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## Ink Cartridge Suit Targets Printer Ripoff

Samsung Rigs Printers to Read 'Empty' and Shut down When There's Plenty of Toner Left

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 28 /PRNewswire/ -- Samsung is rigging its printers and misleading consumers in its quest to sell as many costly and profitable toner cartridges as possible, according to a class action lawsuit filed this week by Kabateck Brown Kellner, LLP in U.S. District Court in Trenton, NJ.

"This is 'razor blade' economics taken to a fraudulent extreme," said KBK Managing Partner Brian Kabateck. "Consumers are not getting the toner they're paying for because Samsung is rigging its machines. The victims in this case are entitled to use the toner they've purchased, but Samsung's malevolent programming is blocking the way."

Printer companies like Samsung derive more revenues and profits from selling toner and ink cartridges than they do by selling printers. (Some call this the "razor blade" model. Many razor companies make more money from blade cartridges than razors.) While cartridge prices remain high, printer costs have fallen along with the cost of other computer equipment, with many printers even being provided free to computer purchasers. Printers, in many cases, are simply vehicles that drive their manufacturers' true profit-centers -- toner and ink cartridges.

Samsung, according to the suit, programs its printers to shut down and display a "toner empty" message when there is in fact a significant amount of toner still remaining in the toner cartridge. Users must install a new Samsung toner cartridge to resume using their printers, even though there is plenty of toner left in their old cartridge. Users cannot pursue the relatively cheaper options of refilling their old cartridges or using another company's cartridges -- Samsung employs "smart chip" technology to force consumers to use their cartridges.

KBK previously sued Epson for designing its printers to shut down with a substantial amount of ink still in the cartridge. Following certification of a national class, Epson settled the case. The victims received ink cartridges and other compensation that the court valued at more than \$350 million.

The Samsung cartridges for the printer owned by the plaintiff cost \$80. The suit seeks to represent a class comprising all individuals or entities in the United States who have purchased or leased a Samsung laser printer.

"We're simply asking Samsung to be straight with its customers," said Darren Kaplan, a partner with the Atlanta-based law firm of Chitwood Harley Harnes LLP and co-counsel with KBK in the litigation. "It's disappointing that it's taking a judge and jury to make them do the right thing."

According to Lyra Research, 2007 ink and toner sales approached \$70 billion, while by 2011, printer manufacturers will make over \$15 billion more in ink and toner than printer sales.

The outrageous cost of toner and ink was put into perspective by Gizmodo, which found that printing with vodka, penicillin, and even human blood would be cheaper. (<http://tinyurl.com/5jdctx>)

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported that while we complain about \$50 to \$75 gas tank fill-ups, that same tank would cost \$4,000 to \$5,000 to fill up with printer ink (<http://www.star-telegram.com/599/story/225552.html>).



SOURCE Kabateck Brown Kellner, LLP

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