COMMUNICATION | PROSPECTING | SALES | SKILLS

Are we selling?

I envision a world where network marketers say with pride, "I sell because I believe in my company's products and opportunity."

by **Wendy Weiss**

1358 words | 6 pages

I looked up the word “sell” in the dictionary. This is what it said:

“To persuade (another) to recognize the worth or desirability of something.”

> ***This definition assumes value. It assumes that you recognize the value of whatever it is that you are selling. Inherent in the definition is the concept of worth or desirability.***

I also looked up “salesperson,” “saleswoman,” “salesman,” “sales clerk,” and my favorite, “sales talk.” The definition for “sales talk” was, “a line of reasoning or argument intended to persuade someone to buy something.”

Whenever I do a workshop or teleconference, I frequently ask participants, “What are the words that come to mind when you hear the word, ‘salesperson’?” Invariably, I hear back words like, “manipulative,” “dishonest,” “unethical,” and “sleazy.”

In the dictionary, however, when I looked up all of the above sales words, none of the definitions referenced “manipulative,” “dishonest,” “unethical,” “sleazy,” or anything particularly negative. The language in these definitions was actually quite neutral and several of them spoke of value.

Unfortunately, in our culture, the words “sales” or “sell” are viewed with disrespect. The words no longer simply mean to persuade someone of the value of what you are offering. Instead they carry the baggage of images of untrustworthiness and deviousness. This is a misconception that does an enormous disservice.

Far too often, network marketers buy into this stereotypical image of sales and see the activity of selling as negative and untrustworthy. They feel that if they are selling (or being perceived to be selling), they are doing something that is not quite right or that has the potential to be not quite right. It’s as if there is a line drawn someplace, but they don’t know where that line is or when they’ve stepped over it. It causes them to be cautious and careful and worry about how they are perceived. This anxiety puts them, in their own minds, at a disadvantage and on a lower level than their prospects and customers. This is a difficult place to be. And it stops many network marketers from taking action.

> ***The reality is- network marketing is selling. Network marketing is persuading people to buy your products and persuading people to join your team. It is persuading them of the value of your products and your opportunity.***

I looked up the word “persuade” in the dictionary. It said:

“1. to prevail on a person to do something, 2. to induce to believe; convince”

Again, nowhere in that definition do we find the words, “manipulative,” “dishonest,” “unethical,” “sleazy,” or anything particularly negative. As with the word, “sell,” the language is quite neutral.

The bottom line: Network marketing is persuading and convincing people to buy your products and persuading and convincing people to join your

team. That persuasion is based on value. If you cannot persuade and convince people to buy your products and/or to join your team, then you do not have a business.

If you believe that selling is “manipulative,” “dishonest,” “unethical,” and “sleazy,” this belief will not support your ability to build a business. It is very difficult to sell (persuade and convince) while believing that selling (persuading and convincing) is wrong. It is time for network marketers to change their beliefs about the words “selling” and “sales.”

> ***The truth is that most professional sales people are honest, ethical and believe in the value they have to offer. And most network marketers are honest, ethical and believe in the value of their products and their opportunity.***

And that is what network marketers should focus on.

Here are some questions that network marketers should ask themselves:

1. Do you believe in the value of your products?
2. Do your products provide a benefit to your customers?
3. Do you believe in the value of your opportunity?
4. Does your opportunity provide a benefit to your downline?
5. Are you doing the best you know how to ensure that your customers get what they need?
6. Are you doing the best you know how to ensure that your downline gets what they need?

If you have answered “yes” to the above questions, then you are proceeding with integrity. *If you are proceeding with integrity, then obviously you are not being “manipulative,” “dishonest,” “unethical,” and “sleazy.”* You can persuade, convince and sell with your head held high.

If you answered “no” to the questions above, then get out of the business. It’s not a fit for you. Find something else to do in which you can believe.

The ability to persuade and convince is not something that everyone is born with. Some people have that skill more naturally than others. Most people, however, no matter what their natural abilities or what level they have attained in a company, can improve their skills.

> ***The really good news is that selling is communication. Like any communication skill, selling skills can be learned and improved upon.***

Improving skills is a process. It’s not something that happens overnight, but instead is something that builds over time and with study and practice.

Because so many network marketers have negative beliefs about selling, it is difficult for them to gain the skills they need to persuade effectively. They are bombarded with the message that selling is a negative activity. They are also frequently told that they are not selling. If they are not selling, how do they persuade and convince? Because of these contradictions, the idea that there is skill involved or that they could learn and improve their persuasive abilities is foreign to many. They are paralyzed to take action and sell and they are unable to improve their skills. Even when they try to improve their persuasive skills, their belief of selling as being negative frequently gets in the way and keeps them from moving forward.

What’s the solution? Let’s reclaim the words “sell” and “sales.” Let’s redefine the words to mean, “to persuade and convince with integrity.”

> ***Let’s remember that value is inherent in the definition.***

Then network marketers could understand that as long as they proceed with integrity and as long as they believe in the value of what they are selling, then selling is an ethical and moral act. This would free so many of the network marketers who are paralyzed by not wanting to sell. It would now be possible for them to align their positive intent with their positive action. It would make it easier for them to learn the skills they need to be effective in the business.

Looking to the future, I envision a world where network marketers say with pride,

> ***"I sell because I believe in my company's products and opportunity."***

Wendy Weiss, sales trainer, sales coach and author is known as the "Queen of Cold Calling". She helps entrepreneurs, business owners and sales professionals gain confidence, reach more prospects, close more sales and make more money. She started her business 15 years ago, representing clients on the telephone and setting new business appointments. While Wendy no longer "dials for dollars" (except for her

own business), all of her workshops, seminars, products and individual sales coaching are based on practical, real-life, hands-on experience.

Wendy has trained thousands of sales professionals and entrepreneurs in the techniques that she developed. Her clients include Avon Products Inc., Arbonne International, Nikken and thousands of entrepreneurs throughout the country.

Wendy has been featured in *BusinessWeek, Entrepreneur Magazine, Selling Power, Target Marketing* and various other business and sales publications.

Wendy is the author of *Cold Calling College* and *Cold Calling for Women: Opening Doors & Closing Sales* (reviewed in this issue). To subscribe to Wendy's e-mail newsletter, *Opening Doors & Closing Sales,* which has an international readership and her columns are syndicated to 168 different print and Internet publications, use our affiliate link here:

WendyWeiss.com

You can contact Wendy directly at:

Weiss Communications
412 W. 25th Street, Suite 1-F
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 212-463-8212
Fax: 212-807-9875
Wendy@WendyWeiss.com