



# Power Prospecting

*By Randy Gage*

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Well, it happened again today. I got a message from a friend I haven't heard from in a couple years who wants to catch up. So I call him back and what does he really want? To ask me if I want to join his new MLM program. (Sigh.)

You have to wonder...will these people ever learn?

I often ask these people if they don't remember that I am already in a network marketing company—the same one they were in and never did anything with. Inevitably they ask if I'm still in it.

"Um, yeah," I reply. "I made about \$150,000 last month, so I'm kind of satisfied with it."

Then they usually sheepishly ask if I would give them the names and phone numbers of my friends or family who could buy their products. (Double sigh.)

It's much like the calls I get at my office. They tell Lornette that they have an urgent consulting or training project, and must speak to me right away. I call them back, only to hear something like, "Hi, Randy, my name is so-and-so. We met a few years ago at the MLMIA convention. (I've never been to an MLMIA Convention.) I'm working with XYZ Company, and I just wanted to touch base with you and blah, blah, blah..."

And it's always the same. The "consulting project" or "business venture" they want me to evaluate actually means they want me to sign up as a distributor on their front level.

Others will often say they are returning my call, or are old friends of mine from school (like I'd have any!), or tell some other outright lie to get past Lornette. They're worse than the damned toner and light bulb salesmen. They just don't get it...

The people who make at least \$25,000 a month in network marketing on a consistent basis never do irritating stuff such as badger or mislead prospects. They don't use dishonest or duplicitous means to reach people. They don't Spam people over the Internet, and they're not cold calling some idiots on a business opportunity list. They don't alienate everyone they know, and they aren't chasing "skinny rabbits." They are talking to qualified prospects and getting high-quality appointments to make high-quality presentations.

Sorting, not selling...

Most people think network marketing is selling—and selling as getting the dumb prospect to buy something he doesn't need. So they devote their career to learning neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), closing strategies, and other manipulative techniques to coerce prospects into buying things they don't want or need. Anthony Robbins and a legion of little Tony wannabes have created an entire cottage industry teaching people to do this. Many MLMers have jumped into the fray, bringing these and other high-pressure sales techniques into network marketing.

These are the jackasses who call during your dinner hour, opening with lines like, "Hi, Jim, you don't know me—and it's just a shot in the dark—but I've heard you're a sharp individual, and I think you could qualify as an associate in a business I'm expanding." (Scream!)

A different approach...

I have no interest in trying to sell something to someone who doesn't want it, and I bet you don't either. Network marketing done right is based on a simple, yet quite profound philosophy:

We're looking for people who are looking.

Put into more specific terms this means our job is to identify qualified prospects, then put our marketing message in front of them. We give them enough information so they can make the right decision for them.

If that means they join your opportunity or buy your product, great. If it means they don't, that's great too. Your job is not to sell your opportunity or products to those who don't need or desire them. It is to find the people who may want what you have and give them enough information so they can decide if getting that opportunity from you is a fair exchange of value.

Network marketing is much more a sorting process than it is a selling process. It is this fundamental difference in philosophy that separates me from the multitudes of sales trainers, marketing gurus, and book authors out there. You don't need to manipulate or trick people into buying something they don't want or can't afford. There's no integrity in that.

One of the big challenges we face today is that so few MLM company executives understand the true nature of our business or the distinction between selling and marketing. So at every convention they bring in speakers to teach NLP, the three-foot rule, and hard closing techniques. If I have discovered anything in the business it is this:

The harder you close someone—the less he or she will duplicate.

I'm a horrible salesman and have no desire to be a better one. I do take great pride, however, in being a great marketer.

The essence of our business is presenting our marketing message in the best, most effective manner possible—to qualified prospects. We give them enough information to make the best decision for them.

It is not unheard of for a schoolteacher or housewife to earn more money than salespeople in network marketing. That's because they can be duplicated much easier than a salesperson.

Now you're probably thinking, "Wait a minute, who sells this stuff?"

Good question. Obviously with approximately US\$120 billion a year in revenue between all the MLM and direct selling companies, there are a lot of products going somewhere. But a lot of this is done without traditional methods of selling. It's done with duplication. **Network marketing is a business of conversational or viral marketing among friends and acquaintances.**

A sales type may be able to go out and retail a lot of product personally, but often he or she is not able to duplicate. That's because the non-sales types they approach fear selling and are often put off by the sales techniques employed on them. As a result, they do not get involved. But here's the reality...

Most sales in network marketing are accomplished without door-to-door or retail sales. Usually the products are conversationally marketed to friends and/or family members and used personally. And because of computer and delivery technologies, most network marketing companies will drop-ship orders anywhere. It's just not necessary to stockpile large inventories and be delivering products all over town. You may be using the products personally and sharing them with a few friends and neighbors, who order direct from the main company.

Sales skills, techniques, and methods are great for sales. But remember that **network marketing is really not so much a sales business as it is a business of teaching and training—a business of duplication.** Sales techniques—which work great on the used car lot—will often backfire in network marketing.

When sales types join your program and you have a system for them to follow, it actually prevents their sales skills from working against them. You and your people have greater security if you follow a system and a lot better shot at walk-away residual income.

Some network marketers appear to be succeeding based on their dogged determination, sales skills and personal strength. They make a lot of money, and they look successful to their group.

But if they took a month off, their income would immediately drop. If they took two months off, their check would be down 30 percent. If they took off three or four months, they wouldn't have a business to come back to.

When you build with a system, once you secure a line, you can walk away and it will continue to grow. You set the system in motion, and once it's in motion, it goes on without you. It's the consummate example of using the leveraging power of network marketing. But this works only when you follow the formula:

**Lead a large group of people—to consistently do a few simple actions—over a sustained period of time.**

And if those actions are sales techniques, they probably won't qualify, because only 10 percent of the population is made up of sales types.

So with all this in mind, let's look at what a solid prospecting pipeline looks like, so you can get the best duplication in your team.

One of the biggest mistakes beginners make is thinking that sponsoring is a one-shot, all-or-nothing event. Actually, it's a process that takes different amounts of time for different prospects. Your goal shouldn't be to sell or "close" anyone, but rather to simply give your prospects enough information so they can make the best decision for them.

Unlike sales, where often you are taught to manipulate or close people, in network marketing we are looking for people motivated enough to take action themselves. Some people are open to new concepts, while others are stuck with the preconceptions they've been taught. You're looking for the open-minded ones.

It's not so much about convincing people or changing their beliefs as much as it is about finding the people who are open to what you have. It is a sorting process, divided into stages, where the prospect indicates his or her level of interest and commitment at the appropriate level. You will meet people who believe all network marketing opportunities are Ponzi schemes. Why spend all your time trying to convince them otherwise when there are legions of people who are open to what you have?

The truth is, resistance to network marketing is crumbling as the profession continues to receive more and more credibility. Everyone knows someone who is successful in the business now, the mainstream media has covered the business extensively, and the old economic model has broken down. Network marketing is regarded in high esteem in a lot of places these days—as it should be. So just introduce people into the pipeline, get them exposed to your opportunity, and let them sort themselves out.