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Column by **Dany Szasz**

Our Image to the outside world

We all remember it: It was right at the beginning of our MLM career. We all dared to begin something new in our lives. We all chose an industry we knew very little about, one which however sounded ever so exciting. Many, who had perhaps failed on many levels in life previously, saw this industry as the last chance in getting their life financially back on track. An industry in which so many people were desperate, as if clutching to their last straw hoping for the opportunity of gaining a little success.

Regardless of our motives for starting: Lack of earlier success, shortage of money, lack of recognition or free time. We all remember that one special moment when we announced our decision to those around us.

How did that go for you? Can you still remember it?

This is how it played out for me: My parents had nothing against it. As they didn't know the networking business

model they were therefore neither for nor against it; however they seemed to tend more towards it. It got more difficult however with my friends and acquaintances. They said things like:

“Are you now also in one of those snowball systems?”, or: “That is just a sect, make sure you steer well clear of it” or: “They are con artists who simply want your money”, or: “You won't earn a cent there. The few that earn anything are at the top and the

rest are just naive people like yourself who make those at the very top even richer”, or: “You will become addicted to the products, a few people have even died from them.”

Ring any bells?

Come on, honestly: If we had said back then that we were going to work for Aldi, BWM or Commerzbank for 2,000 Euro a month, all of them would have thought it was great. Or

“Well, I’m not too sure it works myself – bu

can you imagine any of them saying things like:

“ALDI? Are you completely stupid? Listen to me, their product range contains foodstuffs that you will become addicted to and moreover it’s a sect!”, or: “BWM are you crazy? They will take you to the cleaners. You’ll work yourself to death over the next 40 years for 2,000 Euro a month and besides the management are the only people that get really rich!”, or: “What? You are working for Commerzbank? Listen, of course they won’t tell you this, but it’s a snowball system. And while you are laboriously working away behind the counter selling contracts, only those at the top are benefiting. They only want to keep you in good spirits with those office parties they have so you won’t quit and they can keep reeling in the money.”

Would they have said that? What do you think?

I don’t think so. We all know that it wouldn’t have happened like this. Everyone would have patted us on the back and said: “Fantastic, I’m delighted you found a good job. (one where you don’t earn more than me). Granted, the last bit would most definitely not have been uttered aloud. :o)

Why is this so? Why have we such a bad reputation in the world? Why is it that in people’s estimations we rank next to thieves and robbers?

This is the impression I often get at any rate. I know that some of you are perhaps saying: “Who cares! It’s always been like this and always will be. Let’s talk about something else.” But while we, as professionals, have in the meantime just got the knack of dealing with such



things, as we deal these types of things often enough, we still know how hard it is for somebody just starting out in networking. We also know that we aren’t exactly happy with things the way they are. Being used to something is not the same as being happy about it! It is a situation we have come to accept as a kind of necessary evil; something we just have to put up with. I still remember when I used to live on the Vierwaldstätter Lake when I was around 29 years old and had an income of almost 20,000 to 25,000 Euro a month by networking. I was lucky enough to live in such a beautiful penthouse apartment directly on the banks of the lake. Every-time somebody asked what profession I was in, I said: “Network Marketing” and I was met with the same strange glares. Despite the fact I could prove that it really works. Even more often it would get ridiculous: “Oh, a snowball system.” Many people were truly convinced that “it doesn’t work”. I reacted by saying things like: “Well, I’m not too sure it works myself – but my salary last month was 19,900 Euro. It’s been enough for me up ‘til now. How’s everything with you?”

Then a phase ensued where they stood there a moment, perplexed, and asked

me after a while if MLM REALLY does work that well? They said that I was the only one they had ever met where it seemed to have worked. J I was then so nice as to show them my salary statement and my cars. I didn’t do so because I thought they didn’t believe me, but because I wanted them to have a different example of a person from the world of network marketing. Not caring if they then wanted to have a go themselves or not.

I used to always ask myself if our image will remain the same forever? I also used to ask myself what would have to happen to radically change this image?

What would it be like if what we were doing was “socially acceptable”. If at parties for a change people said: “Hey have you seen the new commercial? This networking thing is really cool, I want in.” You then come up from behind and say: “Yep – I’ve been telling you for years that it’s cool. How you finally woken up?! I may have a place on my team for you.” That would be a pleasant change, wouldn’t it?

It annoys me some times how some companies (without naming names) sell by death in installments and despite this

...t my salary last month was 19,900 Euro.”



have a super image, an image that we in networking could only be jealous of. Isn't the world a strange place? I'm convinced that many of us have felt like this once: It gets on your nerves when fools that haven't a clue of anything, think they can make us look stupid just because we are involved in networking. As if we were some sort of criminals.

What are the reasons for this image? Have we done something wrong? If so, what? Have our companies done something wrong? Or have they maybe failed to do something? But, above all: How can we change it?

This does perhaps to some extent sound like a "question of guilt" – and these are questions that nobody enjoys answering. I've been in networking for 14 years and even back then this "image" was around; and it has only partly changed. However I believe that we have all, to some extent, contributed to this image. Be it by having made promises that were unrealistic or sensational advertisements, which suggest a lack of seriousness – for example: "Become a millionaire in 6 months" –, or by talking people to death or engaging in insensitive conversations with those

you know. We are destroying our image by enticing team partners from other companies with the promise that "everything is so easy" and that they will get rich in no time at all. After a while many people will end up throwing in the towel because they won't have become "millionaires" with any company. I wrote something about this recently. It is in fact these people who are running around out there telling people what a load of rubbish this whole thing is.

We would have truly loved it if our companies promoted or even spent some money on advertising to give the industry a helping hand. However, we also expect that our salaries will not be affected by this. We wish the companies we are working for will simply iron out the problems which we (at least partly) are responsible for.

But what can we do ourselves? How can we make sure our industry is presented in a better light?

However if the impossible were to happen and our industry's image were to have a better rep among the public, what good would it do if WE ourselves didn't change? It is something that we all need

to address. It doesn't just affect certain companies, a certain team or particular networkers. It affects each and every one of us and we can only change it if we change our mentality in relation to it. If we possess some degree of ethics then we have a good chance of changing things in the long run. I'm not saying that we need to be a second Mother Theresa. That would be too much to ask of anybody.

I'm not talking about impossibilities! I'm talking about doing our best in order to give people a realistic picture of his/her opportunities in networking and to avoid exaggerations. I'm talking about telling people how much work is really involved in hitting the big time in this industry and that neither you nor anyone else will simply be handed things. I'm talking about telling an interested party that their success depends upon their commitment – even BEFORE they sign up! I'm talking about inspiring people with our unbelievable possibilities, but not manipulating these possibilities with lies. I'm talking about being authentic – whether you are an "old hand" at it or a "rookie". It is perhaps a longer road to go down and perhaps even a greater challenge, however I believe: It's very doable!

WHAT DO YOU THINK? What are you ready to do or change in your future daily life to make this possible?

I will leave the answers, as always, up to you.

With this in mind: Here's to a positive image!

Yours,
Dany

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