

THE FAKE SALE CARD

Six ways a discount lies to you, and the ten-second check for each.

KEEP THIS ON YOUR PHONE. RUN IT BEFORE YOU TAP BUY.

01

"UP TO"

The big number is the ceiling. Your item is the floor.

WHAT TO DO Say the sign out loud with the small number: "Some items are 10% off."

02

THE PERMANENT SALE

The crossed-out price was never the price. Nobody paid it.

WHAT TO DO If the sale was on last time you visited, the sale price is the price.

03

THE COUNTDOWN THAT RESETS

The timer isn't tracking a deadline. It's tracking you.

WHAT TO DO Reload the page. If the clock resets, there was no deadline.

04

THE COUPON YOU HAD TO EARN

Email for 10% off is a purchase. You paid with your inbox.

WHAT TO DO Check the price logged out, in a private window.

05

"MEMBERS SAVE MORE"

The discount is real. It costs a record of everything you buy.

WHAT TO DO Ask: would I have shopped here without this?

06

THE STACK THAT ISN'T

Extra 20% off a price that was already marked up.

WHAT TO DO Start from the receipt, not the sign. What did I pay, for how many, all in?

ONE TOOL FOR ALL SIX · THE SOURCE TEST

FIRST MOVE Say the real price out loud. Not the percentage. The number you'll pay today, all in.

STAKE Who set this number, and what do they get if I believe it?

SOURCE Measured against what? A real price from last month, or a number nobody paid?

STEELMAN What's the honest reason this might be a real deal? Can't find one in ten seconds? There isn't one.

THINK SHARPER. STAY SOVEREIGN.

Sources on the video: FTC "up to" consumer study (2012)
L.A. City Attorney complaints (2016, allegations) · FTC dark patterns report (2022)
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SCAN TO WATCH THE VIDEO

Why Most Sales Aren't Real:
6 Fake Discount Tricks

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