you to be able to manage your debts and payments, never go overboard when it comes to your credit limit. If it's possible, it will help a lot if you just use about two-thirds of your limit.

3) Statement of account. Keep a record of all your credit card transactions for future reference. In order to prevent inaccuracies of bills and fraud, always remember to check the list of your purchase for the month. If your list and the statement of account do not match, report this to your bank.

4) Piled up debt remedies. There are a number of steps you have to do in order to escape these financial problems.

*** Determine the amount you need to pay and provide yourself with a plan that would fix your finances without pressure.**

*** Consider paying the minimum amount to be paid. Then, ask for debt consolidation options that would make it a lot easier for you to pay your debts. If you don't know how to solve your financial problems, there are financial advisers that could help you with your credit card management. They might offer you financial assistance through bank loans that would allow you more time to pay aside from the debt consolidation method. But of course, remember to research on the agency before getting involved with them. Don't just go saying amen to whatever they offer since there is a possibility that they could cause the situation to aggravate.**

Self-control is the best way to prevent getting debts that you won't be able to pay immediately. But if you're already in the pits, considering the abovementioned suggestions won't hurt.

On Credit Card Instant Approval

Credit card applications nowadays have begun to provide clients with an instant approval feature. Meaning, the person applying for a credit card would easily know whether he or she is eligible for applying. This process of instant approval is basically used online or through the internet.

To be able to prevent confusion in dealing with a credit card instant approval, you should know these facts:

*** The credit card instant approval and the credit card application are two different processes. The approval of your credit card does not necessarily mean that your card would be delivered to you as soon as possible. It only means that you are qualified to apply for the credit card. The credit card application will be your next step once you have been given the “go signal” by the bank.**

*** The instant approval of credit cards is made to target customers with good past credit records. Although because of the high credit market today, the banks are willing stretch their limits and offer this program to different kinds of people. This may depend on the bank you’re applying the credit card on.**

*** Majority of banks provide customers with a credit card application form online. These credit card companies make use of this program with secured connection software for your information's protection.**

*** The information you need to give for your credit card's instant approval include: your name, your current address, your social security number, and if there are previous address you may have over the years. This is the most common information asked on the instant approval feature of the banks.**

*** The main advantage of getting a speedy approval for your credit card applications is the elimination of the major trouble caused by guesswork on whether the company thinks that you deserve a card or not more instantaneously. Unlike the old-fashioned way when you have to visit a bank in person and ask if you're qualified then knowing you're not, this time it's a lot more convenient.**

*** The approval of your credit card online would only take you a few minutes to know your evaluation. It would be your choice to continue your credit card application.**

And lastly, when you have been approved on your credit card

application, don't just go splurging thinking that instant approval also means instant money. Instant approval is more tantamount to instant debt. Think about it.

Get a credit card with a low interest rate

Before you choose a credit card it would be wise to first find out the interest rates offered by all the credit card companies and banks. While you compare credit card companies and banks, take note of the ones with low interest rates and offer the best benefits. Don't miss the fine print as that is where the most important information is usually given. Fine prints almost always specify the conditions applied on using their service.

It is generally a wise decision to go with a credit card that has a low interest rate. A low interest rate would almost always mean that using the credit wouldn't eat up your savings.

One of the strategies of many banks and credit card companies to attract members is to offer an introductory low interest rate then hike up the rate after a certain period.

It is therefore advisable to inquire how long the initial low interest rate would last.

To switch to them, some credit card companies and banks would waive fees if you transfer balances to them from your old card. The fees asked by banks for transfers are actually interest rates in disguise. Make sure that a low fee, which is equivalent to a low interest rate, is charged to you when transferring or you could end paying much more than you actually have to for clearing your debt.

One thing you could do is pay for balance transfers through pre printed checks. Your best option is to transfer balances to over the phone by calling up the customer service line of the bank or company. Doing such would cost a lot less or nothing at all and because you chose a card with a low interest rate you know your expenses would be lower the next time.

It is al important for you to know that incentives such as short term low interest rate will eventually rise even without due warning from your bank or credit card company.

You could always ask the bank or company to give you a low interest rate provided that you have a decent credit history

with the company or bank. If they refuse to give you a low interest rate then you can always switch to a service that offers you a better deal.

Remember to use your credit card wisely. Keep a tab on your expenses while using this card, ensure your dues are cleared regularly and ensure that the low interest rate remain low.

Swipe Age: What is a credit card machine?

Credit card machines nowadays come in various types and prices. The kind of business a merchant is venturing on determines the kind of credit card machine that he or she is going to use.

If a transaction should be typed in the machine for it to be validated, a machine without a printer would be needed. On the other hand, a retail business would require a credit card machine with a printer.

Machines without printers are usually used in enterprises

that use mail or phone to purchase. In this type of business, a receipt at the time of purchase is not needed.

For mobile enterprise, a machine without a printer could also prove to be useful. In this system, the number of the credit card is phoned to a specific location. There, another person will type the number into the machine. Examples of these businesses are locksmiths, plumbing, landscaping, home delivery operations and other business. These are enterprises that do not have enough sales to spend for the high cost of wireless machines. A machine without a printer would still be effective while maintaining the capability to work on a transaction at the same location and time of sale.

Wireless machines for credit cards will be very useful for mobile enterprises. It would require though, high maintenance cost and cellular signal availability.

An enterprise that uses credit cards that need to be typed and swiped should have two accounts handled by the same machine. This is a cost-effective way of managing business if the numbers of typed and swiped card accounts are about the same in volume.

If an enterprise caters to different accounts, a machine

compatible to multiple accounts would be very productive. Examples of these businesses are hair styling, massage and the like.

If a company would only accept Visa card and Master card, it can use a much cheaper machine for credit cards that can only accept these types of cards.

The best way to determine what credit card machine to use is to survey potential customers. The survey should yield the type of credit card they use for a specific product or service.

For example, if a person is planning to open a car rental business, the owner should survey the area for people who usually rent cars. Then, he or she should ask what type of credit card these potential customers use. If the usual card used needs to be swiped, then the owner should purchase a machine for those cards.

By adjusting to the consumer's credit card use, a business could cater to a greater number of customers.

What Is A Credit Card Merchant Account: The Most Important Element Businesses Have to Know

With the proliferation of the Internet technology, everything revolves in a fast digital world of information technology, and credit cards had continuously dominated the scene with tremendous rate.

Today, credit cards had already brought shopping online. The convenience it brings to the people had made the credit card industry more than a phenomenon. And where people usually buys, businesses follows. And with e-commerce rapidly saturating the Internet, having a credit card merchant account is the name of the game.

But what is a credit card merchant account? Why is it that businesses consider it as a must-have feature on their online business?

Basically, a credit card merchant account is an account that entrepreneurs put up with a bank so as to enable the firm accept credit card payments from their customers. This goes to show that whether it is a small business or a home business, it is a must for every industry to have a credit card merchant account.

Credit card merchant accounts are effective ways in increasing the sales of a business. This is because credit card merchant accounts entice people to buy on impulse. Therefore, because of the convenience credit card makes, the business will be able to attract more people to buy online, and when they want to buy, the business must have a credit card merchant account so as to accept the buyer's credit card.

Moreover, credit card merchant accounts can also accept payments by phone and fax. Therefore, it gives the business more flexibility in dealing with payments.

However, getting a credit card merchant account is not that easy. The approval of an application on a credit card merchant account is dependent on the relationship of the business to its bank. This means that if the business is still new, it might have experience some difficulty in obtaining a merchant account.

Nevertheless, credit card merchant accounts are still considered as a crucial element in one's online business. It is the only way to maximize the business' potential online. Plus, there is definitely no other way to provide additional

payment option to the online customers than what credit card merchant accounts can do.

Basically, experts contend that when people find it easy to buy online and doubly easy to pay the items online, then, chances are they would be more than willing to buy it instantly. And that is the main attraction of the credit card merchant account, to create a “buy now’ phenomenon.

Nowadays, businesses are more technology-wise, and where money is the subject matter, credit card merchant accounts is the name of the game.

Credit card services and why we need those little cards

Practically everyone in the United States has credit cards. From teenagers to retirees, almost everyone has at least one credit card. Everywhere we go we see ads - in the television, radio, newspapers, billboard advertisements - on credit cards. Some credit cards are even mailed directly to our homes. But what are credit cards and why should you have one?

Simply stated, a credit card (or for many, just known as credit, is a financial arrangement between you, the consumer or the card user, and an institution (in most instances a bank), that you have to borrow instant money from them and promises that you will repay them back in the future. The institution agrees to that it will give the money you need and expects you to pay them over a certain time period, like on a monthly basis. Your payment will include not just the entire money you owed the group or institution but also an additional charge that is known as an interest rate, if you are unable to pay your full balance on time monthly.

Credit can provide various services, making it an indispensable tool for today's consumers. These include:

Convenience. You saw this wonderful dress in a shop. Perfect for tonight's party, you thought. But you don't have money right now. Thanks to your card, you can buy anything you want right now. Credit cards give you that wonderful allowance not to bring that much cash and to order goods from catalogs. In addition, many of the online-based shops and stores, such as Amazon.com, mainly accept payment using credit.

Emergency Protection. For emergency situation, credit cards can be an extremely helpful tool that could be your friend that could pay for your emergency needs, like when your car conked out in the road, or your mother gets hospitalized, or any emergency situations that you need money but can't get it from the usual means.

Putting you in the right budget. Want to keep a detailed record of your expenditures? Credit cards can do that.

