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"What Have You Done For Me Lately?"

Keeping Leadership in Perspective

It's easy to forget that without the magnetizing effect of the leadership, the team effort likely would never have coalesced in the first place.

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1220 words | 5 pages

If we were to elect a patron saint of network marketing from the annals of history, Archimedes would get my vote.

Archimedes, you may recall, is the man who yelled, *"Eureka!"* when he noticed that he had spilled water out of his tub and all over the bathroom floor, and thereby discovered the principle of forced-matrix spillover.

> ***However, that's not what makes him the patron saint of network marketers; what does so is his discovery of leverage.***

Now, Archimedes was not the first person to discover leverage, but he was the first person to articulate and clearly demonstrate it as a generalized principle. He did this publicly (and rather dramatically) by hooking up an elaborate series of levers and pulleys, pushing on a single lever - and causing a fleet of battleships to move in the water.

Impressive stuff, this leverage.

Over the drum roll leading to his float-the-boats trick, Archimedes was heard to exclaim, *"Give me a place to stand on, and I can move the world."* It is my favorite one-sentence ode to networking.

However, sometimes when I hear it as expressed by network marketers, it comes out sounding different. Sometimes it sounds more like this:

“From where I stand, I’d say the world owes me.”

You see, while leverage works smoothly and invariably in the worlds of geometry and physics, things are not always so in the all-too-fallible worlds of human thought and feeling. We get confused. Shakespeare wrote, *“The course of true love never did run smooth... ”* and had the bard but known the trials and tribulations of modern network marketing, he doubtless would have added, “-- and that’s also true of sponsoring, by the way.”

I was sitting once at dinner with my friend John Fogg when, halfway through the meal, he said in a very when-E.F.-Hutton-speaks voice:

> ***“Network marketing: it’s the most brilliant business system ever created. It would be perfect, except it has that one, fatal flaw . . .”-- everyone lean forward now-- “. . . it involves people.”***

When you start seeing the results of having gotten that little tiny “you-tell-three-who-tell-three” snowball rolling - that human snowball that can turn eventually into a happy avalanche of thousands of product consumers - it’s hard not to notice that you, by your actions, often by your perseverance in the face of challenging circumstance, were the origin of all that snowballing. That you indeed are the cause of two epic chains of events:

1) Because of you, thousands of people have been introduced to these wonderful products and this wonderful opportunity. In many cases, lives have been changed.

2) Because of you, the people who preceded you in this chain of events (that is, your upline) have been immeasurably enriched in many ways, including financially.

Bathed in the afterglow of these two realizations, it’s pretty easy to come to the conclusion that you are, in fact, pretty hot stuff. This readily gives rise to two corollary epiphanies:

1) Your downline owes you—*big time!*
2.) What's more, your upline owes you, too—*even bigger time!*

Let me set the record straight: no, they don't.

My friend Art Robbins taught a training session years ago that enumerated a series of twenty-two "laws of success" for network marketers. My favorites were this pair: a) don't depend on your upline; and b) don't depend on your downline. Art's observation is not an existential cry of despair over the futility of the human condition. It is a simple call to common sense: stop expecting your success to come from other people's efforts. Count on yourself. Take responsibility for your own success. Yes, this is the leverage business... but let's keep it in perspective.

We love our heroes—and sometimes we resent them, too. Writing in our "Letters to the Editor" column about the injustices that routinely parade themselves across network marketing's awards-ceremony stages, one reader offhandedly comments that the "vast majority [the 'little people'] are really the people who make the biggies big." He states this as though it were a self-evident truth of the business. But is it entirely true?

Sure, a network is a team effort; everyone counts.

But if that charismatic, driven, laser-focused individual upline personality had not come onto the scene and led the charge, would all those teeming "vast majority" have spontaneously come together to form a consistently, continuously purchasing network?

What does your experience tell you? Mine suggests the answer is, “Nope.”

It’s easy to resent the leaders (the “biggies”), to view them as having “gotten lucky” or been “in the right place at the right time”... to see them as the fortunate ones whose success is purely the measure of the team’s effort, not of their own. And it’s true, sometimes people in leadership positions forget where they came from and how they got there. Yet it’s also easy for the rest of us to forget that without the magnetizing effect of the leadership, the team effort likely would never have coalesced in the first place.

Moral:
If you start noticing yourself walking around and muttering, *“I am Archimedes, mighty man of mental muscle, mover of many battleships”* - take a sober look in the mirror. So you’re an eccentric mathematician who spills his bathwater. Talented, dedicated: yes. Master of the universe: no.

If, on the other hand, you start noticing yourself looking at your upline resentfully, saying, *“Aw, he’s always bragging about those boats he moved, but I was the guy that tied all those knots in all those pulleys; he never could have done it without me!”* - realize that until Archimedes came along, those boats were all just sitting there, dead in the water. And you have to admit: they actually did move.

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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

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