

# uarantees

Guarantees are getting more fashionable. Guarantees can be powerful builders of corporate value and credibility. They may promise money back, compensation, or product replacement. But they must be relevant, unconditional, believable, and easy to understand. Ignore those who promise to help you use 30 pounds in a week, speak French in a day, or cure baldness.

Here are companies whose powerful guarantees have created strong followings:

- *Hampton Inn* guarantees that its rooms will give “complete satisfaction or your night’s stay is free.”
- *Loblaws* (Canada) offers to replace its private-label food items with national brands if customers don’t consider Loblaws a better value.
- *Xerox* will replace any Xerox product within three years until the customer is fully satisfied.
- A. T. Cross will replace its pens and pencils for life. The customer mails the broken pen or pencil to the company and it is repaired or replaced free and mailed back.

- *Saturn* will take its new car back within 30 days if the customer is not satisfied.
- *Allied Van Lines* will pay \$100 for each day of delay in moving a customer's goods.
- *BBBK Pest Control* will refund customer money if it fails to eradicate all pests and will pay for the next exterminator.

Here is how L. L. Bean words its well-known guarantee: “**All of our products are guaranteed to give 100% satisfaction in every way. Return anything purchased from us at any time if it proves otherwise. We will replace it, refund your purchase price or credit your credit card, as you wish. We do not want you to have anything from L. L. Bean that is not completely satisfactory.**”

There are always some companies, however, that are more ready to proclaim guarantees than to honor them. Their lawyers word the guarantees with hidden conditions and special requirements that make them into nonguarantees. But in the process, the company creates a growing band of angry people bent on discrediting the company to whoever will listen.