Security. In today's world, carrying large cash has become a problem. If your cash gets lost, there's no way you can retrieve it. Compared with credit cards, money cannot be returned back when it got lost or stolen. If your card, for example, got broken or it got lost or someone stole it from you, you can always ask for a credit card termination or cancellation. You will have another card, a new one that will replace it in a few days.

Traveling. If you're quite a traveler, whether across the town or country, or outside the US, it is relatively easier to travel with a credit card.

When used responsibly, credit cards are can help improve our daily lives. With cards, life could be so much easier.

Credit card debt: How to deal with it

**Do you have a hard time paying your credit card bills?
Starting to get notices from waiting creditors to pay?
Worried that you might lose your properties like your house
because of credit debt? Chin up: Dealing with credit card
debt is not as hard as you may think.**

**If there's any consolation, you're not the only one facing
such situation. At some point, many people like you face
financial crises with credit card debt. But you must
remember that your financial situation doesn't mean it
should go straight to the dogs, making it worse than as it is.**

**Here are some tips to help you cope with your credit card
debt:**

**Make a Budget. If you want to have a grab of your financial
situation before you lose everything, making a budget is
what you should do first. Assess how much do you get from
your income or other means and your expenditures. For
example, if getting that posh apartment means you have to**

limit your meals to once a day, then it is not a great and sound budgeting decision. Your goal is ensure that you can answer for all the basic necessities: food, housing, clothes, health-related costs, among others.

Contacting Your Creditors. Remember: Running away from your creditors is not the answer. It is not a solution, and may in fact lead you to bigger problems. If you are having trouble paying off your debts, address this immediately with your creditors. State to them sincerely and fully the reason why it has become hard for you to pay these debts, and check if they could give you a revised payment arrangement that will put you at ease on your payment terms. Do not let creditors turn over your situation to someone or an agency to do the collecting for them, as this means that they have given up on you.

How to address Debt Collectors. There is a law that gives certain conditions for debt collectors as to when and how they should ask you to pay. The federal law, Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, clearly states that those collecting debts may not bug you, give false assertions, or do practices that are not fair when they are getting to collect money from you.

Credit Counseling. You could also consider getting the aid of

groups or institutions that will help you in your problems. If you managed to have an improved payment arrangement of your debt with a good credit counseling organization, creditors may approve of your proposition and accept your modified arrangement plan..

Bankruptcy. Generally, personal bankruptcy is known as the last choice to fix your ballooning credit debt. A bankruptcy unfortunately stays on your financial information report for years. Getting additional credit, buying a house, sometimes even getting a job might be hard for you. Technically, however, it is a legal way of addressing your credit debt.

How to Do a Credit Card Debt Consolidation

Credit card debt consolidation allows you to pay your current debts in 3-6 years. Under a debt consolidation plan, terms and conditions change. The purpose of debt consolidation is to speed up your paying time and at the same time makes lower monthly bills.

Always make sure that the new cost of the consolidated loan is truly less than what you are currently paying for to

the various creditors. Not getting the lowest available interest rate has always been a problem faced by consolidation loan applicants. Be sure that there is something to secure the loan like your house for example.

Calculate the interest and the fees of all your existing accounts to see the total payments you're making at present. After computing this, compare the figure with the consolidation loan amount. This will determine if you're making a better choice or not.

If you're already under a consolidation loan, be sure to make your deposits on time. This will assure your creditors that you really intend to pay for your debts. Having delayed payments might cause the creditors to resume the normal collection activities and what's worse, they might turn it back to the regular interest rates and fees.

Be sure to keep in touch with your consolidation representative. There may be instances that your account will be turned over to a collection agency. Keeping your agent updated on the changes will help you solve your problems.

Pay your credit to your consolidation company. They are the

ones that divide how much goes to each creditor.

Always check on your creditor's statements. It is your duty to monitor the monthly statements sent to you by your creditors. Check if your creditor has reduced the rates. They should also have the late fees stopped. Also check if your debt consolidation company is paying your creditor the right amount.

There are many types of debt consolidation loans available. There could be a loan that would take you a longer time paying but has a higher interest rate. There are also loans that offer short payment duration and a lower rate of interest. If you could not pay for a larger amount every month, you could choose consolidation loans that offer a longer plan.

Rates of the consolidation loan also vary. There is the variable rate debt consolidation loan that allows you to make extra repayments anytime with no extra cost. However a fixed rate debt consolidation loan will only accept fixed repayments for the duration of the loan.

How to get a higher credit card limit

Almost all credit card holders are aspiring for a higher credit card limit. This is because a higher credit card limit will enable them to make otherwise unaffordable purchases. Credit card holders need to remember that to get a higher credit card limit; they must abide by the terms and conditions of the credit card company or bank.

Below are other ways to get a higher credit card limit.

- **The most important thing to do to get a higher credit limit is to prove your creditworthiness. This is the number one thing banks and companies look for in giving a higher credit limit.**
- **Attract positive attention from the credit card company or bank by paying finance purchases once in a while. However, it is not advisable to make this method a habit and should only be done as a last resort to increase your chances of getting a higher credit limit.**
- **Proving credit card companies and banks that you are good borrower would definitely convince them to give you a**

higher credit limit. But be careful as such strategy could only serve the benefit of the companies and banks. A higher credit card limit means greater purchasing power but it also increases the potential of the credit card companies and banks to earn through you through increased interest charges and other fees.

- **Always spend within your credit card limit because doing so means that you are capable of controlling your expenses.**
- **Use your credit card regularly. Don't keep your cards for emergency use only. If you use your credit card sparingly banks and credit card companies will be unable to understand your spending and pay back behavior and would be reluctant to give you a higher credit card limit.**
- **Never make minimum payments. Instead, try to pay for the entire outstanding amount. This would give you better chances of getting a higher credit card limit.**
- **Avoid late payments as much as possible. Not only do you increase your interest, you also have to pay an additional fine for not clearing bills on time. This would dim your chances in getting a higher credit card limit.**

- **The best and simplest strategy to get higher credit card limit is to use your credit card wisely. Always keep in mind that credit card companies keep a record of your transactions and payment pattern so always pay your dues on time and never make late payments. Your performance in the records of banks and credit card companies will determine whether you'll get a higher credit card limit or not.**

How Credit Card Points are Earned

Credit card companies offer varying benefits and promotions to entice their customers to use their credit cards not only in their everyday purchases but also for major buying decisions.

One of the promotions that credit card companies have is the rewarding of points to their users for every purchase that they make.

Different credit cards have different product features, benefits and ways of providing rewards to their users. A

frequent traveler credit card that is made available in the market to those who are frequently flying can avail of the rewards points their card companies provide to them by converting these rewards to frequent flyer miles. These frequent flyer miles is then converted to actual miles that can be redeemed from airline companies that is co-sponsoring the credit card promotions with that credit card company. The frequent flyer miles are not always equivalent to the actual miles required to travel to particular destination. Some credit card companies reward the credit card user with 1 flyer mile for every dollar spent on his purchases. Different purchases mean varying reward points. Retail companies that may also co-sponsor those credit cards available in the market today may have higher reward points equivalent for purchases made on those credit cards to promote the sales of their products too.

Citing the frequent traveler credit card rewards system for example, a card user who purchases groceries, gas or technically his daily purchases, may have an equal travel reward points awarded to him for every dollar he spends on his regular purchases. On the other hand, should he ever buy plane tickets from an airline company co-sponsoring the credit card he's using, the reward points that he may earn may be higher as this is also one way to help promote the airline company's latest promotions or travel packages.

Once an individual credit card user has accumulated enough points from his purchases, he may then redeem them for equivalent rewards. The higher the accumulated points, the higher the value of the reward he may redeem.

Appliances such as a big flat screen tv or electronic gadgets such as a notebook PC are some of the possible rewards that credit card companies may offer their users when they redeem their rewards points. For smaller accumulated rewards points, a not so frequent credit card user may also redeem their points for rewards of smaller value such as a personal wall clock or a desk calculator. Credit card companies have different rewards for various points accumulated on a specific time period.

How Do You Accept Credit Card: Let Me Count the Ways

Nowadays, everything seems to revolve around plastics. That is, more and more people are finding credit cards as the most convenient way to shopping, whether it is online or not.

Hence, with the arrival of credit cards in the market today, most businesses have found its feasible ways when engaging into online business. It has continuously provided

online businesses to accept their customer's payment online. What's more it makes them accept payments even through phone or fax.

But there are still many businesses who kept on wondering what credit card merchant accounts is all about. They even kept on asking how other businesses get to accept credit card payments.

There are only two ways how to accept credit cards. These are:

1. Establish a merchant account with the credit card companies.

It is a must for every business who wants to accept credit card online is to build a merchant account, especially to the credit card companies that the business will be receive credit card payments. The application for this one will vary from one bank to another. That is why it is a must that the company must first learn the primary services of a bank before committing to such service.

Also, most banks do not allow new businesses and home

businesses to get a new merchant account for fear of some frauds. And so, the best way to gain the bank's trust is for the company to establish strong relationship with the bank and to maintain a good credit history.

2. Third Party Merchant

This third party merchant refers to the other companies that are willing to accept credit cards on behalf of the company who wishes to accept credit card payments.

One of the most popular third party merchants today is PayPal. It acts as a mediator between the seller and the buyer. PayPal usually requires their client's buyers to register for their program. That is why; most people find this really wearisome activity.

Both methods can help businesses to accept credit cards. However, there are areas where the first may offer greater features than the other.

