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New card lets employees charge ahead

Compiled by Nathaniel Hoopes

There's a new way to buy with plastic. The only prerequisite: a paying job.

E-Duction, a technology firm based in Blue Bell, Pa., and MasterCard have teamed up to launch "Clear" – a system that allows employees to pay for their purchases via payroll deduction.

For example, if you decide to buy a \$400 titanium driver to help you out-hit your golf buddies, just purchase it on the Clear card and the money will be deducted from your paycheck over the next two months. If you are paid biweekly, \$100 would come out of your paycheck each pay period. There are no interest charges or late fees, but cardholders are charged \$29 annually.

The Clear card extends a credit line of 2.5 percent of an employee's salary. An employee who earns \$40,000 per year would have a credit limit of \$1,000, and a monthly statement explains all charges.

Clear is similar to a debit card, but the ability to spread payments out over two months is something new.

Despite the credit limit, some debt counselors worry that consumers will overspend on the card, leaving themselves with no salary money to cover more-important rent or mortgage payments.

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