Marketers who assume targets are stupid

There are marketers out there who believe that their target audience is made up of stupid people. People who will buy anything, believe anything and do anything.

These marketers are the bottom-feeder telemarketers who tend to use robo-calls or use auto-dialers to call frequently at different times on different days. They play the CALLER ID system by using non-specific identifiers such as “Card Services” or “Holiday Rebate.” (I got a call today that had the CALLER ID as “Important Call”– yes, really.) They ignore the Do Not Call List and refuse to take you off their rolls.

These marketers use direct mail with no targeting or culling of lists. They send offers that are too good to be true. They ask for sensitive information just to enter you in a drawing for a fantastic prize you have zero chance of winning.

These marketers think that by running the same TV ad or print ad over and over and over and over again you will finally be convinced to cough up three convenient payments of $19.99 plus shipping and handling.

These marketers think that by using an actor dressed as a doctor in an advertisement they are proving their miracle pill has been tested and approved by a reliable source.

These marketers think that sending spam email that says “Secure Notification” on the subject line will make you open an email from a bank with which you have no business.

These marketers think people are stupid and will buy anything that sounds great or will be scared by a letter that says this is your final notice (even though you haven’t gotten any notice before or even do business with that company).

Preying on people’s stupidity or gullibility or fear is not ethical. It is not good marketing. And marketers who engage in these practices give all marketers a bad name.