

From: [Jensen, Lisa](#)
To: [lillian_claire_smith](#)
Subject: 2024-1-8 Smith Public Records Request
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 4:58:04 PM

Dear Lillian Smith,

Please see attached in response to your Public Records Act Request.

[2024 January 8 Public Records Request.pdf](#)

[AG23-06176 Beauty Express Intake .pdf](#)

[2023-06441 Redacted.pdf](#)

[2024-1-8 Smith PRR.pdf](#)

Sincerely,

Lisa P. Jensen (*she/her*)
Assistant Director

Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Assistance Program
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-1001

Email: AGO.CAP@vermont.gov
Phone: (800) 649-2424
Website: <https://ago.vermont.gov/cap/>





STATE OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
109 STATE STREET
MONTPELIER, VT
05609-1001

January 8, 2024

Via email to [REDACTED]

Re: Public Records Request

Dear Lillian Smith,

I write in response to your Public Records Act request dated January 7, 2024, a copy of which is attached for your convenience, seeking, "all records relating to consumer complaints, responses and findings filed between 1/1/23 to present against a business operating under "Beauty Express" or "Beauty Express LLC" or "Straight Ahead" or "Straight Ahead Beauty Express." Member/Agent may or may not be listed as "Shahar Tal" and/or "Irene Barr."

Attached is a complaint record (2023-06176) and an intake record (AG23-06176). received by the Consumer Assistance Program between 1/1/23 to present.

Personal information has been redacted pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 317(c)(7).

To the extent you feel information has been withheld in error, you may appeal to the Deputy Attorney General, Robert McDougall. Such appeal should be in writing:

Robert McDougall
Deputy Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-1001

Thank you for contacting the Vermont Attorney General's Office.

Sincerely,

Lisa Jensen
Consumer Assistance Program
Office of the Attorney General
State of Vermont

Intake Category	Received Date	Description	First / Cor	Last Name	State	Status	Notes	Complaint/Intake#
Complaint	9/25/2023	<p>Concerned about legitimacy of business at UMALL, bait and switch and pressure sales claims. Allegedly they are having consumer try products, and selling a different product. Carding CC for extra amounts. Not informing consumers there are no returns, and no signage stating there is no returns. Consumer has notified the UMALL owner, who states this is not a scam operation. Consumer was able to get refund (\$214), states it was a "pretty intense argument".</p> <p>Beauty Express LLC, used to do business as Straight Ahead Beauty.</p>	Nicole	DuPont	VT		10/5 - talked with Nicole and advised of our complaint mediation process. LPJ	AG23-06176

From: vt-noreply@egov.gov on behalf of [Office of the Vermont Attorney General](#)
To: [AGO - CAP](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 2023-06441 06.07.23 Langevin Complaint
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 8:56:54 AM

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Submitted on Wed, 06/07/2023 - 12:56

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Your Contact Information

First Name

Renee

Last Name

Langevin

Email

[REDACTED]

Daytime Phone

[REDACTED]

Daytime Phone Type

Mobile

Personal Information

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Richmond

State

Vermont

Zip Code

05477

Your Age

[REDACTED]

Complaint Information

Is your complaint about:

Bait and Switch

Business Name or Person's First Name

Straight Ahead Beauty

Business Address

University Mall

Business City

South Burlington

Business State

Vermont

Business Zip Code

05403

Please Describe Your Complaint

I'd like to make you aware of a scam business set up in the University Mall. Straight Ahead has a history of running a bait and switch scam. They are advertising one product, and selling another (of much poorer quality) using very aggressive sales tactics. In addition, they do not offer refunds and are not transparent about that policy. It is listed on the receipt after you have already paid for the product.

Here are the Better Business Bureau complaints for this company:

<https://www.bbb.org/us/vt/south-burlington/profile/hair-curlers/straight-ahead-beauty-express-0021-513969/complaints>

Here is another website full of complaints:

<https://www.trustpilot.com/review/www.straightaheadbeauty.com>

Unfortunately I was duped by this scam business since they used a superior product on my hair to get me to buy an inferior product. I am out \$342.40, and would like a refund. I'm wary to approach the business directly because of the horror scenarios I've been reading online about other customers who have tried to do the same.

Amount of Loss

342.40

Incident Date

2023-06-05

How would you like this matter to be resolved?

