

COLUMN

The Big Picture

Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics

How Important Are Your Words in Your Overall Communication?

(Hint: It's Way More Than 7 Percent)

by **John David Mann**

plus ATTACHMENT

728 words | 3 pages

I have a sobering fact for you; are you ready? Here it is: Of the statistics network marketers cite in support of their business, a recent study showed, *more than 87 percent are not actually based on solid research!*

Shocking, isn't it?

Guess what? I just made that up.

Did you know...

...there have been more millionaires made through network marketing than in any other profession?

...that 93 percent of your communication is based on nonverbal cues and tone of voice, with your actual words conveying only seven percent of the message?

...that according to a study done by Hartford Insurance, at retirement, 96 percent are either dead, dead broke or just getting by, and only four are financially successful?

...that according to a Harvard study, only three percent of people ever write down their goals—and at retirement age, those three percent are worth more than the other 97 percent?

Each of these deserves an entire article; let's do a cut-to-the-chase version.

“More millionaires in network marketing...”

Maybe some day, Virginia — but right now that factoid belongs with Santa Clause and the Easter bunny. Back here on planet Earth 2005, it's just not true. Most millionaires got that way by being frugal, working hard and investing in real estate.

“Your words make up only seven percent...”

Under the scrutiny of a little common sense, this one folds up like a shell-game huckster's card table when the fuzz arrives.

Think about it for a moment:

If these figures (most often attributed to Tony Robbins) were actually true, then maybe it really wouldn't matter that much whether or not our words told the truth. But it's not true, and it does matter.

This widely quoted “research” is a tortured distortion of genuine findings by UCLA social psychologist Albert Mehrabian in his book *Silent Messages* (1971), who was describing how conflicting or “mixed” messages are interpreted between two people who know each other. Not public speakers in front of a group.

The truth is that nonverbal communication counts. But please, don't tell me words chalk up no more than seven percent of the content of your communication. It's insulting to words, to Mehrabian, to me, and to you.

The Hartford study?

Doesn't exist.

The Harvard (Stanford, Yale, etc.) study?

Nope, sorry.

Again, the truth: goal-setting is important. A lot of people, probably the majority, retire with way too little to live on. But let's not detract from the truths we highlight by quoting spurious figures and statistics. And if we're going to quote numbers, let's do some due diligence ourselves—the kind we're always telling newcomers to network marketing to do. Let's find out first if the numbers are real.

Actually there *was* a “landmark Harvard study,” and you can read about it in the book *Aging Well*, by George Valliant, recently released in paperback. From what I could find, this appears to be the study that all the goal-setting folks are talking about.

Alas, of “goals” or “goal-setting,” Valliant evidently has little to say: neither term rates a single entry in the book’s index.

However, among the major longevity factors Valliant *did* observe were these gems:

- the role of play and creative activity;
- the benefits of forming new friendships and social networks;
- and the importance of intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning.

Intellectual curiosity! Which ironically would include our taking the trouble to find out if what we’re saying is true or not!

Back in the early days of *Upline* magazine, John Fogg wrote an editorial called, “The Lies of MLM.” He took on some of the heartier and more durable fabrications of the day (which included the “most-millionaires” fiction, the “MLM taught at Harvard” fib, and a few other fictions and fables). It was one of the most popular and oft-reprinted articles we ever published. I find that encouraging. It tells me that people *want* to know the truth and tell the truth.

What you say *really does* duplicate. You have a *responsibility* to speak the truth — not just with your body language and tone of voice, but with your words, too. Remember: “intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning” *have* been proven to help you live longer.

P.S. Quick, who said, “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics”? Mark Twain...right?

True — but he was quoting Benjamin Disraeli.



John David Mann is one of the most recognizable and well-respected names in network marketing. As co-founder (with John Fogg) and senior editor of *Upline®*, Editor in Chief of *Network Marketing Lifestyles* and the current Editor in Chief of *Networking Times*, he has been keenly observing and insightfully commenting on the Network Marketing world for more than 15 years. And... John has been one of the top-earning distributors with the same networking company for nearly 20 years.

The Last Word is an i-book in process, an ongoing collection of short essays on the experience of network marketing. Each article is linked to an interactive forum for "reader comments" so now you can have the last word. John says he may eventually ... *finish...* and publish this book (on, you know, paper). For now (and maybe forever), it exists as a living, growing conversation on the Internet. Just click the link to visit John's website: JohnDavidMann.com

ATTACHMENT

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The Lies of MLM

The original article that was published in the Upline® Journal more than 10 years ago, yet even today a few zealous networkers are still offering up these four fabrications born of the business's lingering inferiority complex....

by **John Milton Fogg**

1370 words | 5 pages

in downloadable Word.doc format

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