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Archives - 1/20/2000



Carpet pros battle bait-and-switch

LATHAM, NY — A carpet cleaning professional has urged colleagues to help rid the industry of “bait and switch” cleaners by documenting fraudulent use of the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) logo. IIRC is a Vancouver-based, member-owned independent certifying body.

IICRC Master Cleaner & Restorer/Senior Carpet Inspector Clayton Shull tells cleaners to copy yellow page and newspaper ads with the logo and send them to the IICRC.

The troubleshooter for Edenvale Restoration Specialists in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and native of Abbotsford (near Vancouver) BC calls “bait and switch” tactics a “virus” infecting the industry and suggests litigation under the IICRC umbrella for abuse of the logo.

“This is how I feel we can make this virus go away — use financial medicine,” he says.

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Shull referred to an *NBC Dateline* television report this week concerning “baiting” scams that attract homeowners with the promise of low prices and end up taking them to the cleaners.

Dateline invited industry expert Jeff Bishop to analyze tactics and techniques of five Houston-area cleaners who promised low prices and expert cleaning but did not deliver the goods.

One cleaner, for example, talked of using “special enzymes” on carpeting. In order to steam clean, he’d have to use special cleaning solutions not part of the coupon which had attracted the customer.

“That’s going to kill the bacteria,” he told his customer. “It kills any kind of mildew smell, ammonias, mites.”

Bishop’s analysis: “If you can’t dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with B.S. ... He has no concept of what he’s talking about here.”

Bishop told *Dateline* that consumers should look to pay about \$40 per room of cleaning. He also recommends cleaners approved by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC).

“He conveyed what every cleaner should aim for in professionalism, dedication, knowledge and intelligence,” says Shull. “He spoke with articulation and without hesitation, and showed genuine sincerity in improving this industry.”

Others are more cautious in their comments; some express concern that certifying bodies such as IICRC are becoming exemplary of a unionist movement.

They add that certification is no guarantee of quality cleaning and that some certified cleaners use “bait-and-switch” tactics themselves.

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