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Features Article

Keep within your budget this Valentines

Love is in the air with 14th February just around the corner to mark Valentine's Day, a special day when consumers across the globe spend money to celebrate their love. Valentine's Day is a popular gift-giving event, even when consumers are tight with their budgets.

In Fiji, Valentine's Day shopping is nothing less than any other festive occasion with people buying gifts to spoil their loved ones. Commercialisation of love has already started with enticing promotions, giving ideas on how you can spoil your Valentines.

Many consumers will be looking for a perfect gift for their loved ones that fits their budget, whether it's chocolates, flowers, jewelry, clothing, an evening out or simply a greeting card. Many consumers get carried away by the specials or discounts being offered in stores not realizing that they spending the money which they don't have, leaving a big hole in their pockets.

It has been noted from the previous years that consumers mostly blow their budget or take loan to celebrate the day. There are many consumers who are worried that their funds cannot stretch enough to express their love. Consumers can still blissfully enjoy this day by spending their money wisely and must not allow themselves to be driven away by emotions. Love isn't about what you give in goods but what you give by way of time, attention, and acknowledgment of the other person. And none of these can be purchased.

Tips from the Council:

- Plan ahead and properly on what you want to do to mark the special occasion and prepare a list of things you will need to make it a success. When you have a list in place, stick to it;
- Cautious consumers do their research and comparative 'window shopping' to get the best prices and ensure that there is something out there that matches their budget;
- Be wary of advertisements or sale items that seem too good to be true. Ask the right questions and as many as you can about an advertised deal or promotion. Make a habit of properly inspecting the goods before buying;

- Indulge in traditional accompaniments such as roses and chocolates by downsizing. For example give one rose rather than a dozen or a bar of chocolate instead of a box.
- Make your own card which is more meaningful than a purchased one.
- Engage in low cost activities like walks or watching DVDS at home or giving bouquets not necessarily made of red roses or cooking a special dinner;
- Ask for and keep receipts after purchase in case problems arise with the goods than you can always seek redress;

Consumers are advised to be savvy-shoppers this Valentines and focus on the true meaning of the occasion which is the day to celebrate love by spending time together.

Wishing all consumers a happy yet cautious Valentine's Day!