



## Credit Card Jokes

The Motley Fool

By *Selena Maranjian*

Money is a serious matter and we run the risk of disastrous ruin if we ignore it. Still, that doesn't mean we shouldn't pause now and then to chuckle over financial issues. They are often funny, after all. And we do need some giggles in our lives — on a regular basis, even. It was with this philosophy in mind that I recently went on an Internet hunt for some credit card jokes. Here are a few I liked.

### Let's get the wife joke out of the way

"A man said his credit card was stolen, but he decided not to report it because the thief was spending less than his wife did."

This joke is obviously just as applicable to many men as it is to many women. It alludes to the discouraging truth that far too many of us are walking around with more debt than we think we can pay off. And who's to blame? Sure, there are some valid reasons to blame the credit card industry. But in most cases, it's hard not to blame the borrowers, too. Many of these folks were extremely irresponsible, spending more than they could afford. (Others, though, end up in debt due to medical emergencies or other nasty twists in life.)

**Satan's brainstorm** Most of the jokes I found were not credited to anyone. But the following I take from Dr. Gregg Dimkoff of the Seidman School of Business at Grand Valley State University: "There's a joke going around about the time Larry King interviewed Satan on his radio/TV program. At one point during the interview, King asked Satan to describe the foulest deed he'd ever done. Satan refused to name one, pointing out that there had been so much destruction over the years, so many lives cut short, and so many wars and calamities that none stood out. But Larry King kept pestering. 'Surely, if you think hard enough, there must be one dastardly deed you are most proud of.' Satan thought for a moment, his eyes brightened, and he replied, 'Well, yes. I guess if I have to pick just one particularly evil thing I'm proudest of, it would be this: several years ago I invented credit cards.'"

I'm of two minds when it comes to this joke. Yes, credit cards have enabled millions of people to get mired in debt and they have led to many bankruptcies. Without credit cards, millions of people wouldn't owe tens of thousands of dollars apiece, on which they're being charged interest rates well above 20%. And it's not merely fly-by-night lenders charging consumers 25% or more — it's familiar names such as **MBNA** (NYSE: KRB), **J. P. Morgan Chase** (NYSE: JPM), **American Express** (NYSE: AXP), **Capital One Financial** (NYSE: COF), and **Citigroup** (NYSE: C).

But there's a flip side. Credit cards can be good, too. (That's why we actually offer our own spiffy Motley Fool credit cards, which feature the best terms we could negotiate for you.) If you don't abuse them, they're extremely convenient, permitting you to not have to carry around gobs of cash and providing you with handy summaries of your expenses each month.



### **Searching for limits**

The next bit of humor I offer you is too long to fit in this article, so I'll just link to it. It's not so much a joke as a humorous odyssey that follows a consumer as he tries to find out just how well our credit card purchases are monitored. I was impressed by how uninterested many cashiers were in what should have been highly suspicious transactions. Worse still was the fact that just about no matter how this fellow signed his receipts, they were almost always processed by the credit card companies.

This permissiveness is instructive for those who worry about the security of buying things online with credit cards. Yes, there are lapses in security now and then. But most reputable websites, especially commercial ones such as **Amazon.com** (Nasdaq: AMZN) and **eBay** (Nasdaq: EBAY), have taken many steps to protect credit card information. (Amazon has a privacy and security information page, and eBay has a security page, too.) It's good to remember that our offline credit card transactions aren't necessarily any more secure. When you buy a bunch of socks and hand the cashier your card, for all you know, she might copy the number discreetly and then engage in identity theft. It behooves us to always be vigilant with our credit cards, though we also need to accept that sometimes, it's out of our hands.

Here's another humorous bit reflecting a lack of security in many transactions: "I was signing the receipt for my credit card purchase when the clerk noticed that I had never signed my name on the back of the credit card. She informed me that she could not complete the transaction unless the card was signed. When I asked why, she explained that it was necessary to compare the signature on the credit card with the signature I just signed on the receipt. So I signed the credit card in front of her. She carefully compared that signature to the one I signed on the receipt. As luck would have it, they matched."

### **Get help — or get informed**

If you aren't saddled with credit card debt, congrats! I encourage you to help yourself stay out of debt by spending a little time in our Credit Center, which offers many surprising peeks into the credit card industry. If you are drowning in debt, grab this lifesaver — our Get Out of Debt nook. Also, spend some time in our Consumer Credit discussion board, where you'll run across inspirational people rejoicing after paying off tens of thousands of dollars of debt. Some examples:

paid off \$28,000 in debt. Pennsylvanian paid off \$32,000. AngryGeek owed \$36,000 when he was earning less than \$14,000. He paid it off. RadioPhool dug out from under \$84,000 of debt. Mlk58 paid off nearly \$140,000 in non-mortgage debt.

These articles may also be of interest:

How to Owe \$40,000 by Doing Nothing  
The Eight Commandments of Credit



\$24 Billion to Card Companies ... for What?

Sneaky Credit Card Tactics

Do You Want to Work Forever?

Get Rich by Beating the Odds

**Got more jokes?**

My great online search for credit card jokes, as you might have guessed, didn't turn up too many. If you have any to offer, please share them with us on our discussion board!

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