



January 2019 Monthly Newsletter

Check out what's new and exciting at Origin SC this month!



This New Year, Take The Leap!

- ~ Take control of your money ~
- ~ Improve your credit score ~
- ~ Become a homeowner ~

Success by doing things the ORIGIN WAY...

We interviewed our client, Antoine Lowery about his success with **Origin SC**. He greatly improved his financial situation as well as became a first time homebuyer! Check out the interview:

Q. What was your first experience with **Origin SC**/how did you hear about us?

A. My sister went through **Origin SC** a few years back when she was purchasing her first home. She highly recommended that I do this as well. I began with attending some of your free workshops.

Q. Did you work with any of our financial coaches? How was that experience?

A. Yes. I worked with a few different financial coaches at **Origin SC** over time. I benefited tremendously from the one-on-one coaching. When I first started I couldn't even begin to read a credit report. The coaches taught me all the ins and outs of credit reports and how to increase your score. After I was finished with coaching, I felt extremely educated when it came to anything credit related.

Q. Did you have a budget in place before receiving coaching? Do you continue to use your budget after utilizing our coaching services?

A. I never had a budget to begin with. I never thought much about what money I was spending. When my coach helped me put a budget in place it definitely helped me. It allowed

me to be able to pay off debts/bills. Having a step-by-step guide about how I should spend my money was extremely helpful.

Q. How has your credit score changed since using **Origin SC**'s coaching services?

A. It changed a lot-- for the better! I came to **Origin SC** with a credit score of 498. Now, my credit score has gone up to 720! I set a goal when I first started this journey and I wasn't sure if it was set too high, but I reached it and it's awesome.

Q. After using our financial coaching services, did you sign up for **Origin SC**'s homebuyer program?

A. Yes. I knew I was ready to purchase a home and I wanted to continue to have Origin SC by my side throughout the process.

Q. How was the homebuyer experience?

A. It was great. I went to the First Time Homebuyer workshop and fell in love with Debbie Kidd, the Director of Homeownership. You could tell she really had a passion for the material she was teaching. She was very genuine and I knew that I wanted her help with purchasing my first home. She worked with me throughout the process until I closed on my home.

Q. What is your biggest accomplishment you have experienced since working with **Origin SC**?

A. Buying the house of my dreams. I never thought it would be something I would actually be able to do until I worked with **Origin SC**.

Q. What would you say to a person that is thinking about improving their financial situation but doesn't think that they can do it?

A. I would tell them that it's definitely possible-- but you have to really want it. It's a lot of hard work. You also need to be able to accept help. There's no shame in utilizing helpful resources, it will only help you.

Q. Anything else you'd like to share?

A. I would definitely recommend **Origin SC** to anyone that wants to improve their finances or purchase their first home. Working with **Origin SC** inspired me to help more people realize that they can own a home just like I can. Whenever I recommend Origin SC to friends I know that they will be working with a great group of people, and they always come back to me and tell me that they are!

This could be YOU! Contact **Origin SC today to start making your dreams of homeownership a reality.**

For **Realty** services, contact Debbie Kidd at 843-276-8744 or email dkidd@originsc.org

For **Lending** services, contact Stephanie Reed at 843-735-7810 or email sreed@originsc.org

For **Financial Coaching** and workshops, please visit our website www.originsc.org or contact Laura Jeffers at 843-735-7866 or email ljeffers@originsc.org

Attend a FREE Origin SC Workshop

North Charleston (Main Location) 4925 Lacross Road, North Charleston, SC 29406	Dorchester Prosperity Center 222 Old Trolley Road, Summerville, SC 29485	Berkeley Prosperity Center 325 E. Main Street, Moncks Corner, SC 29461
Intro to Homeownership - Feb. 2	Intro to Homeownership - Feb.	Intro to Homeownership - Feb.
Credit Improvement - Feb. 5	28	25
First Time Homebuyer - Feb. 16	Intro to Homeownership - Mar.	Intro to Homeownership - Mar.
Intro to Homeownership - Feb.	28	25
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For additional dates and locations, visit our website : www.originsc.org/classes

Top DOs and DON'Ts for Building Credit



Here are the top DOs and DON'Ts to follow for building or improving your credit, protecting your identity, and guarding personal information from loss or theft...

