AIR CANADA NOT HONOURING "GLITCH" THAT SOLD FLIGHT PACKAGES FOR 90% OFF

News / Airlines

It seemed like a chance to travel the world at bargain prices. For a short while, Air Canada's website was advertising 10-pack flight passes for C$800 - a deal John Risdon jumped on, thinking it was a deal of a lifetime.

"Maybe it's a seat sale, maybe it's a promotion they're offering," Risdon said. "It's advertised on their website, so I've got to get it."

But it was an offer too good to be true, he soon found out, when the airline yanked the tickets, citing a glitch in the pricing.

The package was actually supposed to cost C$8,000, and anyone who purchased it for C$800 would have the transaction cancelled, Air Canada said.

Although the airline returned his money, Risdon isn't happy with it reneging on the deal.

"I don't think they can charge you for something, advertise a certain price, take your money give you a receipt for it and then unilaterally change their policies to suit their mistake," Risdon said.

In Canada, there are laws against "bait-and-switch" advertising - offering a bargain price to

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consumers and turning around to say the deal isn't available.

And though this law is meant to stop businesses from luring shoppers with too-good-to-be-true prices, the wording of the law doesn't make clear what happens in cases of "glitches" or typos that accidentally lower a price.

Both The Brick and Lenovo have mistakenly offered huge discounts to customers in the past. Both companies gave customers some form of compensation for their mistakes, but didn't honour their accidental sales.

Delta Air Lines, however, did honour the cost of the tickets they accidentally sold for about 10 percent of their intended price in 2013.

But Chris Adam, who also purchased the C$800 package, said Air Canada wasn't budging.

"I called the consumer line and the call centre agent wasn't exactly helpful and said there had been an error and these wouldn't be honoured," There was an offer, there was acceptance, there is a binding contract," Rohn said.

He said the airline could potentially be obligated to honour the offer they made.

"Unless Air Canada can somehow show there was a genuine mistake ... it will be fairly difficult for them to get out of it, I would think," Rohn said.

Though the airline didn't say how many packages had been sold at the incorrect price, in a statement to CTV Calgary, Air Canada did say it would honour any bookings made before it caught the error.

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