

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

*In the Matter of*

TRU-VANTAGE INTERNATIONAL, L.L.C. a limited liability company.

FILE NO.

AGREEMENT CONTAINING

CONSENT ORDER

The Federal Trade Commission has conducted an investigation of certain acts and practices of Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., a limited liability company ("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, Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., by its duly authorized manager, Kevin McEneely, a manager and member of the limited liability company, and counsel for the Federal Trade Commission that:

1. Proposed respondent Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., is an Illinois limited liability company, with its principal office or place of business at 7300 North Lehigh Avenue, Niles, Illinois 60714.
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 sixty (60) days and information about it publicly released. The Commission thereafter may either withdraw its acceptance of this agreement and so notify proposed respondents, 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 This agreement contemplates that, if it is accepted by the Commission, and if such acceptance is not subsequently withdrawn by the Commission pursuant to the provisions of Section 2.34 of the Commission's Rules, the Commission may, without further notice to proposed respondent, (1)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 by any means specified in Section 4.4 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. No agreement, understanding, representation, or interpretation not contained in the order or in 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.

## DEFINITIONS

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

1. "Competent and reliable scientific evidence" shall mean tests, analyses, research, studies, or other evidence based on the expertise of professionals in the relevant area, that has been conducted and evaluated in an objective manner by persons qualified to do so, using procedures generally accepted in the profession to yield accurate and reliable results.
2. Unless otherwise specified, "respondents" shall mean, Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., its successors, assigns, managers, and each of its agents, representatives and employees.
3. "Commerce" shall mean as defined in Section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

## ORDER

### 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 Howard Berg's Mega Reading or any substantially similar product in or affecting commerce, shall not represent, in any manner, expressly or by implication, that such product is successful in teaching anyone, including adults, children and disabled individuals, to increase their reading speed above 800 words per minute while substantially comprehending and retaining

the material. For purposes of this Part, “substantially similar product” shall mean any product that is substantially similar in components, techniques, composition and properties.

## 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 product or program purported to significantly increase one’s reading speed in or affecting commerce, shall not make any representation, in any manner, expressly or by implication, about the benefits, performance, or efficacy of such product, unless, at the time the representation is made, respondent possesses and relies upon competent and reliable evidence, which when appropriate must be competent and reliable scientific evidence, that substantiates the representation.

## III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., 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.

## IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., and its successors and assigns, shall deliver a copy of this order to all current and future members and managers, and to all current and future employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities with respect to the subject matter of this order, and shall secure from each such person a signed and dated statement acknowledging receipt of the 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.

## V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., 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, Washington, D.C. 20580.

## VI.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Tru-Vantage International, L.L.C., and its successors and assigns, shall, within sixty (60) days after the date of 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 it has complied with this order.

## VII.

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 \_\_\_\_\_, 1998

TRU-VANTAGE INTERNATIONAL, L.L.C.,

By:

KEVIN MCENEELY  
Manager and Member

RUSSELL W. DAMTOFT  
Counsel for the Federal Trade Commission

MARY ELIZABETH TORTORICE  
Counsel for the Federal Trade Commission

CHARULATA B. PAGAR  
Counsel for the Federal Trade Commission

APPROVED:

C. STEVEN BAKER  
Director  
Chicago Regional Office