COLUMN

Banana Marketing

If we could let customers be customers, then...

NO company has products that are best for everyone, so why not share the customers? Amongst ourselves?

by **Kim Klaver**

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"Where all think alike, no one thinks very much."
-Walter Lippmann

That said, here's my question:

Why don't we promote cross-company customers?

Why couldn't a rep from say, PrePaid Legal, one from Shaklee, LifeWave or Isagenix be each other's customers without the paranoia of them stealing each other?

Pretend for a moment that NM companies (and reps) distinguish old fashioned customers from sales reps. And pretend that companies pay reps enough to make it worthwhile to get old fashioned customers who order regularly, and who don't want to sell anything. You know, customers, like we all are of so many things.

All American companies try to build a customer base don't they? They're like customer base builders. While we market our products through people, that's no reason to limit our customers to the sales people, the way most network marketing do, is it? Why just recruit business builders and pay the good money for doing that, and pay nearly zip to reps who want to become customer base builders? (Most NM companies pay so much better for finding business builders that most reps tell their new people, "There's no money in customers, so just go recruit. That's where the money is.")

Isn't a company that behaves like this telling the world that they don't expect anyone to use their products unless they're also selling them? That's a pretty limited market, isn't it?

Building the business – one at a time.

Some years ago, Paul Zane Pilzner asked me why it was that people in NM recommended representing only one network marketing company, when say, pharmaceutical reps represented more than one.

I told him then (and still believe it today) that building more than one business is like trying to recruit for more than one religion. If someone gets into a business and promotes it as a real income opportunity because THEY love it, see its potential and want to find others to join them, them, it's kind of like religion, isn't it? How many can one person be passionate about and promote? Oh – you don't like Christianity? No problem, here – let me show y9ou Judaism.

(I refer here to people who do the networking business because they love the business model and have found a company/product they use themselves and want to evangelize. Not the junkies who jump from deal to deal looking for the quick score.)

Now the products – that's a different story.

> ***Aren't there way more customers for a good product than people who want to sell that product? Can't we just let customers be customers?***

Thousands of reps have told me about customer sales they lost when they tried to get that SS# and/or sign the person up in the business, like their company or upline pushes them to do.

Where else but with a NM company do you have to give your SS# before you're allowed to buy products? (They could be creative and figure out

other ways to track customers, couldn't they?) Where else do they push you to sell what you buy when you just want to be a customer?

History shows that for nearly all companies, fewer than 3 percent of those who sign on as business builders end up doing so regularly, so 97% of all the reps that stay in a company are just customers by default. Yes, they signed on as distributors, but most only use the products themselves now.

So here's my idea:

Since the great majority of people in the business quit and end up as just customers anyway, why don't we encourage each other to buy each others' products as just customers? No signing up as business builders, but just as customers. Like regular people.

What if network marketers were to start buying from each other instead of from GNC or a health food store? Many companies have good products, and work for different people in different ways.

Why not keep it in the family and collaborate instead of compete – for just customers I mean?

Yes, a company might lose a rep or two who moves to another company. But I think that the additional customer business from the 13 million already involved in the NM business (per the DSA) would be far greater than a few reps moving from one company to another.

We'd need two rules, at least:

1. *All agree to honor the business choices of others, NO STEALING or attempted stealing of reps. It's about the CUSTOMERS, REPEAT CUSTOMERS, only.*

2. *Companies who want to play in this much more friendly market (members of the profession) must set up customer programs where customers do NOT have to be distributors also. JUST CUSTOMERS. Something which, in my opinion, is long overdue*

and will do much to lift the stigma associated with our products – people tell me they won't buy from other reps because they don't want to be nagged and badgered to sell the product, too. We could finally let go of that loser baggage.

I know of just a handful of companies that treat their customers as customers, and actively encourage their reps to seek out customers who are NOT also Reps for the company.

If your company is one of those, let me know and we'll start a list.

And I'll post it, assuming your facts are correct.

I've promoted cross company customer gathering for years, and do it in all my classes where we have different companies represented. FUN. And why not? NO company has products that are best for everyone, so why not share the customers? Amongst ourselves?

Kim Klaver (also know by her stage name Ms. Stud), is the Mastermind behind BananaMarketing.com (formerly MLM911.com) and is the author of all the books, tapes, tips and articles you will find on that site. Kim travels all over the US entertaining and motivating the troops, "New, New MLMers", with her radical tips and no hype techniques.

A Harvard, Stanford & MIT person, Kim became a network marketing industry superstar. Her live events are standing room only shows to entertain, delight and offer alternative techniques to find those elusive, 'right' ones for the business.

Kim's book, *If My Product's So Great How Come I Can't Sell It?* is truly a must read. You can have a free 23-page introduction and learn how to purchase the book at her website with our affiliate link, here: BananaMarketing.com. (It's down on the right.)

John Fogg wrote this about Kim and her book:

> *"Nothing I know of will make more of a profound and profitable difference, faster— in your business and for your people's business— than learning what Kim will teach you about presenting your products the "right" way to the "right" people. Once you know THAT, you will be more successful than you've ever been before— ever!" Kim's message is both Powerful and Immediately Profitable!"*

And be sure to check in with Kim's blog, here: KimKlaverBlogs.Bogspot.com