

NEWS BRIEF: CONSUMERS BEING SPOOKED BY “GHOST” STORES

A small disturbing, but emerging trend has arrived in Australia.

“Ghost” stores (bricks ‘n’ mortar outlets) are being closed, and prospective customers are being invited to migrate or initiate sales to online platforms.

One problem. The supposed bricks ‘n’ mortar premises have never existed. Nominated addresses have never had such business names operate from those precincts.

Creative use has been made of localities including Chapell Street, Melbourne, Byron Bay and Margaret River, Western Australia. The emotive cues of “buy local” have been and are being utilised.

Questions are being raised and left unanswered about the origins of the products, services and applications which are being advertised and promoted, primarily online.

Clearly, any underlying intent is to tap into the emotions of Australian consumers to support and “save” local businesses, brands, products and services.

There is strong, consistent evidence of such circumstances for Darrel Lea Chocolates, South Australian based canned and bottled fruit, fashion stores and homewares and kitchen craft merchandise.

It also reflects the occurrences of high profiled trading names which have been placed in administration during the past 12 months being brought back as online businesses. Consumers are responding to the re-emergence of recognised and previously trusted brand names.

The behaviour seems to be unconscionable, if not outright illegal.

Consumers are reminded:

Caveat Emptor

That is, let the buyer beware.

The topic represents an interesting interview subject.

FOR INTERVIEWS:

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