



## Sephora Has A Racial Discrimination Lawsuit On Its Hands

And it ain't pretty.

by **quinn keaney** 11/20/2014

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When beauty retailer extraordinaire Sephora announced they'd be having [a 20% off sale](#) for their most loyal customers (known as ["VIB" and "VIB Rouge"](#) members) earlier this month, you could practically hear the sounds of makeup addicts all over the world scrambling for their wallets. A chance to get a discount on the coveted Dior BB cream? Sold.

Unfortunately when the sale started, the mass amount of online traffic crashed the site and deactivated or locked out numerous Sephora shoppers' accounts.

For a popular company that rarely holds sales (and I mean, *RARELY*), the site buckling under the sheer amount of customers wasn't wholly surprising, right? Sure. Well, until a large number of customers who'd found themselves locked out of their accounts during that time period realized they had one specific thing in common: [they were of Asian descent](#).



In the aftermath of the sale, Sephora has found themselves in hot water thanks to [a class action lawsuit filed by four women](#)—Xiao Xiao, Man Xu, Jiali Chen and Tiantian Zou—against Sephora and its parent company LVMH. The women claim that the beauty retailer discriminated against anyone “of perceived Chinese/Asian descent based on the ill-founded and discriminatory belief that all Chinese/Asian customers abuse discount sales to engage in bulk purchase for re-sale.”

Buying products in bulk and reselling them overseas is a big problem for a lot of companies, however Sephora’s handling of the situation is definitely head-scratching. Around the time of the sale, customers posted on [Sephora’s Facebook page](#) and on a [Reddit thread](#) saying that they’d been denied access to their VIB accounts due to their international email addresses and Asian last names. People of other races experienced similar problems with their Sephora accounts, but at that point the number of Asian customers was overwhelming.

To address the situation, Sephora took to [their Facebook page](#) and [told Fashionista](#):

“This lawsuit significantly distorts the facts in this matter. We look forward to defending our actions in court. Among other points, we intend to make very clear that clients from a number of countries around the world have been impacted by a temporary block we needed to place on accounts in order to restore the functionality of our site during a surge of activity by resellers during a promotional event two weeks ago.”

While it’s still not entirely clear whether or not Sephora was targeting Asian and international customers, at the very least, the beauty company has some explaining to do.