

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

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In the Matter of)	FILE NO. 992-3313
)	
OFFICE DEPOT, INC.,)	AGREEMENT CONTAINING
a corporation.)	CONSENT ORDER
)	
)	

The Federal Trade Commission has conducted an investigation of certain acts and practices of Office Depot, Inc., a corporation ("proposed respondent"). Proposed respondent, having been represented by counsel, is willing to enter into an agreement containing a consent order resolving the allegations contained in the attached draft complaint. Therefore,

IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between Office Depot, Inc., by its duly authorized officer, and counsel for the Federal Trade Commission that:

1. Proposed respondent Office Depot, Inc., is a Delaware corporation with its principal office or place of business at 2200 Old Germantown Road, Delray Beach, Florida 33445.
2. Proposed respondent admits all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the draft complaint.
3. Proposed respondent waives:
 - a. Any further procedural steps;
 - b. The requirement that the Commission's decision contain a statement of findings of fact and conclusions of law; and
 - c. All rights to seek judicial review or otherwise to challenge or contest the validity of the order entered pursuant to this agreement.
4. This agreement shall not become part of the public record of the proceeding unless and until it is accepted by the Commission. If this agreement is accepted by the Commission, it, together with the draft complaint, will be placed on the public record for a period of thirty (30) days and information about it publicly released. The Commission thereafter may either withdraw its acceptance of this agreement and so notify proposed respondent, in which event it will take such action as it may consider appropriate, or issue and serve its complaint (in such form as the circumstances may require) and decision in disposition of the proceeding.

5. This agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by proposed respondent that the law has been violated as alleged in the draft complaint, or that the facts as alleged in the draft complaint, other than the jurisdictional facts, are true.

6. This agreement contemplates that, if it is accepted by the Commission, and if such acceptance is not subsequently withdrawn by the Commission pursuant to the provisions of Section 2.34 of the Commission's Rules, the Commission may, without further notice to proposed respondent, (1) issue its complaint corresponding in form and substance with the attached draft complaint and its decision containing the following order in disposition of the proceeding, and (2) make information about it public. When so entered, the order shall have the same force and effect and may be altered, modified, or set aside in the same manner and within the same time provided by statute for other orders. The order shall become final upon service. Delivery of the complaint and the decision and order to proposed respondent's address as stated in this agreement by any means specified in Section 4.4(a) of the Commission's Rules shall constitute service. Proposed respondent waives any right it may have to any other manner of service. The complaint may be used in construing the terms of the order, and no agreement, understanding, representation, or interpretation not contained in the order or the agreement may be used to vary or contradict the terms of the order.

7. Proposed respondent has read the draft complaint and consent order. It understands that it may be liable for civil penalties in the amount provided by law and other appropriate relief for each violation of the order after it becomes final.

ORDER

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Order, the following definitions shall apply:

1. "Rebate" shall mean cash, instant savings, instant credit, credit towards future purchases, merchandise, services, or any other consideration offered to consumers who purchase products or services from respondent, which is provided at the time of purchase, or subsequent to the purchase.
2. Unless otherwise specified, "respondent" shall mean Office Depot, Inc., a corporation, its successors and assigns and its officers, agents, representatives, and employees.
3. "Clearly and conspicuously" shall mean as follows:
 - A. In an advertisement communicated through an electronic medium (such as television, video, radio, and interactive media such as the Internet and online services), the disclosure shall be presented simultaneously in both the audio and

visual portions of the advertisement. Provided, however, that in any advertisement presented solely through visual or audio means, the disclosure may be made through the same means in which the ad is presented. The audio disclosure shall be delivered in a volume and cadence sufficient for an ordinary consumer to hear and comprehend it. The visual disclosure shall be of a size and shade, and shall appear on the screen for a duration sufficient for an ordinary consumer to read and comprehend it.

- B. In a print advertisement, promotional material, or instructional manual, the disclosure shall be in a type size and location sufficiently noticeable for an ordinary consumer to read and comprehend it, in print that contrasts with the background against which it appears.
- C. On a product label, the disclosure shall be in a type size and location on the principal display panel sufficiently noticeable for an ordinary consumer to read and comprehend it, in print that contrasts with the background against which it appears.

The disclosure shall be in understandable language and syntax. Nothing contrary to, inconsistent with, or in mitigation of the disclosure shall be used in any advertisement or on any label.

4. In the case of advertisements disseminated by means of an interactive electronic medium such as the Internet or online services, "in close proximity" shall mean on the same Web page, online service page, or other electronic page, and proximate to the triggering representation, and shall not include disclosures accessed or displayed through hyperlinks, pop-ups, interstitials or other means.

5. "Commerce" shall mean as defined in Section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

I.

