

## the PRICE is NOT Right! (And what to do about it)

What's the best way to save on your expenses? Know how much everything REALLY costs. Once you see how much retailers mark up their products, you may think twice before handing over your cash. **Here are just a few of the biggest culprits:**

### BOTTLED WATER

The average tap water costs about \$0.002 a gallon. Once a company bottles it and gives it a fancy name, it can cost up to two dollars for a measly 16 ounces. Most of that cost is not for the water, but for the bottle.



**RIP-OFF REJECTION:** Buy a water bottle and fill it up for free at home.

### GREETING CARDS

Most store-bought greeting cards are marked up as much as 200 percent. With an average of two to four dollars per card, it's easy to spend a lot of money. So why do people continue to spend that kind of money? Convenience.



**RIP-OFF REJECTION:** Get personal, plan ahead and make your own cards.

### RESTAURANT DRINKS

It costs a restaurant about five cents for a 12-ounce glass of soda. Compare that to the one to two dollars they charge, and even unlimited refills isn't a bargain. Keep in mind, most soft drinks are just water, sugar and flavoring.



**RIP-OFF REJECTION:** Skip the soft drink and order a free glass of water.

### TEXT MESSAGES

The data usage for a typical text message is about 600 times less than a one-minute phone call. Without a texting plan, companies can mark up texts as high as 6,000 percent.



**RIP-OFF REJECTION:** Sign up for an unlimited texting plan.

# 2012 Tweet for College Winner



For this year's scholarship contest, we asked the following question: **"How do credit unions help U.S. consumers?"** We had more than 70 great entries through Twitter. Here's the winning tweet:

*"Credit unions help U.S. consumers by offering GREAT banking solutions for all ages: savings, checking, loan options, etc."*

Congratulations to **Teresa Hester (AKA @TeresaHester1)**, and thank you to all the many fantastic tweets we received.

Check [www.ElementsofMoney.com](http://www.ElementsofMoney.com) for details on next year's scholarship!

## THE TRUTH BEHIND SALES, BLOW-OUTS AND DISCOUNTS

Stepping into your favorite store may give you a feeling of excitement, but watch out, it may be a set up. Most stores are experts at tricking consumers into spending money. **Here are a few of their tricks:**

### DISCOUNTS\* (WITH ASTERISKS).

It's hard to resist a good sale, but what if it comes with disclaimers and requirements? Before buying into a "big print" discount, read the small print.

### GOING-OUT-OF-BUSINESS SALE.

A 10- to 30% discount sounds great, but in reality, may not be a bargain at all. Look at the pre-discount price—it may be higher than it was before the "incredible" sale.

### REBATES.

More than \$500 million in rebates go uncollected each year. Most companies hope you forget to mail in a rebate or make a mistake. Understand what you need to do to collect a rebate, and follow the directions carefully.



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## THE BIGGEST MONEY MARKUPS

The cost of making a cup of **COFFEE**



at home: 25¢



at a restaurant: \$2



**CLOTHES** at a boutique store can cost as much as 250 percent more than at a retail chain.



The average movie theatre **POPCORN** is marked up by **1,275%**