1. Know What Your Credit Is

Did you know there are companies that keep track of whether or not you pay your debts and if you make payments on time? And that these companies make this information available in the form of a credit report and score? Good credit means that your history of payments makes you a good candidate for a loan, and creditors (those who lend money) will be more willing to work with you. Having good credit usually translates into lower payments and more ease in borrowing money. Bad credit, however, can be a big problem. It usually results from making payments late or borrowing too much money, and it means that you might have trouble getting a car loan, a credit card, a place to live, and sometimes even a job.

2. Understand Your Credit

Many people just starting out have no credit history and may find it tough to get a loan or credit card, but establishing a good credit history is not as difficult as it seems. You might apply for a credit card issued by a local store because local businesses are more willing to extend credit to someone with no credit history. Once you establish a pattern of making your payments on time, major credit card issuers might be more willing to extend credit to you. You might apply for a secured credit card. Basically, this card requires you to put up the money first, and then lets you borrow 50 to 100% of your account balance. You might ask other people who have an established credit history to co-sign on an account. By co-signing, the person is agreeing to pay back the loan if you don't.

3. Read the Fine Print

When applying for credit cards, it's important to shop around. Fees, charges, interest rates, and benefits can vary drastically among credit card issuers. And, in some cases, credit cards might seem like great deals until you read the fine print and disclosures. When you're trying to find the credit card that's right for you, look at the:

- *Annual Percentage Rate (APR)* - The APR is a measure of the cost of credit, expressed as a yearly interest rate. Usually, the lower the APR, the better it is for you. Be sure to check the fine print to see if your offer has a time limit. Your APR could be much higher after the initial limited-time offer.
- *Grace Period* - This is the amount of time you have to pay your credit card bill after the date of the credit card purchase and before the date the company starts charging you interest on the unpaid amount.
- *Annual Fees* - Many credit card issuers charge an annual fee for giving you credit.
- *Transaction Fees and Other Charges* - Most creditors charge a fee if you don't make a payment on time. Other common credit card fees include those for cash advances and going beyond the credit limit. Some credit cards charge a flat fee every month, whether you use your card or not.

- *Customer Service* - Customer service is something most people don't consider, or appreciate, until there's a problem. Look for a 24-hour, toll-free telephone number.
- *Other Options* - Creditors may offer other options for a price, including discounts, rebates, and special merchandise offers. If your card is lost or stolen, federal law protects you from owing more than \$50 per card for unauthorized charges.

4. Improve Your Credit Record

A lot of people spend more than they can afford and pay less toward their debts than they should. To get control over your finances, and to manage your debt, try budgeting and/or credit counseling

5. Keep Your Record Clean

It's easy to qualify for credit if you have a good credit history, but what if you have never used credit before? It takes time to establish credit and build a record of consistency in making payments to demonstrate your creditworthiness. And it is much better to go slowly and develop a strong credit record than to apply for too many credit cards or a loan that is larger than you can handle. Start slowly, be cautious, keep track of your overall debt, and pay on time. Most importantly, remember that credit actually represents real money and has to be repaid with interest. Good credit is important, now and in the future. In most cases, it takes seven years for accurate, negative information to be deleted from a credit report.

6. Know What Creditors Look for on Credit Reports

Understanding what types of information most creditors evaluate is important. factors include:

- Your bill-paying history
- How many and the type of accounts you have
- Unused portions of credit lines
- Longevity of accounts
- Late payments
- Outstanding debt
- Collections actions

7. Obtain a Copy of Your Credit Report

Credit reporting agencies don't share files, so you'll need to contact each reporting agency to make sure the information about you is correct. The three major credit reporting agencies are: Equifax, Experian, TransUnion. The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies—Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion—to provide you with a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months. You can order your free annual credit report online www.annualcreditreport.com, by calling 1-877-322-8228, or by completing the Annual Credit Report Request Form found on www.ftc.gov and mailing it to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.

8. Keep Credit Cards Under Control

Whether you shop online, by telephone, or by mail, a credit card can make buying many things much easier; but when you use a credit card, it's important to keep track of your spending. Owing more than you can afford to repay can damage your credit rating. Keeping good records can prevent a lot of headaches, especially if there are inaccuracies on your monthly statement.