Take for example the differences between the two methods. In most case, the primary rates for merchant accounts are higher than the third party merchant account. Plus, the third

merchant party accounts more convenient than what the merchant account can do.

And so, for those who are still deliberating whether to get merchant account or the third party merchant account, it is strongly suggested that whatever methods is used, remember to take into consideration the pros and cons of the two method so as to accept credit card.

How to Apply for a Credit Card Online

The average American mailbox gets sales pitches from credit card companies at about two a day. With this overload of information, choosing the best product that fits your needs can get pretty overwhelming. The sheer number of brochures and application forms not only make it inconvenient to make an intelligent choice, but also adds to unnecessary clutter.

This is where the advantages of applying online for a credit card comes in. It's easier to make head-to-head comparisons, because of the relative simplicity you can retrieve the latest information about your prospect credit

card product. And once you've made your choice, it's just a matter of pounding at your keyboard and clicking those checkboxes. No manual, long-hand writing each letter of your name in those annoying boxes. What a great, great consumerist world we live in.

So, what to remember when hunting for a good deal on a credit card online? Here are a few tips:

1. Know thyself.

What do you need the card for? Is this your first time to get one? Where would you most likely use it? All these are basic questions, and ones that cannot be stressed enough. You don't want to end up like more than half of Americans who end up buying things they're not sure they need with money they're not sure they have.

2. Be internet-savvy.

There are a few websites that facilitate a simple side-by-side comparison of different credit card products, but usually it's a marketing tool of only one credit card company. If you're interested in comparing products from

one company to another, you'll still have to go to each company's website. This still beats having to deal with all that paper, though.

3. Read the fine print.

This is as good a time as any to do your homework. Often times when we read from a brochure the company sent us, they conveniently leave off a lot of vital information about the product. Calling their helpdesk may help, but that's just another hassle. And anyway, if you still have specific questions, there's usually an email link you can use to field them.

4. Make sure you're secure. This is a sophisticated techno-world we live in. If you have to, invest in security software that will protect you and how you surf the internet. This also applies to when you're already going through the application process itself.

The credit card industry is a multi-billion dollar business. Competition for market share has kept up with the times, and that means using the internet to lure more clients. You as a consumer can use this tool to your advantage, and it won't be that easy. But it will certainly be worth it, if you

get the hang of it. Just remember your goals why you're getting that plastic money in the first place, and try to do your homework.

How to avail of Credit Card Point Redemption

I have a friend who's a frequent traveler who's most of the time always out of the United States. While he's always traveling, his purchases done in other countries are done over his credit cards. He prefers using his frequent traveler credit card in buying his plane tickets as these that allow him to accumulate travel air miles. Whenever he buys plane tickets, can always redeem his accumulated travel miles to avail of discounts on his plane ticket or if he has accumulated a lot of air miles already, he can use them in buying his plane tickets alone. He does have other credit cards that were offered to him from US merchant stores. The only problem he has is as he's always out in other countries, while he's able to use these credit cards, he may not be able to always to use his accumulated points from those merchant sponsored credit cards because he seldom goes to those stores anymore. In availing of credit card points other than air miles, are there other ways of redeeming them assuming that an individual may not be around all the time to shop back in the locally based stores

that co-sponsored those credit cards?

The answer is yes. While an individual may be out of the country on business or leisure, the advantage provided by the internet has allowed consumers all around the world with much flexibility and benefits. Accumulated rewards points from credit cards offered by major US based merchant stores can also be redeemed online whenever he may make purchases over the internet. A person making a book purchase online using his credit card sold to him also by the same online book retailer he's buying the book purchase right now for example may redeem his rewards points in the form of redeemable gift checks that he can later use to buy other books and have them sent over to his house in the US or send as a gift to friends or loved ones.

In order determine the number of points a person has accumulated from his purchases from his credit cards that he can later on redeem for new gift items, appliances or even equivalent travel air miles, these can also be tracked and checked from the credit card companies' websites. Credit card companies have their own hotline numbers for inquiries on redeemable rewards also. It's important to know the equivalent number of points that will be needed to redeem the equivalent items so that the credit card user may maximize the benefits and rewards that his credit can

offer him on a longer-term basis.

How to avoid credit card pitfalls?

Seeing people buying food or shopping clothes using credit cards has been commonplace these days. The phrase "Charge it!" has become a favorite expression of card users, and has been commonly heard in shops, dining places, and elsewhere.

After all, who does not want to use these credit cards? Easy to use, these sleekly-designed cards can be used to buy practically everything in commercial establishments regardless of how much (or less) money does one carry money in his wallet. Short of cash and hungry? No grocery supplies? Going to a party but no money to buy that dress you've been drooling for? No problem! Your good ol' credit can care of that for you. No worries.

Credit Cards: Not Free Money

But wait. A credit card spree may be fun, but that doesn't

free you from responsibilities in paying the expenses you incurred from using your credit card. Credit cards, after all, are interest loans in disguise. Typical credit cards ask for a number of charges, including:

" A finance charge, which is an interest charge for the unpaid portion of your monthly bill;

" An annual membership fee;

" Or if you're paying after the deadline, there is also a late payment fee which could have a higher interest rate.

In fact, many credit-card holders face credit-related problems. Poor purchasing decisions, lack of information on credit card fees, and disregard for upcoming credit payments are among the reasons why many credit-card users are often hard-pressed in paying their debts. Some are not even able to pay for the actual purchases they made, just barely managing to pay credit card company charges.

Before you get drowned in a sea of debt, here are some tips to help you manage your credit-related expenses:

" Be credit smart. Applying for a credit card application means you are ready to assume the responsibility for paying your credit. You and only you - not your parents, spouse, or whoever - is responsible for that.

" Use your credit cards wisely and sparingly. Remember: Paying goods and services using credit cards are more expensive than using cash or checks. Credit payments include interest and other fees. Use credit cards as sparingly as possible. If you really need to use credit cards, carry only the cards that you will actually use.

" Use credit only if you are sure you can repay it. Paying your debt on a credit card using another does not count.

" Avoid impulse shopping on your credit card.

" Use credit for money emergency only.

" Seek credit counseling as soon you see financial problems on the horizon.

Settle Smart: How To Do Credit Card Payment

The first step in doing a credit card payment is to understand your monthly billing. The following are terms you will encounter:

Statement date – The date that the bill was printed.

Payment due date – this is the day that the cardholder must pay any outstanding balance. Payments made after the said date will be credited, but will also be fined a lateness fee.

Total Amount Due – It consist of the unpaid amount from the previous month, as well as purchases, payments and interest charges for the current month. When the cardholder pays this amount on or before the payment due date, no interest charges will be imposed.

Minimum Amount Due – this is a smaller fraction of the total amount due. To maintain a good standing with the card company, pay at least this amount, if you cannot afford to

pay the total amount due.

Finance charge – if the cardholder is not able to pay the total amount due, then he is charged a fee for borrowing money from the company. It is calculated based on the interest rate of the card. For detailed information on how this is calculated, go to

[http://www.abcguides.com/creditcards/ci_faq.htm#finance charges](http://www.abcguides.com/creditcards/ci_faq.htm#finance_charges).

Late charges – Paying or not, after the payment due date, is penalized with late charges. Avoid this as much as possible as this is almost 2X the interest rate of the finance charge. Consistently missing payment may lead to cancellation of the card and a bad credit standing.

Having understood the information on your monthly bill, here are simple strategies for paying your credit card charges:

Always pay the total amount due. Paying only the minimum amount due means being charged for a high interest rate on the unpaid amount.

If you cannot pay the total amount due, pay as much as you

can above the minimum amount due. This strategy aims to reduce the finance charges that you have to pay for settling partially.

Do partial payments as early as possible (as soon as you receive the billing). Finance charges are based on the unsettled amount and the time it remains unsettled, so the shorter it is, the lower it will be for finance charges.

Some card companies reward loyal cardholders by accumulating points for their spending. Check if reward points can be credited back as payment.

Lastly, pay the total amount due. Just to emphasize the point!

There are many avenues to pay your card bill. There's the traditional way of waiting in line, or the faster way of paying electronically through your computer, cash machine or mobile phone. With all these conveniences at hand, it is quite unforgivable to miss your payment due date.

Therefore, settle smart: pay the total, pay on time.

Best Strategies for Online Approval of Credit Card Application

Credit cards had been a popular form of purchasing items on a "chargeable" or borrowed term.

The advantages of having a credit card are:

- 1. Security, since one does not have to carry a large amount of cash to purchase certain items.**
- 2. Convenience. In case one has to purchase an item that is immediately needed (and is out of cash), these can be purchased using a credit card**
- 3. Cash advances. Purchases that require cash payments may still be accommodated by the credit card through the cash advance feature. This works like a regular ATM transaction (with of course a corresponding interest rate)**

Disadvantages

- 1. Interest rate. Unlike purchasing with cash, credit card charges come with a corresponding interest (unless paid before the due date). The consumer should be aware of the**

various interest rates offered by the different credit card companies. One has to choose the mode of payment (plus the interest rate) that would best suit his or her capacity to pay.

2. Overuse. A consumer tends to purchase items that are not really needed or included in their budget if they have a credit card that is ready to use.

3. Annual fees. Whether one chooses to use his or her card, after activation, annual fees will be charged.

4. Other charges. A delay in the payment during one billing period would incur you additional charges.

Credit card online approval usually is far easier than manual applications that require various forms to be completed before it can be processed. The company likewise is more likely to receive your application on a shorter period of time as compared to snail-mailing your forms.

