

# The Collector Chronicle

NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY

December 2013

Utah, Colorado & Idaho's  
Collection Authority

## LAST MONTH'S LUCKY WINNER

The lucky winner of our client drawing for November is Weber County Library in Ogden, Utah. They originally signed up with Collection Services Bureau (who we acquired in 2010) back in March of 1983, so they've been using us for over 30 years! Wow! We work with Suellen, and we'll be sending her a \$100 Visa gift card. Enjoy!



## THIS MONTH'S PRIZE

Last month's prize was so popular we decided to do the same thing this month. We will be giving away another \$100 visa gift card!

Each client who sends new accounts during December will have their name entered into a drawing. At the end of the month we will draw a name, and if it's yours, you'll win the prize.

**Don't miss out on your chance to win;  
Send new accounts in December!  
Good luck!!**



## COLLECTING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

BY DAVID J. SAXTON  
PRESIDENT, NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY

It's that time of year again; Christmas is almost here. It's one of my favorite seasons. I look forward to it all year. Because of my profession, people always ask if it's difficult to collect during the holidays, so this month I thought I'd tell you what it's like.

It all started back in 1988 when I got my first job in the collection industry. I had been working as a front-line collector for about five months when I began to worry about collecting in December. The "old timers" I worked with kept telling me how difficult it was to collect during the Christmas season, so that's all I knew.

Since I was the new guy, I went along with the rest of the crowd and believed I wouldn't be able to collect in December. As the month progressed, I started to hear things like, "I can't pay this month because of Christmas..." and since I'd already convinced myself I wasn't going to have a good month, I would simply say, "Okay." My first December ended up being my worst month ever.

Well, when December rolled around the *next* year, I was determined to have a different result. With an extra 12 months of experience under my belt, and the added motivation of working on commissions, I was ready.

I didn't want a repeat of the previous December, so that year when people told me they couldn't pay because of Christmas, I was prepared. I responded by telling them I understood what they were saying, but that they still had to pay. I was successful with enough people and ended up having a decent month.

My third December in collections was even better. I had the confidence of doing well the year before, and another 12 months of experience to boot! I looked at that year as an opportunity to really see how well I could do. I worked harder than ever and didn't let myself get discouraged. When I heard, "Don't you know what time of year it is?" or "I just can't pay with Christmas coming up..." I made the commitment to help each consumer find a real solution—a way to pay—even though Christmas was right around the corner. I helped people discover sources of money they had never thought of, and I was very diligent with my follow-up. I kept at it, and by the end of the month, I hit my goal! In fact, I actually collect-

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ed more that December than I did in November of the same year. Ever since then, I've had success in December.

I use these experiences to help train our collectors so they have the same kind of success in December. Some of the specific things we teach are:

First, consumers spend more money between Thanksgiving and Christmas than any other time of the year. So with all that spending, we've got to make sure we aren't forgotten. If we contact consumers early enough, we can help them understand that they aren't going to get a free pass in December. It allows us to collect a portion of the money they are spending before it's gone.

Second, for some consumers, December actually does mean they get to "take a month off" on a bill or two. What happens is some credit card companies or banks offer consumers the option of not making a payment in December. So when we contact a consumer, we'll find out if they have any bills that fit into this category (like their car payment) and if so, we have them pay us the amount they would normally pay on that bill.

Another option consumers have during the holidays is using gift money they receive from friends or relatives to pay their bill. You'd be surprised at how often a parent or grandparent will give money as a present and a consumer will use that money to pay us.

Throughout the year we get anywhere from 50 to 100 payments like this each month. During December, when parents and grandparents are in the "giving" mood even more, those numbers increase. If we've done our job, contacted the consumer early in the month, and let them know they still have to pay, they use this money when it's available.

Lastly, there's the traditional Christmas bonus. Some companies still give Christmas bonuses and this is a great source because it's additional money outside of a consumer's regular income. Again, if we contact a consumer soon enough, they will pay when they get their Christmas bonus.

Now let me assure you that we don't overdo it during

the holidays. We never tell a consumer that they should pay us instead of buying Christmas presents—but we do expect them to pay something. With this attitude, and good old-fashioned hard work, we end up with just the right balance and it results in successful collections during December.

Okay, so that's collections in December, pretty straight forward. There is, however, another topic I want to discuss as well: a client's reluctance to send accounts during the holidays. I completely understand the concern of being looked at as the "Grinch" or a "Scrooge," but you can't let that stop you. All of your good paying customers will pay during the holidays, and if you don't assign the non-paying accounts, you're sending the wrong message. When you step back and look at it, it makes sense that everyone should pay their bills every month of the year.

Here's another way to look at it: The people who aren't paying will be spending a lot of money over the next two months. There's no reason they shouldn't send some of that to you. If you send the accounts we will collect them, and the consumers will still have Christmas for their families. After all, the debt was incurred months ago, and they shouldn't use December as an excuse for not paying.

Our proven techniques and attitude toward collecting during the holidays has always resulted in good results in December. If you send your accounts before the end of the month, you can benefit from this success too.

So don't hold back—send those accounts! After you get it out of the way, you can sit back and enjoy the rest of the Holiday Season! Merry Christmas everyone! Have a great month.



The *Collector Chronicle* is published monthly by NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY for prospective and current clients. Please direct questions or comments to the Editor, Dave Saxton, at: [DaveSaxton@North-American-Recovery.com](mailto:DaveSaxton@North-American-Recovery.com)

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