The Competition Bureau, as an independent law enforcement agency, ensures that Canadian businesses and consumers prosper in a competitive and innovative marketplace.

Headed by the Commissioner of Competition, the Bureau is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Competition Act, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, the Textile Labelling Act and the Precious Metals Marking Act.

Legal Actions
We have the ability to refer criminal matters to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who then decides whether to prosecute before the courts. We also have the power to bring civil matters before the Competition Tribunal or the courts, depending on the conduct in question and applicable legal provisions.

Written Opinions
The Commissioner has the discretion to provide a binding written opinion to businesses seeking to comply with the Competition Act. Any person may request written opinions on whether proposed business plans and practices could raise concerns under the Act.

Questions or Complaints
If you believe any of the laws under the Bureau’s jurisdiction have been breached, please fill out our online form, call, fax or write. We are required by law to conduct our investigations in private. We keep the identity of the source and the information provided confidential, subject to certain exceptions.

This publication is also available online in HTML at: www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/03798.html

A store attracts customers by an advertisement for a bargain-priced product. Once inside, the customer discovers that the product that was advertised, the “bait”, is sold out or otherwise unavailable. The “switch” occurs when a salesperson pressures the customer into purchasing a higher-priced product as a replacement, or if customers find themselves induced to make other purchases while inside the store.

**BAIT AND SWITCH SELLING AFFECTS YOU AS A CONSUMER**
In both cases above, the retailer successfully lures customers into its store with an advertised bargain that turns out to be unavailable in reasonable quantities.

**BAIT AND SWITCH SELLING AFFECTS YOU AS A COMPETITOR**
Bait and switch selling is anti-competitive. By advertising products at bargain prices that are not available in reasonable quantities, retailers can unfairly lure consumers into their stores, thereby taking business away from honest retailers. This practice may cause businesses to lose their loyal customer base, and new customers may not consider entering their stores.

It is **not** bait and switch selling if the advertiser can establish that the non-availability of the product was due to circumstances beyond its control, the quantity of the product obtained was reasonable, or the customer was offered a rain check when supplies were exhausted.

Retailers who contravene the law may be ordered by a court to stop the conduct, to publish a corrective notice and/or to pay an administrative monetary penalty.