

Helping distributors help themselves

The Distributor Rights Association (DRA) is powered by its members to meet the overwhelming need for network marketers to have a powerful voice backing their rights as independent business owners

by **Cheryl Gonzalez**

1270 words | 5 pages

The Distributor Rights Association was formed 3 years ago FOR distributors and BY distributors because there is an overwhelming need to join forces to become a Powerful Voice. Every profession has an Association powered by its members and since so many of us are Professional Network Marketer's, it was time.

As Independent Business owners we have rights when we decide to choose a Company and start a business from home. Yet we all operate as if in a vacuum and as though we are the only one's to exist. There are approximately 14M Distributors and if we can put them all together it would mean some serious clout.

So how can the Association help you to help yourself?

DRA ADVOCATES FOR REAL PEOPLE AND THEIR BUSINESS.

MLM is a people business that is based on relationships, which are usually older than any contract signed with a company. One of the first training steps the majority of MLM Companies promotes is contacting a person's "warm market." The nature of the business involves networking and building relationships that are based on pre-dated relationships to joining a company.

***Lifetime value of a personal
relationship is worth far more***

than different product and services sales that a single Company can provide.

Affiliate programs on the Internet are taking millions of possible MLM distributors because they have no restrictions on what an Affiliate can sell to his people he has a personal relationship with.

DRA PLATFORMS FOR COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

The Charter of the DRA wants to create logical and well thought out standards for both MLM companies and distributors to work together. MLM Company policies and procedures that regulate MLM Distributor contracts have never had national or International Standards to refer to. This proves very confusing to new MLM companies and distributors.

Since MLM companies create the policies and procedures, no consideration has been given for appropriate procedures in treating MLM Distributors in the past. In addition, there is NO training or attention on the contractual relationship being entered into and any signing of documents is done without discussion.

THE DRA PROMOTES CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH MEDIATION

The DRA wants MLM Distributor forces to have established standards of communication, treatment, education or training concerning Conflict Resolution. Conflict resolution between MLM Distributors and Companies has been left to the legal system, which is not wise for either side in this day and age. Mediation is a lot cheaper and easier than Arbitration or Lawsuits where lawyers have lead us today. We need Mediators! We need Mediation within the contractual relationship because it has the goals of 1) Preserving the relationships, 2) resolving matters on good terms, 3) opens a creative solution to disputes, and 4) resolutions are quicker.

PROTECTION FROM CRIMINAL ELEMENTS – ILLEGAL BUSINESS OPPS AND PYRAMIDS

The Distributor Rights Association by charter is to fight MLM Pyramid Schemes that steal people from good distributors and MLM Companies. Federal and State Governments have failed to effect Federal or State

combined programs to stop the fraud and theft on the Internet thereby harming our membership by depriving them of their constitutional rights of fair and equal protection under the law of the United States. No effort has ever been made by any national MLM organization to expose the failings and harm that our elected officials fail to protect us from.

Estimates are that the good companies and distributors in the real MLM Industry lose 3 million people in the United States yearly because they join an illegal business opportunity scheme, a pyramid scheme or a Ponzi scheme. The DRA is dedicated to saving these people for good MLM distributors and companies by Educating the public.

MLM TAX ADVANTAGES UNDER ATTACK

NO MLM Distributor wants to lose 30% of their MLM earnings in withholding taxes that are tax deductible under law. **AND no MLM Companies want to start paying withholding.** In recent years, MLM Distributor Independent Contractor status has come under attack by State and Federal tax agencies. One area of extreme concern to the Distributor Rights Association is that when MLM companies restrict the activity of their MLM Distributors, they may get Distributors reclassified as employees. This could destroy the great tax benefits of MLM and the whole MLM Industry. Companies trying to control the time of Distributors is contrary to Independent Contractor status. The DRA sees this course of control by Companies as leading to the destruction of the MLM Industry.

CONFLICTS WITHIN THE MLM MARKET

With the birth of the World Wide Web (the Internet) the problems have been accelerated. MLM Distributors have become more educated and more exposed to other MLM Companies. A Distributor belonging to Company A finds that A doesn't provide low cost long distance (a necessary tool). The Distributor signs up with MLM Company B to (1) get long distance service (2) to sell it to reduce the cost of that service. They then find themselves terminated by MLM Company A for joining another MLM Company. Company A wants to control their time. Even becoming a wholesale buyer with an alternate Company has given rise to termination. Once again (see above) this makes MLM a target for taxing regulators.

DRA SUGGESTS "SOFTENING" OF THE MLM INDUSTRY

In the 1960's, 70's and throughout the 80's there was more of a cooperative atmosphere between MLM Companies and Distributors. The

MLM Distributors were the hens that laid the golden eggs; the MLM companies provided the nest. Everyone worked in a cooperative atmosphere. Now all of a sudden, there is a competitive atmosphere and companies have “lawyered up and don’t communicate!”

TO DISTRIBUTE RESEARCH SUPPORTING DISTRIBUTORS

The DRA is publishing books to disseminate legal and conflict resolution information to stabilize and support Company and Distributor efforts. In the last ten years the “terminations” of distributors have increased without warrant. Distribution of legal information relative to getting back to older paradigms of “partnerships” is now essential.

PROVIDING TRAINING FOR MLM COMPANY COMPLIANCE OFFICERS

Many MLM Companies have a person that handles conflicts with MLM Distributors. If there is any training, it generally is some sort of legal training. Sometimes better training would be in communication and investigative techniques with intent toward mediation rather than Arbitration or Lawsuits. The DRA wants Mediation training because most conflicts are based on misunderstandings.

DRA PUBLIC CAUSE: TO HELP MLM NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Because the DRA is the only INDEPENDENT group that represents guidelines, protection and structuring for MLM distributors we have found that foreign governments have come to us to give input on law and regulation in countries where MLM is an emerging industry. In addition national groups in the U.S. have asked us to help on state and national legislative issues that involve MLM issues like nutritional regulation. The DRA will support activity to promote MLM and reasonable regulation in any area that needs our help!

If you can relate to what your other fellow distributors feel are some real issues facing us, then you, too can help by joining the Distributor Rights Association, DRA, and help us spread the word among your colleagues. I look forward to Welcoming you Aboard!

Cheryl Gonzalez has been a proud MLM Distributor for 18 years. She currently serves as the President of the Distributor Rights Association. <http://www.mlm-dra.org> She has been an online networker since 1991 and has been published in Home Business Magazine, and Networking Times.