IT IS ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division, or other device, in connection with the labeling, advertising, promotion, offering for sale, sale, or distribution of any computer, computer-related product or Internet access service in or affecting commerce, shall not misrepresent, in any manner, expressly or by implication, or by depiction, the price or cost to consumers of such product or service, or what is included in the price or cost of any such product or service.

II.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division, or other device, in connection with the labeling, advertising, promotion, offering for sale, sale, or distribution of any computer, computer-related product or Internet access service, in or affecting commerce, shall not make any representation, in any manner, expressly or by implication, about the price or cost to consumers of any such computer, computer-related product or Internet access service when that price, cost, or any rebate is conditioned upon the purchase of any other product or service, unless it discloses clearly and conspicuously, and in close proximity to the representation that consumers must purchase the other product or service in order to obtain the represented price or rebate and the cost of the other product or service, including if a service, the length of time that consumers are required to purchase the service.

Provided, that for purposes of this Part, use of the term “rebate” or “discount,” without any description or characterization of either term shall not, in and of itself, be deemed a representation about the price or cost to consumers of a product or service.

III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division, or other device, in connection with the labeling, advertising, promotion, offering for sale, sale, or distribution of any Internet access service; or any computer or computer-related product for which the price, cost or any rebate is conditioned upon the purchase of Internet access service; in or affecting commerce, shall not make any representation, in any manner, expressly or by implication, about the price or cost to consumers of such Internet access service, unless it discloses, clearly and conspicuously:

- A. the dollar amounts of any and all fees, charges, rebate repayments, and other costs consumers are required to pay to cancel the Internet access service; and
- B. (1) that consumers may have to pay long distance telephone charges, hourly surcharges, or other costs in excess of local telephone service charges to access the Internet service, if that is the case; and (2) a means for each consumer to ascertain whether he or she would incur such costs or charges to access the Internet service and the amount of any such costs or charges. Provided that respondent may comply with Part III.B.(2), above, by disclosing a means by which consumers may obtain information from the Internet service provider about available access phone numbers and the amount of any hourly surcharges or other costs to access the Internet service; and by advising consumers to contact their local telephone

company to determine whether using the access telephone number closest to them will incur charges in excess of local service charges.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Office Depot, Inc., and its successors and assigns shall for five (5) years after the last date of dissemination of any representation covered by this order maintain and upon request make available to the Federal Trade Commission for inspection and copying:

- A. All advertisements and promotional materials containing the representation;
- B. All materials that were relied upon in disseminating the representation; and
- C. All tests, reports, studies, surveys, demonstrations, or other evidence in their possession or control that contradict, qualify, or call into question the representation, or the basis relied upon for the representation, including complaints and other communications with consumers or with governmental or consumer protection organizations.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Office Depot, Inc., and its successors and assigns shall deliver a copy of this order to all current and future principals, officers, directors, and managers, and to all current and future employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities with respect to the subject matter of this order. Respondent shall deliver this order to current personnel within thirty (30) days after the date of service of this order, and to future personnel within thirty (30) days after the person assumes such position or responsibilities.

VI.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Office Depot, Inc., and its successors and assigns shall notify the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to any change in the corporation that may affect compliance obligations arising under this order, including, but not limited to, a dissolution, assignment, sale, merger, or other action that would result in the emergence of a successor corporation; the creation or dissolution of a subsidiary, parent, or affiliate that engages in any acts or practices subject to this order; the proposed filing of a bankruptcy petition; or a change in the corporate name or address. Provided, however, that, with respect to any proposed change in the corporation about which respondent learns less than thirty (30) days prior to the date such action is to take place, respondent shall notify the Commission as soon as is practicable

after obtaining such knowledge. All notices required by this Part shall be sent by certified mail to the Associate Director, Division of Enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580.

VII.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Office Depot, Inc., and its successors and assigns shall, within sixty (60) days after service of this order, and at such other times as the Federal Trade Commission may require, file with the Commission a report, in writing, setting forth in detail the manner and form in which they have complied with this order.

VIII.

This order will terminate twenty (20) years from the date of its issuance, or twenty (20) years from the most recent date that the United States or the Federal Trade Commission files a complaint (with or without an accompanying consent decree) in federal court alleging any violation of the order, whichever comes later; provided, however, that the filing of such a complaint will not affect the duration of:

- A. Any Part in this order that terminates in less than twenty (20) years;
- B. This order's application to any respondent that is not named as a defendant in such complaint; and
- C. This order if such complaint is filed after the order has terminated pursuant to this Part.

Provided, further, that if such complaint is dismissed or a federal court rules that the respondent did not violate any provision of the order, and the dismissal or ruling is either not appealed or upheld on appeal, then the order will terminate according to this Part as though the complaint had never been filed, except that the order will not terminate between the date such complaint is filed and the later of the deadline for appealing such dismissal or ruling and the date such dismissal or ruling is upheld on appeal.

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2000.

Office Depot, Inc.,

By: _____

An officer of the corporation

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APPROVED:

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