For a faster credit card online approval, take into consideration the following:

1. Do not leave any unanswered line, especially those marked with a red asterisk.

2. After completion of the online application, immediately send either through email or facsimile the additional requirements needed.

3. Take into consideration that credit card companies prioritize applications of the following group of people:

- married couples

- persons with a mortgaged house or car

- persons with several dependents

4. Choose credit card companies that have a promotional offer in the application process, chances are, promos are offered due to low application rate, thus prioritization your entry is a sure shot.

The logic here is that the more obligations an applicant has, the more they are likely to use the credit card, which

equivalents to higher earnings (through interest charges) on their part.

What's the best credit card for me?

So, you have decided you need a credit card. However, you must remember that not all credit cards are created equally. Your friend's credit card doesn't mean that it is also the best for you. Before going to this bank and get its credit card, you must consider the several factors that you should take into consideration when deciding which credit card you want to get.

Some of those factors include:

o Interest rate. When you are the type of person that pays off your balance monthly, you would probably disregard the interest rate. Unfortunately, most people are having problems keeping with their credit card balance. Most people do carry a balance in their credit cards. If you sometimes late paying and carrying a balance, then it would be the best decision to have a credit card with a low interest rate. Having a card with a low interest rate save you

a lot of money. You might disregard the difference between a 10 percent and 20 percent interest rate, but the difference could be significant if you have balances for a long period of time. Major credit card companies like Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and AMEX, have low interest versions of their credit card.

o Reward programs. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express and other major credit card companies have reward programs. Reward programs give you special privileges or services for being a credit card holder. Some of these programs include frequent flyer programs, where you are given one frequent flyer mile for each dollar spent. If you are quite a traveler, then a credit card with this program might be for you. Some offer cash-back options. Most common are discount offerings at retail stores or online chains.

o Annual fees. The annual fee is an important consideration, especially those who have a hard time paying off their balances monthly. If you think that the annual fee you have to pay to keep your card is way too high compared with the privileges you get from your card, it would be probably better to stop using the card.

o Member benefits. Credit cards promise various benefits.

Some have travel protection as part of the benefits, while others offer roadside assistance. You have to consider your lifestyle in checking out a card's benefits.

Remember: On choosing credit cards, choose wisely. If you need to, discuss your specific financial needs with your financial advisor.

The war on Low APR credit

The interest rate is definitely a key factor consumers consider before signing up for a credit card. This is especially true for those carrying balances, as a card with low rates will generate significant savings. Thus, MasterCard, Visa and other leading credit card groups are now competing in terms of varying low APR (annual percentage rate) packages.

The huge market for card shoppers has also made banks tie-up with card companies or set up their own card units. Based on figures from MarketResearch.com, corporate credit cards have now grown into a \$500bn market in the US. The sector's growth has progressed due mainly to

increasing acceptance and demand for electronic transactions worldwide and a requirement among more US firms for corporate card use - offsetting the country's recession and economic woes across many global industries.

As cards under such plans allow consumers to minimize the cost impact of a Christmas purchase or a holiday, credit card companies are giving users a wide range of attractive packages.

One such option is Citibank's Citi Dividend Platinum Select card. The offering targets individuals seeking to transfer their balances and a reprieve from soaring interest rates - gives the consumer 0% APR for up to 12 months. As an incentive, users of the Citibank card will also be reimbursed as much as 5% of any cash purchase they make at pharmacies, supermarkets and gas stations and 1% for purchases at all other stores and shops.

American Express also offers 0% APR for initial purchases over a 15-month period with its American Express Blue Card, which features a 3.99% interest rate fixed for the balance of the product. JP Morgan Chase is also offering a cash-back incentive and 0% interest rate for up to 12 months on balance transfers with its Chase Cash Plus Visa.

Maintaining APR credit

Companies market their products to the point that they seem to good to be true. Before signing up for 0% APR credit cards, there are several things a user should watch out for. One of them is caution with cards starting with high interest rates conditional on economic indicators - the variation would lead to fluctuating interest for any change on specific indicators.

Also, 'teaser' promotions where low rates run for only 3 months or up to one year can be handled by maximizing gains from the 0% plan by moving all balances to that card and settling all amounts due as soon as possible within the introductory period. However, users should recognize when their cards do not allow such balance transfers. Some companies also move delinquent holders to variable APR cards automatically for delayed payments.

Things to Know About MasterCard

Credit card is known today as the plastic money. But it stretches the limit of a typical paper money. Credit cards

increase the buying power of a consumer because of what is known as the credit limit. Payments are made easier because you don't have to make stops to the billing centers. What's best is that owning a credit card gives you a worldwide access to cash.

MasterCard is one of the credit cards in the market. Today, MasterCard offers the Automatic Bill Payment. With this, you can now pre-authorize the participating companies to charge your card on a regular basis. This includes your insurance companies, your cable provider as well as your electric and water companies.

What's good about owning a MasterCard?

- 1. Avoid the trouble of writing checks. With MasterCard Automatic Bill Payment, you can save time from writing check and the trouble of tracking the issuances you've made.**
- 2. No more late payments. Paying your bills will always be on time. Take care of your bills even while you're working at the office.**
- 3. Keep your money growing. Your money is safe on**

the bank until the time comes for you to pay your bills. This means the time your money is sitting on the bank, the interest is growing.

Choosing the right MasterCard that would best suit your needs is a must. The following is a list of MasterCard Credit Card Types.

1. Standard. This is the type of credit card for starters. Whether you're a student or simply starting out on a credit, this is the card that would suit you.

2. Gold. Once you acquired a considerably good credit history, you can now switch from your Standard Credit Card to the Gold Card and enjoy added benefits.

3. Platinum. This card offers the best every card has to offer. Plus it gives you the extended purchasing power for expensive items. You can also earn points that could be exchanged for rewards whenever you use your Platinum MasterCard.

4. World. This is the premium card that embodies your dream about hassle-free spending. MasterCard World offers

a no pre-set spending and whole new personalized benefits.

Now let's check what's in store for MasterCard Holders...

**Enjoy free nights' stay on selected destinations worldwide.
Use your MasterCard to pay for your stay and get another
night stay for free!**

**Nothing beats the feeling of getting discounts and savings!
Get favorable discounts on participating merchants and
service-oriented shops when you use your MasterCard.**

Perks of Citibank credit card

**Citibank credit cards offer a wide range of benefits.
Basically, all of its features offer clients with security during
emergencies, the advantage of not bringing cash and
checks, and improving independence and responsibility in
financial management.**

Other than these basic perks of credit cards, there are

specified benefits the Citibank credit cards have to offer. Here are some of the credit cards and their corresponding perks:

1) Diners club international credit card. This kind of credit card provides you with the decision of your own credit limit. The interest rates would not show on your bill for fifty days. Since this Citibank credit card could be used all around the world, it gives you the privilege of using it within five million companies worldwide. The ATM card could be used anywhere in the world. And lastly, there is no extra fee when the Citibank credit card is lost.

2) The Citibank Gold Card. This kind of Citibank credit card provides you with a higher credit and cash limit. It offers you access on international lounges and airports. It has a strong and secured insurance. And there is no fee when the credit card has been stolen, lost or damaged.

3) Jet Airways Citibank International Gold Card. This kind of credit card allows the cardholder to take advantage of jet privileges and promos on jet miles when you make use of the credit or cash. When you have been approved with this kind of credit card, you will be automatically given a jet airways ride of 1500 miles. Plus, the services and credit card is insured.

4) The Citibank Silver Card. This kind of credit card has several kinds of insurances like personal accidents, baggage and household insurances that would cover up your expenses. There are also occasional discounts on certain stores and zero costing on lost credit cards.

5) The Citibank Woman's card. This kind of credit card targets the women. It provides women with discounts on jewelry, cosmetics, health products, clothes and many shopping stores. It also provides jewelry insurance and there is no extra fee when the Citibank credit card is lost.

6) Specialty cards. There are Citibank credit cards that provide you specifically with music and book stores usage, gives you an advantage on concerts and movie passes, and could give you discounts on oil transactions. These kinds of credit cards would depend on which you apply for and use regularly.

With those numerous advantages, you will surely wonder how you were able to get along without it.

A Credit-free Card: What is a prepaid credit card?

In this high-tech era of computers and machines, the purchasing power of people is mostly based on credit. Nowadays, credit cards are almost indispensable in almost any business transaction. For one, nobody can purchase anything online without a credit card.

People who have a poor credit history though, will have a hard time getting or renewing their credit cards. This is where prepaid credit becomes useful.

There are lenders that offer prepaid MasterCard and/or prepaid Visa Cards. Both these cards can be used like a regular credit card. It is even hard to distinguish which card is prepaid or not, by simply looking at it or even using it.

This is basically how prepaid credit cards work. When an account is opened, the card should be “pre-loaded” with cash up-front. This is like paying for a pre-paid calling card.

Prepaid MasterCard or Visas can be used anywhere as long as these cards are accepted.

The prepaid credit card advantage:

1. Prepaid credit card can be easily obtained. It can be purchased online or in local retail stores. It does not require any credit check or proof of income.

The only thing to do is to fill out an application, pay a small fee for setting-up the account and load the card with cash. The amount of cash loaded will be the “credit limit”

2. No interest charges.

When a prepaid MasterCard or prepaid Visa is used, there is no interest charge unlike the regular credit card. The reason for this is that the money used is the owner’s actual money therefore no interest is needed.

3. Prepaid credit cards are free from financial or credit problems.

4. Prepaid cards can be used almost anywhere. Prepaid MasterCards and Visa cards are almost accepted anywhere in the world.