I would like a refund

From: vt-noreply@egov.gov on behalf of [Office of the Vermont Attorney General](#)
To: [AGO - CAP](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
07.26.23 Langevin Response 2023-06441
Date: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 9:57:28 PM

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Submitted on Thu, 07/27/2023 - 01:57

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Complaint file number:
2023-06441

This update submitted by:
Consumer

Your e-mail address:
[REDACTED]

Complaint status:
Not yet resolved

Consumer name:
Renee A Langevin

Business name:
Straight Ahead Beauty

Business contact:
Shahar Tal <shahar2tal@gmail.com>

Response or update:
Customer responses (business statements in quotations):

"The Customer purchased her straightener for 200\$, a promotion price opposed to the original 370\$. She then complained that another bought the tool for 100\$. A price that could indicate a few things, a military or hairdresser discount could have been used or a coupon." - This was not the case. It was a good friend who purchased the tool, and I know this friend does not have any special discounts. The more you resist, the more they drop the price. Sketchy. They clearly have been trained not to take no for an answer.

"The Bionic Pro Ceramic is a Negative ion, Far Infra-Red technology straightener, as seen on the back of the box. Infrared heat is a light wavelength that uses negative ions to create heat and seal in moisture and prevents your hair from getting damaged or frizzy." - The device sold to me

has no indication of infrared technology (besides what is listed on the box). It has a temperature dial that heats up the plates, just like every other hair straightener.

"If used incorrectly by the user, for example: Different heat setting to the demo's temperature or not using a comb while straightening the hair, will lead to unequal results, all due to misusing the tool." - I know how to use a hair straightener. I watched how they did my hair and did it myself the same way with different results. They don't indicate the temperature the demo tool is set at. On the phone, they told me that the demo works differently because it is plugged in all day. Those are not instructions they give you either verbally, or on the box. They continually said it doesn't use heat, it uses infrared technology. If that is the case, the temperature setting should not matter.

"The complaint states that there was a bait and switch tactic involved between the item demonstrated and the item given to the client.

The Beauty Express kiosk works with the same products sold to our customers." - Again, didn't get the same results at home compared to what they showed me in the demo. I would be happy to pay for a tool that worked the way they showed me in the mall. Sadly, it's not the case.

"Of course, we would appreciate the chance to show that the complaint is incorrect. A matter that

could be simply resolved by Renee Langevin. Who has never even once called our customer service, or returned to the place of purchase, but instead chose to involve high officials in order to

confront the problem." - I do not trust these people. Why would I give them another chance to try and scam me? I will not be engaging with them at all going forward. My credit card company is looking into the matter.

"As Renee Langevin stated in the letter that was sent to us from the state's attorney in her name, she received a call from us on June 28th, 2023, asking her to schedule a visit at our location

at the University Mall with the purchased items for us to open the tools, connect, and use directly

on her hair while comparing to our demonstration tools at the Kiosk.

As seen in the letter, Renee Langevin states that she is not interested in returning to the Kiosk at

all to resolve the matter and her only interest is a full refund." - Again, I don't trust these people. Their aggressive, manipulative sales tactics and the fact that they offer no refunds show me that they are not a trustworthy company. If you truly believe in your product, you offer a refund if the customer is not satisfied.

"In addition, Renee Langevin signed all receipts and agreed to the 'No Refunds' Policy.

Which is clearly said at sale point, written on signs on the kiosk, and in addition mentioned 3 times on her receipt- once on each card payment receipt, plus an additional time on the concluding receipt." - They never verbally said "no refunds" to me, just that I could do an exchange at any time. I saw no signs stating "no refunds". It is printed on the receipt, but at that point it is too late!

"We stand by the quality of our tools, and after receiving hundreds of compliments through our customer service we will be opening a salon for easier access to our products, as requested

by our satisfied clients of Vermont." - I again refer you to the Better Business Bureau page for this company. <https://www.bbb.org/us/vt/south-burlington/profile/hair-curlers/straight-ahead-beauty-express-0021-513969>


They have an F rating, and there are many complaints like mine.

"We are waiting for Renee Langevin to return to the kiosk for us to resolve this issue and not let the untrue and disrespectful rumors spread." - I will not be returning. I do not trust these people and have no desire to interact with them. I will happily return the items (through shipping) once a refund is issued. I'm truly disappointed at how these people took advantage of me, and the University Mall for caring so little about helping me resolve this issue.

