

From: Darren Santeler
Subject: Electronic Fund Transfers

Comments:

I just read an article concerning banks over draft fees as well as the fact they process larger payments first and felt I had to comment. As a younger individual just out of college I have had both of these problems with two different major banks while in school. It amazes me that they claim this practice as a customer service as I have never once talked to someone who likes these kinds of "programs". When I was in college I can admit that my money managing skills were not great. To be honest they were actually pretty bad, but I was young and learning more about budgeting. The bank I had during my first years of college (Wells Fargo) was more than willing to take advantage of this and charge me plenty of money for it. Being as I had never really used much of a bank account I was under the impression that I could run down my bank account until it was out of money after which my debit card would no longer work. After all, it was a DEBIT card, not a credit card. I had applied for no loan and had no desire to. Imagine my astonishment after one month I got a statement saying I owed my bank well over 400 dollars in overdraft fees which all stemmed from under 100 dollars worth of transactions. Add this to the fact my account was a college account and I was furious. Their response was one that seems to be typical...we wanted to make sure your bills were paid. After explaining why it was this way the woman on the phone told me a heart breaking story of someone who was stuck out of town with no way to pay for gas, food, or a hotel. This in no way applied to me and I wanted out, but was told there was no opt-out program. I was a college student with a college account and they had no problem charging me all they could. I also had an occasion where my bank put a longer hold on a deposited check then I was aware of. I spent some of the money that hadn't deposited yet (that I thought was already available) and had an overdraft..for three different charges. If they had taken the smaller ones out first they would have only gotten one overdraft fee..\$39 on \$150 overdrafted.. still a good fee. Instead they took the largest one out, then the two smaller ones and charged me \$117 for \$150. As a student with a student account! The reason they said was simple, the largest bills were usually car and house payments, so the bank wanted to make sure they were paid over the little ones. I could see the reasoning behind it, but the problem was they would approve ALL transactions until the end of the month anyway. There was never any turning off the card and not approving the smaller transactions. In my opinion this was ludicrous. After this second problem I switched to Bank of America. Since there I have had similar problems which infuriates me. These were not isolated events, they were common practice. Bank of America told me the same thing; these were customer service programs that helped people in the long run. It was plain and clear that these programs were initiated to make more money, regardless how many people it hurt. After graduation I got a job so I don't have the problem of running my bank account down and getting charged these fees. This only reiterates the problem that banks hit people while they're already down. Only people living paycheck to paycheck have these problems..people that can't afford it and seem to never be able to pull out because of practices like this. Although I hate to see the government get bigger, this is somewhere they defiantly need to step in. Greed is all too prevalent in big corporations these days and it is absolutely disgusting to see.

-Darren Santeler