Disadvantages of Prepaid Credit Cards:

1. Usually a set-up fee of 5 to 50 dollars is needed when an account is opened. Then another fee of \$5 or more is paid every time more money is loaded onto the card.

Regular credit cards usually do not charge a set-up fee or annual fees.

2. Cash up front is needed before any purchase could be made with the prepaid card.

This could be an advantage since compulsive spending can be avoided.

3. There are some prepaid credit cards that cannot be used to pay regular payments such as monthly electric consumption or online services.

Note: The prepaid credit card is a definite help for people who have past credit problems. It is just a matter of choosing the right prepaid credit card that suits ones' needs.

The Travails Of The Pros and Cons Of A Business Credit Card

Getting a sense out of a deal is, in some instances, the most difficult thing to do. This is because most people could not instantly figure out the benefits they can derive from obtaining it.

Take for example the case of business credit cards. Some people contend that business credit cards are crucial in the growth of a business, while others contend that it is just one way of losing their investments.

But whatever the point there is, only one thing is certain, it is still a credit card and just like any financial decisions, extensive consideration is a must.

So, for those who want to know whether getting a business credit card will be good for their company, here are some of the pros and cons to be considered first.

PROS

1. It is efficient and provides management on the company's financial charges.

With the business credit card, most entrepreneurs can manipulate their costs and payments through separate charges consolidation. This means that the company will only have one billing statement with details on the employees' expenses instead of having various statements and invoices.

2. Business credit cards provide their client's with the opportunity to curb overspending in their employees.

Because the business owners are given the right to "preset" the credit limit of their employees, they are able to impede any probable overspending of their employees instead. This, in turn, poses great discipline among the people.

The statements that go to the manager or to the financial administrator are in full details of all the financial transactions incurred at a specific time. Hence, the company can track down the kind of spending habits of their employees.

CONS

1. It is still a credit card.

This means that even if it is a company's property, employees will still have the tendency to over spend or splurge into more cashless shopping. This can be very risky especially to business management who is primarily the one responsible for the accounts.

2. Any errors or faults can damage credit ratings.

If credit history is very important to common individuals, it has a greater impact on businesses. So, if something goes wrong with their business credit card, the effect is mostly imposed on the business rather on the employee.

So, what's the bottom line here? As compared to other types of credit, it is always best to monitor the spending habits. Credit cards can really be feasible where it serve its purpose, but can also do more harm than good if misused

and taken for granted.

Small Business Credit Cards for More Successful Businesses

Small business credit cards are credit instruments that cater specifically to the needs of small businesses. They are like your normal credit card except for some changes in interest rates and features which are optimized for use by small businesses. They are very useful for small businesses that desire to streamline their finances and access extra credit.

The numbers of small businesses that use these cards are ever-growing. A recent report shows that 66% of small businesses use these cards for purchasing and financing. Forty percent of this number use their exclusively use credit cards for their payments. But why should a business apply for one? Are there any benefits that merit application for such a card? There are many advantages. Some of them will be outlined below.

For one, these cards allow a business to get hold of good credit. Good credit is the use of borrowed finances to

generate more cash. In effect, the act of borrowing actually results in the company earning more. A small business credit card allows for this. The business then is able to keep hold of finances for other reasons: investing for interest, for profit, or other needs the business may have for cold cash. They can pay in easy installments that will not dent the financial capability of the business. They can also pay when they are capable of paying.

Another advantage of using small business credit cards is the fact that they help make bookkeeping easier. Instead of keeping a journal of all transactions and receipts, one can have the credit card company send an itemized list of purchases made using their credit card. This allows for better bookkeeping and better accounting. Lost receipts and undocumented expenses can be avoided. This helps the business make more accurate financial reports.

Small business credit cards also allow businesses to build up their credit limit. Small businesses will typically need capital for new equipment, or to expand their business. A good credit limit will allow small business to access credit that would otherwise be inaccessible to small businesses. Bigger capital opens up the possibility of greater profits.

These cards also offer the option of limiting one business's

spending. This would be very useful for a business that is keeping a tight watch over its finances.

Small business cards are quickly becoming an efficient way to increase buying power and capital. With these advantages, it may soon be that small businesses will regard these small business credit cards as a necessity.

Successful Credit Cards For a Successful You!

There are tons of competing credit card companies around. For the consumer in you and me, separating the wheat from them tares among these companies will be quite an enormous task. What should one look for anyway when considering what credit card company to avail of?

As with most smart consumers, the key to finding the best credit card company is to stick with the best. Among the hundreds of credit card companies that exist, only about 10 to 20 can be considered truly successful. Identifying these companies will narrow down your choices to the select few credit cards that are worth applying for.

Here are some of the characteristics of successful credit card companies.

1) No Annual Fee – Some credit card companies are confident enough in their status that they do not need to collect annual fees. When you consider applying for a card, make sure you consider those that do not have annual fees first. Remember, if these companies that require annual fees are not content to make money off of the interest on your purchases, then they are not financially reliable to bank on. If the card you are looking at has annual fees, steer clear of them unless they offer some fantastic feature that you just can't miss.

2) Extended Interest Days- Upon purchase of an item using your credit card, you will not be charged interest unless you are unable to pay before the set interest day deadline. The most successful credit card companies offer longer periods of grace. This means that you do not have to pay interest until that day comes. Often enough, the standard for this period is 25 days.

To avoid having to pay interest, you have to pay within 25 days after your billing statement. For large purchases that require numerous months to pay, you can swallow the interest for its sake.

3) Low Annual Percentage Rate – Some credit card companies offer low annual percentage rates. These companies can attract more customers because they have the financial clout to wag such a deal in front of consumers. Consumers will benefit from lower APR. Companies that offer lower APRs hint of larger consumer bases that make such offers possible.

If you plan to pay your balance on credit cards in full, the APR may not be much of a factor in your selection of a credit card.

4) Consult Feedbacks and Industry Profiles – most successful credit card companies are featured in business journals and other media. This will also give you an idea of who's who in the credit card business.

The Best credit card promotions available in the market

In determining which credit card to choose, it's best to know the purpose of getting the card. Credit card companies may offer cards to their clients that have flexible terms with

varying annual percentage rates or APRs. In choosing a credit card, an individual will need to study carefully and understand the purpose for getting the credit card.

Different credit cards have different features, APRs, annual membership fees and promotions that they provide their users.

Some credit cards may offer low APRs with no annual membership on the first few years of use although these may change to higher APRs and varying membership costs after the expiration of their waived membership fees and low APRs. In this example, the use of this particular credit card may only be applicable for short term use as there may be other credit cards available that offers fixed lower than current industry's standard APRs. There are also credit cards offered in the market that waives the annual membership fees on a longer term basis as long as the credit card user is able to meet specific purchase and payment targets.

There are credit card companies on the other hand that offers reward points that provides flexibility in choosing how the rewards will be redeemed. Rewards points accumulated from purchases can be redeemed in the form of gifts, appliances, furniture, or even travel miles. For a

frequent traveler who's also a frequent credit card user, he can maximize the rewards system provided by credit card companies that offers travel perks with their frequent flyer programs.

There are merchants in the business of retail that are also offering credit cards to help promote the sales of their products. A retail company selling products on the internet may offer credit cards under major credit card companies. While the credit card is technically a standard credit card that can be used in purchases from various establishments, the retail company that provides the credit card rewards the consumer with reward points depending on the amount of purchases made. The reward points accumulated then is converted to gifts, products or redeemable check amounts that can be redeemed for products from their stores on the internet.

In choosing which credit card a person will choose, it's always best to understand the purchase habits the person has. A person who's a frequent traveler can maximize his credit card use by subscribing to credit cards that offers air mile rewards. A frequent shopper on the other hand may benefit from his credit card by getting a card that his favorite merchant is offering and later on redeem the points accumulated from the merchant's stores.

Tips for an easy card processing

Most businesses conduct their transactions with the help of credit cards. Moreover, personal transactions could also be carried out through the use of credit cards. Credit card has become very essential for shoppers since it eliminates the need to carry a large amount of cash. It gives convenience both to the customer and the seller because transactions can be done any time you want it. It helps in managing your money easier and can be especially used during emergencies.

Using credit cards on online transactions boost your business profit against your competitor.

Here are the three key elements needed for credit card processing:

1. Payment gateway - combination of secure software and hardware that transmits payment information from customer to merchant, provides interface, credit card processing, billing, reporting and operational services.

2. Internet merchant account-relationship between a retailing company and a merchant bank which gives authorization to collect funds from customer's credit card account.

3. Bank account-an account or account number that holds funds from which they can make withdrawals.

The key to online sales is accepting credit cards but unfortunately, most internet merchant accounts can be harder to achieved because of increased security risks as to no signatures attached, and nor the card is physically presented on the point of sale. In some ways it could also be crucial for businesses because of the occurrence of credit card fraud and attack of credit card thieves.

So you must have a secure, confidential and protected way of dealing credit card information.

The easiest and safest way to implement an online credit card processing is using a third-party service which is a payment gateway at the same time a merchant account. Lots of third-party service or software is offered in the

market today and appropriate for all types of businesses. It also incorporates a payment gateway and a merchant account. And many of these services also incorporate a shopping cart application as part of the deal. It may appear to cost more but it saves you from an initial outlay on shopping cart applications and expensive long time contracts.

When choosing a third-party service for credit card payments, consider the volume and frequency of your sales. There are also other third-party credit card processing services available, all of which have slightly different pricing schemes. The right one for you will depend on your sales volume and cash flow.