I [REDACTED] and have no desire to engage in this matter any further.

Email

[REDACTED]

From: [Shahar Tal](#)
To: [AGO - CAP](#)
Subject: Re-2023-06441 Response on a customer complain Beauty express
Date: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 4:27:01 PM
Attachments: [image_6483441.JPG](#)

[image_6483441.JPG](#)
[image_6483441.JPG](#)

You don't often get email from shahar2tal@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Re-2023-06441

To whom this may concern.

I am writing on behalf of The Beauty Express company, who has ownership of the kiosk in the University Mall, South Burlington, Vermont.

The Beauty Express company concentrates on hair products, styling tools, hair extensions and other hair accessories. We use the best in the market and mix between companies to give our clients the most professional products in the industry. For example, our hair extensions are SHE Beyond the Beauty and the flat irons and hair products are Straight Ahead Beauty.

We work through kiosks, a small stand in the middle of the mall that allows our representatives to offer the customers in the mall if they would be interested in hearing about our products and trying them out for themselves.

On June 5th, 2023, we had a woman named Renee Langevin show interest and sit down for a demonstration.

Within the encounter the client purchased our Bionic Pro Ceramic (a far Infra-red technology straightener), and a set of products for her hair including a hair serum, hair mask and a set of shampoo and conditioner.

The Customer purchased her straightener for 200\$, a promotion price opposed to the original 370\$. She then complained that another bought the tool for 100\$. A price that could indicate a few things, a military or hairdresser discount could have been used or a coupon.

The Bionic Pro Ceramic is a Negative ion, Far Infra-Red technology straightener, as seen on the back of the box. Infrared heat is a light wavelength that uses negative ions to create heat and seal in moisture and prevents your hair from getting damaged or frizzy.

Also available to check for more details online or on the company website straightaheadbeauty.com.

Also, the company owns kiosks, stores and salons all over the USA, and worldwide.

Our products give the best and highest professional results for easy use at home.

If used incorrectly by the user, for example: Different heat setting to the demo's temperature or not using a comb while straightening the hair, will lead to unequal

results, all due to misusing the tool.

The complaint states that there was a bait and switch tactic involved between the item demonstrated and the item given to the client.

The Beauty Express kiosk works with the same products sold to our customers.

Of course, we would appreciate the chance to show that the complaint is incorrect. A matter that could be simply resolved by Renee Langevin. Who has never even once called our customer service, or returned to the place of purchase, but instead chose to involve high officials in order to confront the problem.

As Renee Langevin stated in the letter that was sent to us from the state's attorney in her name, she received a call from us on June 28th, 2023, asking her to schedule a visit at our location at the University Mall with the purchased items for us to open the tools, connect, and use directly on her hair while comparing to our demonstration tools at the Kiosk.

As seen in the letter, Renee Langevin states that she is not interested in returning to the Kiosk at all to resolve the matter and her only interest is a full refund.

In addition, Renee Langevin signed all receipts and agreed to the 'No Refunds' Policy. Which is clearly said at sale point, written on signs on the kiosk, and in addition mentioned 3 times on her receipt- once on each card payment receipt, plus an additional time on the concluding receipt.

Even despite the state's refund policy rule **CP 106.01**, that states: "... unless the seller discloses at the time of sale that no cash refund will be made on the goods or that cash refunds are made at the sole discretion of the seller. Disclosure of such refund policy must be conspicuously placed on a sign located at the point of display, the cash register, or the store entrance." The manager of the University Mall location that spoke to Renee agreed that even though the sale stands with the terms of the state law of the No Refund Policy, we will make an exception if the products do not work as promised. In Addition, she was asked to bring the same payment methods used for the unlikely event that the products do not match, and a refund could be issued to the same card used at the original sale.

Included are the signed receipts by Renee Langevin herself on two receipts stating our policy on paper.

We are sad to hear that Renee had gone through a bad experience.

At Beauty Express, we put customers' satisfaction first, and therefore appreciate them reaching out when a problem occurs. We stand by the quality of our tools, and after receiving hundreds of compliments through our customer service we will be opening a salon for easier access to our products, as requested by our satisfied clients of Vermont.

We are waiting for Renee Langevin to return to the kiosk for us to resolve this issue and not let the untrue and disrespectful rumors spread.

Thank you in advance,

Beauty Express LLC.

774-4149185

* Photos of the complain and the customer receipts attached

