

Balancing the Books: A Commentary by Your Target

Contributed by The Scribbler

I don't normally do articles covering the selling aspects of Mary Kay, but from time to time, if I see selling guidance that makes me go, "Wowsers, that's a pretty non-stalky idea!" I think it's worth a mention to our active IBCs and directors. Training in Mary Kay sees more pass-around than a kindergarten game of hot potato, so what's one more source, right?

Today I'll treat you to three examples of booking techniques I think need to get excommunicated, and three examples I felt were reasonable and even pleasant (meaning they won't land you in the local police blotter under "Level Three Personal Space Offenders.") So without further ado, I present to you the Terrible Three:

Take a catalog or sale flyer to every birthday party. But why should you take catalogs to birthday parties when you can delegate that hopefully-income-producing activity to your kids? "Before [my daughter] Sidney goes to a slumber party, I say, "Here, take the (eye color) and the fragrance and spray it on everything. Then take orders." (NSD Kathy Helou, "Mary Kay Seeks more Youthful Look," Cincinnati Enquirer, 16 Sep 01.) Isn't it inspiring to know that Mary Kay's leaders know how to draw the line between work and play and are passing that work ethic down to their children?

I think most of us can agree that parties are meant for cutting loose and enjoying the company of others, not for recruit-and-star-order trolling. I've seen MLM diehards attempt to hawk their wares and/or opportunities at friendly festivities and all I could think was, "Why can't you just enjoy some cake and conversation, as opposed to prattling on about how you've got more time to devote to your business now that little Logan is in daycare?" I've gotta admit, the little sprout does seem happier; kid's probably thrilled to hear a woman say his name without the suffix, "Mommy's on the phone working her business; go watch Dinosaur Train" attached to it.

Host a show before or during a PTA meeting. You're treading into dangerous territory with this one, because 1. The parents are already cheesed that they're missing Hell's Kitchen reruns and 2. PTA meetings are about as thrilling as watching Ben Stein work a Rubik's Cube. Pink logic suggests one solution: extend things a few hours by hosting a beauty show right in the middle of the meeting! Husbands will undoubtedly be present, giving you the opportunity to shape your character by facing a whole pack of the brutes armed with only a DISC chart and a deck of "Damn right your wife's going to say 'yes' tonight; one-liners.

I think that happened once or twice on Fear Factor; this one Mary Kay lady got up in front of a bunch of husbands and said, "If you don't support your wife's Mary Kay business, she might as well consider herself a single mother!" I won't spoil the episode's ending for you, but I will say that ice packs were involved. Remember, if you get a black eye, it only means they don't have enough information!

Offer your business card with samples everywhere you go: home, office, picnics, parties, play-grounds, etc. I realize that bookings have to come from somewhere, however, I think it's inappropriate to get them from venues where the last thing on someone's mind is "Have you ever considered doing what I do?" If you're with your family at the playground, I don't think it's fair to your husband and children for you to slip into the shadows and play Mary Kay cougar to the playground's highly-recruitable deer population. Oh sure, your NSD might bark, "You must always be thinking about recruiting!" but you need to bark "Family second, career THIRD" right back at her. Of course she's going to howl like the Wolfman, sister - her commissions are directly affected by your business choices. Let her howl. Halloween's almost here and the practice will do her good.

Now that you have an idea of what Mary Kay business tactics to avoid, have a peek at these three terrific tactics, now with 100% less manipulation and little pink lies!

Treat hostesses to a special "Hostess Appreciation Tea." A thoughtful touch if you brew up a couple different pots of tea, offer platefuls of petit fours and little lemony tea cakes, fire up the "Bistro in Paris" CD, and offering a platter of warm moist towelettes for guests to freshen their fingers with. That's it. No selling previews, no mini-shows, and most of all, no recruiting. So help me, as a potential recruit, if you turn this "Tea" into a pitch for the Dream, you might as well throw your soul in that box over there by the door. No, the other one, silly - the one with the pitchfork-shaped tag that says, "Merry Christmas, Beezelbub" on it.

Include a business card or flyer with your bill payments. Because it's a simple way to advertise your business without Mary Kay Corporate's centurions setting fire to your thatched roof cottage! Don't forget to send a business card with the credit card payments! Some MK leaders teach their troops to send Visa the bare minimum each month, so just think of it as layering whoever's opening the envelope on the other end. For the next three-to-five years. And that's only if you don't charge anything else on it during that time. Paging Dr. Ramsey…David Ramsey, please report to the end of the month. Thank you.

Put an "Ask me about Mary Kay" button on your purse or coat. This is a nice, non-intrusive way to attract business. If people want to know about Mary Kay, they will ask, right? And please don't put the darned button on upside down in the hopes that someone will point it out so you can start the Half-Truth Train a chugga chuggin down the track! (I just want your opinion, I only want to share information with you, and I just need the practice all aboard!)

Keep it simple, sister: If someone ends up asking you about Mary Kay, all you have to do is present the truth of the Mary Kay opportunity in its entirety. Only if you're doing that can you claim that you are presenting all the facts needed for her to make an educated decision. If you can't (or won't) give your prospect that courtesy, you're a liar, plain and simple. Tell her what you're pulling down each year after taxes and all those pesky expenses. Tell her about chargebacks, car co-pays, inventory ins-and-outs, Corporate's numerous stipulations on "your" business, and why the phrase, "There are no quotas in Mary Kay" is grossly incorrect. Sure, it's a lot tougher to present the whole truth because it means you might lose a potential recruit (and that chunky star order that'll push you over the production bar), but didn't Mary Kay Ash once say, "Honesty is the cornerstone to all success?"

This week, make the choice to pursue honesty ‐ not just in your booking practices, but in all that you do.