Travel Rewards from using your credit card

Responsible use of your credit card allows flexibility and leverage as it helps people manage their money. By using the principle of interest rates in credit, it allows large and expensive purchases like buying furniture and appliances. Payment for these large purchases can be extended over a specific period to make it more flexible for the credit user. The credit card company on the other hand is able to earn

income charging interest rates for credit used over a specific period of time.

Credit card companies use as promotional or marketing strategies the giving of rewards to their card customers by giving points for every time they use their credit cards when making transactions. These reward points can be in a form of free gifts, appliances, electronic gadgets, cash rewards or travel miles. The number of points per card transaction may depend on the amount purchased. For travel point rewards for example, a 1 dollar purchase transaction sometimes equals 1 travel reward mile. The number of travel miles will usually depend on the travel destinations, the credit card company's rewards program and the airline companies they have tied up with in their air miles points program.

Travel rewards from using credit cards in making purchases are quantified in air miles. Heavy credit card users are able to benefit from these programs the most as the huge accumulated points that they may make may already equal the points equivalent to one plane ticket. The more purchases a person does on his credit card, the more points his credit card rewards him and the person has the options to convert these to travel air miles.

To determine if the accumulated air miles rewards points a person has is enough to avail of a plane ticket, lets say flying domestic within the US, they can do this by checking with their credit card companies how much air miles they need to accumulate in order to avail of a plane ticket to their desired destination. The number of accumulated air miles points on their card doesn't necessarily equal the actual miles required to make the trip. In order to determine the actual equivalent of miles their accumulated miles rewards points from their credit card purchases, they'll need to check with their credit card hotline numbers or from their credit card's consumer websites to receive more detailed information in determining how much actual miles their accumulated air miles reward points has made, how to claim them and how to work out the travel arrangements with the airline company the credit card company has tied up with regards to the travel rewards promotions.

Learning More about Visa Credit Card

Today when everything is just a click away, owning a credit card or two is nothing new. Plastic cards have replaced paper money. Why it's very convenient! You don't have to

worry about running out of cash every time you go shopping. Spending time counting pennies or loose change is no longer a problem. Credit cards have made life easier for every consumer.

Visa is the most common credit card in the market with more than one billion users. It is also the first credit card known to everybody since its debut in 1976.

What can you do with your Visa Credit Card?

- 1. Pay your taxes. Standing in queue to pay for your taxes is long over. You can now pay your taxes using the Visa Credit Card.**
- 2. Pay your bills. Now you don't have to make stops to the billing centers to pay your bills. Paying them is a phone call away with your Visa Credit Card.**
- 3. Donate to charity. Feeling generous? Give your share to those in need using Visa and feel great with the help you gave.**

4. Travel with Visa. Pay your air fares and other needs while you're away for vacation. Travel has never been this fun using Visa with its Visa Traveler's Check, Visa Travel Money and even the Visa currency converter.

Now that you know what you can do with a Visa Credit Card, it's time to get one. But first, let's see which visa credit card that would best suit your needs.

1. Visa Classic. This credit card type is the most convenient for the first timers. It's the roadway to building a good credit history.

2. Visa Gold. This is the card created to suit your need. This is for holders that have a good strong credit history.

3. Visa Student. This card is offered to students. It includes special discounts for books and computers when you use your card to purchase.

Now that your equipped with the basics about your Visa Credit Card, it's time to know a little more about what Visa has to offer.

There's no pleasure like gift-giving. Visa offers The Visa Gift Card. This is a prepaid debit card perfect for birthday gifts and for other occasions.

Teach your teens how to spend their money wisely with the Visa Buxx. This is a prepaid card for teenagers that could be loaded by their parents.

Enjoy your dream vacation with no worries. Let the Visa TravelMoney take care of your purchasing needs while on vacation.

Kill Your Credit Cards

Credit cards are kind of a drag once you get over the novelty of having one or more. By that time you are at your credit limit. Now instead of spending at a shopping spree, you are struggling to make the minimum payments every month.

Now you are also wondering why the balance keeps going up even though you are not using the credit cards to buy

anything anymore. Not that you do not want to buy stuff with your credit cards, but when you try they come up declined.

The reason your balance is getting bigger is because you are being charged an exorbitant interest rate on your credit card balance, and then interest on the interest, plus any of the various fees you might be getting charged. You are in debt and you need to get out!

High credit card balances are bad because you are paying outgoing interest that puts a hole in your finances. What you should have is incoming interest to build your savings. This is hard to do when you do not have any savings, and harder to do when debt is giving your money an outflow rather than an inflow.

Ever wonder why the poor get poorer while the rich keep getting richer. It is because the rich are collecting interest on the money they have and the poor are paying interest on the money they do not have. The first thing you have to do to move from poor to rich is to stop having to pay interest. Scrimp, budget, and sacrifice. Anything you can do to pay down on your credit cards to get you out of the downward spiral.

Once you get them paid, close the accounts because we have an almost certain inevitable tendency to use our full credit balances when we have them available. That is why credit card debt is so common, and why credit card companies are making such good money. Do not let them make it from you anymore. Kill your credit cards! If you need to use credit cards to make payments, banks and credit unions now have debit-charge cards available that are linked to checking accounts so that you do not have to borrow money or get charged interest to pay bills.

Do this and you will have extra money available every month that you can spend rather than paying down on a recurring credit card bill that gives you no benefit. You can also decide to save that money in an interest bearing account. Having savings will restore your peace of mind with the feeling of security rather than your previous stress caused by debt.

Once you get in the habit of not borrowing money and saving money instead, you will have that incoming interest which will give you a brighter future. First you have to get out of the dreary dilemma of debt, and unless you have borrowed from or gambled with the mob, credit cards are the worst kind.

What are credit card rates?

Credit card rates have always been an issue in applying for a credit card. These rates are what everyone should know before choosing a credit company from another. Shopping around for the best rates will give you the best deal.

For you to own a credit card, you should first know what are credit card rates? What is an APR? What are the different kinds of rates?

Credit card rates are used to measure the interest of your credit card. It is used to know how much you would pay if you hold a balance on your account, if you have a cash advance or loan, and if you transferred a balance from other credit cards. The credit card rates are usually computed annually.

1) APR. The APR signifies the annual percentage rate of the interest. The APR is used by the bank to know how much would be charged on your bill for a yearly basis. There are two kinds of APRs:

*** Fixed. This kind of APR is an interest rate which has been arranged by the bank. The fixed APR would not be changed unless the bank or the credit card owner would amend the contract of agreement. Majority of credit card accounts that has fixed rates does not change often.**

*** On-going. This kind of APR is a kind of interest rate that could change even after the signing of contracts and the grace period.**

Note: Both the fixed and APR rates would depend on consistency of the bill payments, if you would request your APR to be changed either lower or higher and if certain government provisions was made regarding the annual rates of your credit card.

*** Special APRs. These kinds of annual rates would depend on the contract you have signed. If your terms specify a penalty APR when you would not be able to pay for your bills, this kind of rates would apply.**

2) Interest rate.

*** Fixed. A fixed interest basically means that your rate**

cannot be changed unless the bank informs you that there have been some changes in the policies.

*** Variable. A variable interest rate changes automatically whenever the basic rate of the bank increases or decreases.**

Note: Both the fixed and the variable rates could be changed by the bank anytime. This means that any bank could alter the terms and conditions of your credit account for a fifteen-day notice.

More Than Meets The Eye: What Is A Chase Credit Card?

With so many credit cards dominating the market these days, people can no longer tell the difference between one card to another. It all seems like a wide array of credit cards all committed to provide the consumers with substantial means in cashless shopping.

However, there is one credit card that aims to be above the rest. This is the chase credit cards.

On its façade, chase credit cards may look just like the other credit cards, works like the others, and has the basic features of a typical credit card. But what people still don't know about chase credit cards is that what it has basically more than meets the eye.

Here are some facts about chase credit cards in order to guide those who are contemplating to get hold of it:

1. Chase credit cards are easily accessible online.

Just like the other credit cards, chase credit cards are also available online. But the fact that people can do transactions online is a remarkable modification in credit cards.

In fact, consumers who want to get a chase credit card can easily apply online, and once approved they can continuously track their balances, statements, and details of their transactions all in just one click.

2. Chase credit cards have free alerts.

These are the notifications that a chase credit card holder receives through e-mail or phone.

If the consumer chooses e-mail alerts, notifications shall be sent to the user's e-mail address, wap-enabled mobile phone, pager, or even a PDA device. In this way, the consumer can be updated about his or her account at any time of the day.

Free alerts can even jog your memory whenever there is a due payment. It will also ring a bell in the event that your balance is about to reach its limit. Best of all, it is free so people don't have to worry about additional charges just for this service.

3. Chase credit cards offers versatility when paying bills.

Chase credit cards can be used automatically to pay all the bills on due. The consumer has to arrange for the specific requirements needed before they can get their chase credit card start paying bills.

So, for a new way of enjoying credit cards with all the functions still intact but ahs a different way of managing the

consumer's accounts, chase credit cards are certainly the best of its kind.

HomeWork on College Credit Cards

With credit cards dominating the market world today, even college students are already prospective clients of most credit card companies. This is because studies have revealed that most college students have difficulty in maintaining their expenses especially to those who are far way from home. That is why credit card nowadays had been a “must-have” for most college students.

Basically, college credit cards do not differ that much to ordinary credit cards. In fact, college credit cards are classified as secured credit cards because students do not have any credit history that will enable them to get a regular credit card.

