



## Credit Card Jokes

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.