9. Protect Your Identity

Here are some ways to protect yourself from identity theft:

- Before you reveal any personally identifying information, find out how it will be used and whether it will be shared.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if your bills don't arrive on time.
- Guard your mail from theft. Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes or at your local post office. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after it has been delivered. If you're planning to be away from home and can't pick up your mail, call the U.S. Postal Service toll-free at 1-800-275-8777, or visit www.usps.com to request a mail hold.
- For passwords on your credit card, bank, and phone accounts, avoid using easily available information like your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your Social Security number or telephone number, or a series of consecutive numbers. It's a good idea to keep a list of your credit card issuers and their telephone numbers.
- Don't give out personal information over the telephone, through the mail, or online unless you've initiated the contact or you know with whom you're dealing.
- Never carry your Social Security card. Give out your Social Security number only when absolutely necessary.

10. Guard Your Personal Information

A lost or stolen wallet or purse is a gold mine of information for identity thieves. If your wallet or purse is lost or stolen:

- File a report with the police immediately and keep a copy.
- Cancel your cards. Call the issuer(s) immediately. Get new cards with new account numbers.

- Call the fraud departments of the major credit reporting agencies and ask each agency to put a "fraud alert" on your account:
- Report the loss to the fraud department of the bank where you have your checking and savings accounts.
- Review your credit reports regularly and have them corrected when necessary. Report a missing driver's license to your state's department of motor vehicles.
- If your keys are missing, change your home and car locks.

4 Financial New Year's Resolutions Anyone Can Make

1. **Automate Your Finances** - Move any relevant bills and subscriptions to credit or debit cards when possible. Setting up automatic payments ensures that bills are paid on time and creates less work for you.

2. **Plan to Pay Off Debt** - Alleviating debt is an investment that pays immediate returns. The less debt you have, the less interest you'll have to pay until there's none at all.



3. **Plan for Retirement** - Opening a retirement fund is a simple process, and there's a lot of time for your savings to grow. You'll find that even a small amount of retirement funding can help build momentum for the future.

4. **Monitor Your Credit Score** - Building good credit will have a positive impact on your entire financial life. A good credit score can save you money throughout your life by helping you qualify for favorable terms on loans, credit cards, and other financial products.

To learn more, check out the full article [HERE](#).

Here's what our clients are saying about us...

"Debbie was an excellent personality and great knowledge of homeownership. I learned a lot and will continue to further my experience with Origin SC."

"I learned a lot that I did not know, especially about Credit Karma, credit repair agencies, debt collectors, and disputing items on a credit report."

"The class was very informative. I learned a lot from this session. I will definitely do a one-on-one session with one of your coaches."

"The class was great. I learned not to waste all of my money eating out. I learned how to read my bank statement and that I need to keep an eye on it."

"I learned so much information about to prepare for first time homebuying and how to improve my credit score. I thoroughly enjoyed the class and I'm excited for this journey."



"Tyrone's coaching was clear and concise. He relayed information perfectly."

"Debbie was very informative and I'm SO READY to start my process. This is a great program and I'm glad I attended this workshop."

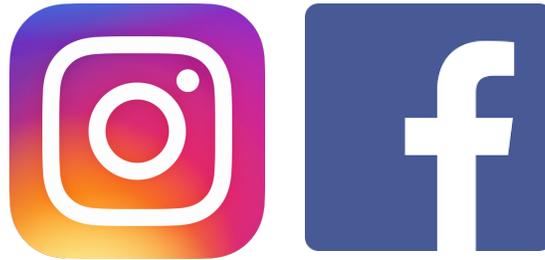
"This was an awesome and informative workshop. It helped explain the whole process and everything I was confused about."

"I am thankful for Laura Jeffers. She was a great help and explained everything so well. Thank you!"

"I am very grateful for Origin SC. I'm thankful for this class. It helped save me from many trials and tribulations."

Experience **Origin SC** for yourself! Sign up for one-on-one financial coaching or one of our FREE workshops today by calling 843-735-7802 or visiting www.originsc.org

Keep in Touch with Origin SC!



Origin SC | www.originsc.org | 843-735-7802 | info@originsc.org

Resources:

Federal Trade Commission (FTC): www.ftc.gov

NFCC: <https://www.nfcc.org/blog/4-financial-new-years-resolutions-anyone-can-make/>

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