But the fact remains them. Why would credit card companies be willing to provide college students with credit cards where in fact there is no basis where they can tell whether the student is capable of paying or not.

For two reasons, the credit card companies see a greater opportunity in them. One, survey shows that most college students remain loyal to their credit card company even after they have graduated from college and got have their work.

Second, reports show that college students are actually good customers. Most of them really do pay on time. Moreover, their balances tend to provide workable income to the credit card company.

On the other hand, college credit cards are also preferred by most parents, even if they know there will always be the tendency to overspend, due to the fact that college credit cards offer some fringe benefits that other credit cards cannot provide.

A good example of this is the student loans that will be used to pay the tuition fees. In doing so, students, as well as parents, will have an easier way of paying tuition fees at a more considerable rate and payment plan. Plus, there are college credit cards that had tied up with some establishments that are very useful to college students. They can, in turn, get fringe benefits and rewards from these

establishments whenever they pay their balances on time.

Best of all, college credit cards have lower rates than most regular credit cards in the event that they maintain good grades.

Indeed, college credit cards are part of the “must-haves” of the college students. In fact, it is also one way of letting them know the ins and outs of good financial planning and budgeting.

The goal here is for the students to know how to use the plastics responsibly, and they should know that whatever they do, it's under their responsibility.

For Reality: What Is A Low APR Credit Card

Shopping had never been lousy since the advent of credit cards. Since then, people had always been indulging into various cashless shopping due to the convenience of the credit card.

However, most people get credit cards only for the sake of shopping. They do not even read the fine print on their credit card and the least that they have considered is the one with the low annual percentage rate or APR. Most of them did not even know how interest rates could affect their billing.

On its general since, low APR credit card are those that have lower APR. This means that the cost of the interest rate will be according to the purchases obtained by the customer.

Normally, APR vary from 6% to more than 30%. Of course, it would be clear that the card with the lowest APR credit card is those that have 6% or lower.

But consumers should remember, that APR can be very tricky especially if the consumer have no idea what interest rates mean.

Basically, credit card companies would offer the consumers very low APR credit card so as to get the consumers on the hook. In fact, credit card companies could lower their APR to as much as 0%.

Low APR credit cards are usually expressed during the introductory rate so as to entice new credit card holders to sign up to them; and once they are all hooked up, the credit card company would start changing and increasing their credit cards.

People should know what makes a low credit card really low and the best option for retaining that low APR even if the introductory offer is over.

First, they should know that APR has two faces: the fixed and the variable.

The fixed APR has more stable interest rates than variable rates. Variable rates, on the other hand, can start really low but it all depends on the prime rate of the Federal Reserve. This means that at any point in time, it may increase.

Needless to say, there are really quite a few credit cards that have low APR. The reason behind it is that APR is actually where the credit card companies get to earn a living. If they continue to give people the low APR that they used to claim, chances are they wouldn't be in the business for so long.

The bottom line here is that consumers should be really conscious on their APR and other interest rate. Low APR credit cards will not be very beneficial if it will only last for 6 months or so.

What Sets A Student Credit Card Apart from Other Credit Cards

Today, most parents contend that it is okay to let college students obtain their very own credit card. Not only because they want to let their kids manage their finances alone but also because having credit cards or a credit history for that matter is extremely important.

With the advent of credit cards, most people would always be looking into someone's credit history before they can approve anything.

They even insist that without a credit history, people tend to become a total outcast in the society, someone who is not worthy to enjoy anything and everything without a credit history. That is why most college students would struggle

just to get one.

But what makes the student credit card different from the other credit card? Why is it that it is highly classified as “student credit card,” and not just any credit cards for that matter?

Basically, student credit cards do not make such big difference as compared to the other types of credit cards. However, because it is a student credit card, the benefits stated therein are completely focused on providing the student’s their basic needs.

Moreover, student credit cards are entitled to lower interest rates especially for students who have good grades. They can negotiate their interest rates for a lower rate provided that they pay their balance dues on time and that they maintain good grades.

On the other hand, student’s credit cards are actually secured credit cards. But the difference that sets the students credit card apart from the other credit cards is that their parents can set the credit limit.

Also, parents can let their child's credit card to hook up with them so that they can keep track on their child's credit transactions.

Another thing that sets the student cards apart from the other credit cards is that the student credit cards are mainly focused on and quoted for students only considering the fact that they have limited credit history.

Normally, student credit cards have no annual fees and have credit limits that are only set to \$500. And according to some surveys of financial institutions, the average student credit card annual percentage rate is 17.66% for purchases and 19.67% for cash advances.

So, even if student credit cards are different from the other credit cards because of its considerable interest rates, it is still a credit card. Thus, students must really be responsible in handling them; otherwise, they are bound to suffer bad credit history in the end.

The Card Apart

Southwest Airlines, one of the biggest international airlines, goes hand-in-hand with Chase, a big credit card company, to produce: Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Card.

Southwest Airlines is known for their Rapid Rewards. Unlike most airline companies, count the roundtrips made and not the miles of every trip. Only eight roundtrips are required to be able to avail of rewards. This concept was combined with their credit cards so that the people may enjoy their services more.

Chase Credit Cards operates under Bank One and First USA brands and offers cards that are flexible, trusted and superb customer service.

Southwest Airlines together with Chase, produced two types of credit cards: Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Signature Card and Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Business Card.

Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Business Card:

This is the card recommended for small businesses. It is ideal, because it can separate the personal expenses from

the expenses of the business. Every time this card is used, the user has a chance to win a roundtrip Award.

Reward Dollars may be earned in all purchases.

-two Reward Dollars may be earned by spending \$1 on Southwest Airlines.

-one Reward Dollar may be earned by spending \$1 on all other types of purchases.

This will also entitle the applicant to an internet account that may be used to maintain and organize the expenses of the business. With the online help, quarterly reviews may be seen and reports may be downloaded by the card holder.

This card also gives up to a \$100,000 limit even for small businesses. Grace periods are offered for easier pay.

This card also boasts low annual fee. It only has an annual fee of \$59 dollars and is relatively less than other companies that go from \$60 - \$100.

Rewards are easily earned, because a reward may already be cashed in when the expenses reach \$19,200. That is pretty low, compared to the \$25,000 minimum of other card companies.

Additional cards do not have a fee, but a minimum amount is needed for it to be availed.

Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Signature Card:

The Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Signature Card offers all the Visa Business Card offers and more.

It does not have a credit limit. Also, it does not have a limit when accumulating Award points by using the card.

It offers zero liability on unauthorized purchases. In addition to that, it has purchase security, travel and emergency assistance and other offers from Visa.

Additional Benefits: Get four (4) bonus credit cards upon purchase.

Low Interest Rates = Bigger Savings

When choosing a credit card, the interest rate should be the first thing to consider. Low interest rates only mean one thing: more savings! The bigger the balance of the account, the bigger sum of money will be saved. As more money gets saved, more money gets stored and more interests will roll in the bank account.

Other credit cards companies have reasonable interest rates and offers more like giving the percentage of money back. The more money spent on credit, more money will be returned to the card's user. Most credit cards use 5% on special purchases and 1% on regular purchases.

Some banks give "Reward Points." These "Reward Points" accumulate as the credit card is used and it may be exchanged for certain items catalogued by the bank. Points may be exchanged for microwaves, cell phones, televisions and the like. This is yet another great feature to be considered when looking for a card.

A number of major banks offer low interest rates. A few major banks would be: Citibank, American express and JP Morgan Chase. These banks are known to give 0% introductory APR (Annual Percentage Rate) for 12 months. Most of these cards offer no annual rates.

Here are some credit cards with low interest rates:

Citi Dividend Platinum Select Card (Citibank):

-it features 0% APR (Annual Percentage Rate) for 12 months

-it rewards the user. The more this card is used, the bigger the rewards.

-earn 5% return from expenses in supermarkets, drug stores and gas stations.

-earn 1% return from other expenses.

Citi Premier Pass Card (Citibank):

-0% introductory APR.

-get points by flying. Every mile gets you a point.

American Express Blue Card (American Express):

-3.99% fixed interest rate.

-0% introductory APR for 15 months.

Chase Cash Plus Visa (JP Morgan Chase):

-0% interest rate for 12 months.

-has other cash back promos.

Chase Flexible Rewards Platinum Visa Card (JP Morgan Chase):

-0% introductory APR for 12 months.

-a dollar spent equals a point.

-no annual fee.

Pulaski Bank Visa Master Card:

-0% on balance transfers for 5 months

-6.99% fixed rate

-\$35 annual fee

Discover Card:

-0% APR for the first 10 months.

-\$0 annual fee.

-9.99% fixed interest rate.

These cards have the lowest interest rates in the credit card market today. These cards do not only offer low rates, but they also give certain rewards for the frequent users of the card.

No Fuss Credit Card Application

Today's consumers want the least possible hassle, processing time and related fees when they make credit card applications.

One question that immediately comes to mind is acceptance. Credit card applicants generally should not worry if they comply with all the requirements set by their card issuer. Some of the things that are checked include income ranges, age and current addresses. For potential owners who have moved, they must make sure that they indicate correct information on their previous place of residence, including when and how long they stayed at their former address.

Individuals who want no fuss credit card applications should expect to have their credit ratings given a thorough review. This review will be conducted by issuers to establish if the applicant poses any risk. Such a check will include the individual's ability to remain consistent with monthly rental payments or repayments and mortgage or loan profiles. An application with a history of financial troubles will have problems having their applications processed, as this issue will have an impact on their credit rating.

