

## SLOW DOWN, NEW YEAR AHEAD: SPEND WISELY DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

The festive season is once again upon us. It is a season for giving, but unfortunately it is also a time of reckless overspending. Right now, businesses are already overwhelming consumers with heavy marketing ploys in the form of lucrative advertising, and other forms of merchandise promotions. Their intention is to cash-in on your hard earned income.

During this period, we notice an increase in granting of unsecured loans by banks and other various providers to the middle and lower income groups, who are already experiencing high level of over-indebtedness. The granting of unsecured credit has a potential to increase social and economic tensions, as many South African consumers struggle to pay their debts.

The reality is that a lot of consumers are struggling to pay school fees, medical expenses and municipal services, to mention but a few. Unemployment and inflation remains very high at the same time. The situation thus makes consumers vulnerable to offers buy on credit, in order to fund expenses such as electricity, food and transport.

We therefore would like to remind consumers that we still live in a period shrouded with tough economic challenges, characterized by high levels of food prices, high fuel prices, high electricity rates which collectively have negative effects on our disposable income.

Our top ten (10) shopping tips are as follows:

1. **Cash** is the cheapest option – it is interest free, you can negotiate discounts and shop around for better prices;
2. Remember **credit** options have additional cost implications such as finance charges and interest;

3. Read **contracts or agreements** carefully before signing. Your signature is your 'yes' and is legally binding. Never sign a blank document;
4. Be aware of **NO Return NO Refund** policies when purchasing items;
5. Always keep your **original packaging and receipt** (till slip) as you may not be able to return default goods or exchange items without it;
6. Make sure that you understand the **warrantees and guarantees** of the goods purchased;
7. Grey/ parallel goods will not be repaired by any dealership and you might only be able to service/ fix goods at store purchased;
8. Take note of **expiry/ sell-by dates**;
9. Do not cancel/ skip payments on your **medical aid or insurance** – if anything happens to you during this period you are not covered;
10. Do not spend more than what you have. **Save** for the January expenses such as school fees and school clothes, transport costs.

**I ALSO TAKE THIS TIME TO WISH ALL CONSUMERS A FESTIVE SEASON OF CAREFUL SPENDING AND RESPONSIBLE GIVING.**

Let us manage our finances well. We need to cut on unnecessary expenditure and more importantly, save for a better future for our children.

**Remember, if you can't afford it – then you can't have it. Don't borrow to spend!**  
**If you see a "SALE" sign, think SAVE – in order to pay for next year's obligations.**

*Merry Christmas and a Prosperous 2013!*

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