Credit card providers will also check details such as delayed payments on recent or previous cards, utility bills or loans, and the number of rejected applications, if any. Companies can also probe deeper to the extent that they check the electoral register to verify an applicant's addresses and even the county court to find any judgments against or records on the individual.

Credit card applicants should realize that low interest providers are more likely to impose a higher number of restrictions and possibly accept only individuals with perfect credit histories. In such cases, the more likely option is for an applicant to consider cards with higher rates.

Since borrowing entails charges, a credit card applicant

should make an exhaustive review of all terms and conditions related to their application, preferably across different credit or charge cards. Among the key terms potential card owners must consider are the annual percentage rate, the free or grace period, transaction and annual fees, and adjusted and previous balances.

Some individuals on pre-approved status will have their credit card application mailed at home, reflecting an attempt by the issuer to verify that they have the right applicant. Other options that have made credit card applications more convenient are telephone and internet-based processing. As a security measure, applicants should exercise extreme caution in providing their social security number and other personal information.

Preventing Credit Card Fraud - 12 Top Tips

Many people enjoy the convenience of paying for goods and services with a credit card. Unfortunately, some people become victims of the growing problem of credit card fraud. The first you may know of fraudulent activity on your credit card account is seeing unauthorized transactions on your statement.

Here are 12 simple steps to minimize the possibility of fraud on your credit card account:

1. Keep both your personal and credit card information secure. Never email your credit card details. Email is not a secure method of transmitting data and can be intercepted by criminals.

2. When you receive a new credit card always sign it immediately.

3. When you receive a replacement credit card always destroy the old card immediately. Cut the old card into at least three pieces.

4. Make sure you thoroughly destroy old receipts that have your card details printed on them. The most effective method is to use a shredder.

5. Open and read your credit card statement as soon as you receive it. Check to make sure you know what all the payments printed on the statement were for.

6. If you see transactions on your credit card statement that you do not recognize, immediately contact your bank or credit card company.

7. If you cannot find your credit card for any reason, immediately telephone the card issuing company and tell them. They will block the card to prevent any unauthorized use.

8. Never tell anyone your Personal Identification Number, which allows cash withdrawals using your credit card.

9. Make sure your Personal Identification Number is not easy to guess. Avoid using numbers that are easy to trace, for example do not use your date of birth. Ensure you use a different Personal Identification Number for each individual credit card.

10. Do not use an ATM if you suspect it has been tampered with. Report your suspicion to the bank that operates the ATM.

11. When you use your credit card in a retail store always keep a watch on your card while the clerk processes the payment. Double check it is your card that is handed back to you.

12. If you use your credit card to make online purchases, always ensure the web page where you enter your credit card details is secure. A secure web page has a URL that begins <https://> and an image of a locked padlock in the bottom right hand corner of the browser window.

Following these simple precautions will reduce the possibility of you becoming a victim of credit card fraud. Your bank or credit card company may have further information on minimizing the risk of credit card fraud, so it is worth contacting them.

4 Things To Consider Before Getting That Credit Card

You see them everywhere. They arrive in the mail. They arrive by phone. They arrive by email. They are positioned by cash registers and gas pumps. They are credit card offers. It can be exciting to read all the enticing offers included on

the applications. Free gifts, prizes, rewards, and discounts abound when it comes to credit card applications but before you stretch out your eager hand to grab that pen to fill in the offer you should take a few minutes to consider four important questions.

Can you handle it?

In case you never read the news or watched television, you should be made aware that credit card debt is a tremendous problem in the United States today. Credit card debt can destroy your financial future and drastically impact your life. So it is important to ask yourself before signing up whether or not you can handle the temptation and responsibility that comes along with a line of credit. If you are not sure then start out with a very low credit limit to test the waters.

Is this the best offer?

Once you have made the decision to fill in a credit card application you should do your homework before actually taking up an offer. Shop around for the best terms and rates as well as rewards. A great reward package that you will never get to use really isn't so great while something that might sound pretty small can really add up if you use it. For

example, a discount on a car or cruise might be great but if you don't see either of those major purchases in your future then why not choose a gas or food discount instead. You know you will be using those.

What are your long-term financial plans?

If you plan to apply for a big loan, such as a mortgage or vehicle loan, in the near future then be careful about how many new accounts you open. Too many checks of your credit might be a red flag and sometimes having too much credit open can also be a detriment to your credit rating. Of course, if you don't have much on your credit report then you should likely take out a credit card and use it a bit just to show that you can handle credit.

Is your credit good enough?

Some high-level credit cards will only accept new customers with very high credit scores. Some reward or low-interest cards are also only available to a select group with good credit. Make sure your credit is good enough for the credit card offer you want to take and that your credit won't suffer due to one more credit check.

Credit cards can be a great tool, but just like any tool they need to be used wisely and can be used to do harm as well as good. Protect your financial future by asking these four important questions before filling out the credit card application.

How to Deal with Bad Credit Reports

In today's world our credit score is everything. Creditors and bankers approve or disapprove loans based on your credit worthiness. It is also something that will determine your credibility to certain employers or landlords.

If you have a good credit rating you will be able to apply for loans and/or credit cards easily. And, ultimately, isn't that the goal? It will also mean that you will have more chances of getting certain jobs. You will be able to pay your bills on time.

Having bad credit reduces the opportunities of these things. You may get approved for a loan or for a credit card but you'll most likely have a very high interest rate. You will be

an “at risk” customer because the creditors are not sure if you will be able to pay your bills on time. If you are trying to apply for an apartment complex the landlords may take a look at your credit score to determine if you will be able to pay your rent and utilities.

These are just some of the many reasons as to why having a good credit score is very important in today's world. However, what do you do if you happen to have a bad credit score? If you have bad credit it is important to fix the problem as soon as you can. Here are several ways to do just that.

First, you must stop your bad credit before it gets worse. So how do you do this? You pay your previous overdue debts as soon as possible. This cuts off the bad credit reports from creditors. It will not improve the actual credit score but it will put you on the right track to repairing your credit history.

Secondly, you must raise your credit score by opening a new savings or checking account. You should also apply for a secured credit card. This will mean that you will have a higher interest rate but it is also a good way to control your credit card spending and it will also raise or repair you bad credit score. By paying the monthly credit card bills on time

you will be able to see a significant rise in your credit history report.

If you continue to follow these steps you will eventually start to see a good credit rating. However, your past credit history will contain bad credit scores and ratings. This does not expire for 5 to 7 years. You must remember that it does take time to raise your credit rating. You must be patient and diligent to see a change.

That is why it is very important to make positive reports for your creditors. They then will pass those on to credit reporting agencies. Remember to pay your loans and credit cards on time in order to get a good credit rating. By doing so you will eventually end up with a good credit score and history. Never miss out on a future financial opportunity when they come your way.

It Takes Credit To Build Credit

Using a credit card wisely is an important step in building a good credit rating. If you're trying to re-build your credit or if you're young and just starting out, pay close attention the

next time you receive a new card offer in the mail. When you're trying to build a positive credit history for yourself, using the right credit card makes sense. Making small purchases and then making your payments on time each month is a simple, reliable way to build an outstanding credit report.

What to Look For On a Credit Card Application

If you receive a credit card application that appears to offer a low monthly interest rate, don't make a decision until you turn it over and closely examine the Disclosure Box. In it you'll find a more important measure of credit terms - the Annual Percentage Rate, or APR. By federal law, the Disclosure Box will also tell you whether or not the card has what is called a grace period - a number of days, usually 25, until your purchase starts to accrue finance charges. If a card has a reasonable grace period and you pay off your balance at the end of each billing cycle, you won't have to pay finance charges. It isn't difficult to find credit cards that offer these grace periods, so if the Disclosure Box doesn't declare one then throw the application in the trash and look for a better offer.

If you don't have any credit history at all, a credit card company won't want to give you a very high credit limit, but that's probably best when you're just starting out. You don't want to be tempted to go into serious debt with your very first credit card.

Calculate Your Monthly Finance Charges

Ideally you want to pay off your balance each month to avoid paying any finance charges, but when that isn't possible it's important to know the actual cost of the items you purchase. The annual percentage rate, divided by 12 months, gives you the periodic rate that will be applied to your outstanding balance each month. You can estimate what your monthly finance charge will be by multiplying the periodic rate times the outstanding balance. It may sound complicated at first, but taking the time to learn this simple equation can make a big difference in how you use your credit card.

When you're able to see how much you actually spend on an item that you don't pay off at the end of the month, it might help you to resist the temptation to over-use your card. An item that you want to buy might be on sale at the time you

purchase it, but if you don't pay off your balance at the end of the month then those finance charges can dramatically increase the actual amount you'll end up paying.

Use Your Credit Card as a Tool

Credit cards are only one of the tools available to help you build a positive credit history. Making on-time payments for other forms of credit, such as rent and utilities, are also important. Depending on your situation, within 1-2 years your credit rating will be improved enough that you no longer need to use your card for new purchases to maintain your good credit. Use these tools wisely, and they'll help build your financial future!

Resources

Stop Debt Collectors Dead In Their Tracks with a Nearly 100% Success Rate: <http://tinyurl.com/ka28xzq>

"Credit Repair Doctor" - 5 Simple Steps To Easy Credit Repair: <http://tinyurl.com/n5aft9p>

Being in debt is nothing to be a shame about, we just need help in managing our money a little better. I hope my tips and advice was some help to you.

Good Luck,

Terry Clark

