

Lessons in Leadership

The Power of Edification

One of Pride - Based Leadership's most powerful tools is **EDIFICATION** — a **common concept in Network Marketing for over half of a century that remains unheard of in traditionally - structured organizations**. The result is that countless opportunities to enhance relationships and build business have been lost by virtually every company virtually every day for DECADES. Bottom line — if your staff doesn't know how to edify you and your organization properly, they're compromising your credibility and weakening relationships with your prospective and existing customers — as well as the media, your vendors, the business community, your shareholders and anyone else with whom you seek a beneficial relationship.

Edification is simply a way of giving credibility to your company and the individuals engaging in the business relationship. It is a process through which each party comes to regard the others with greater respect — and themselves with greater pride. Done properly, edification establishes the individuals and the organizations they represent as being credible, significant and valuable to one another.

What makes edification more powerful than typical methods for enhancing credibility?

The answer is in three parts: **WHAT is said, WHO is saying it, and WHEN it is being said.**

In fact, proper edification is one of the most effective tools for managing a prospect's level of productive tension.

Let's take a closer look:

WHAT is Said

Proper edification involves sharing two types of information: Factoids & Humanizes. Factoids are the important pieces of information your prospect should know about the person with whom they are talking. It includes names, titles, responsibilities, company represented, quantifiable accomplishments and so forth. Humanizes are interesting and relevant bits of personal information that help to showcase the nature — the human side — of the individual being edified.

Here is an example.

Let's say that you have decided to go on a few sales calls with each of your representatives. Obviously, your purpose in going is to enhance your company's relationship with its prospects — and as a result, secure their business. If your representatives behave like typical sales representatives, they will tell their prospects that, "My manager and I would like to stop by for a few minutes Tuesday afternoon. What time would be best for you?"

What's the problem? Being identified as a non-specific "Manager" does nothing to enhance your image or boost the importance of your visit. In fact, it can actually make the sales representatives appear ineffective in executing their job.

On the other hand, if your sales representatives had said "I'm very fortunate to have Richard Reynolds spending time with me next Tuesday. Mr. Reynolds is one of our company's top managers and a huge resource for helping me help my clients. I only have him for the afternoon and he's asked me to set up just a few appointments with key people."

This statement positions you in a much more favorable light — and increases the prospect's level of productive tension. As a result, the prospect is more likely to be receptive to the visit ... the visitors ... and the reason they're visiting.

The goal is to help your prospects realize that **THEY** are important because **IMPORTANT** people are electing to meet or speak with **THEM**.

WHO Should Say it

If you haven't already figured it out, **YOU** should never edify **YOURSELF**.

The core of what gives edification its power is that it is done by someone else on your behalf. If you were to edify yourself, you would come across as arrogant — turning your prospects off at the precise time you want to build rapport and trust. Expect a cold reception now and a closed door in the future if you try this route! If however, someone else edifies you, you appear important and gracious — and your prospects will open up and provide the information you need to help support your business relationship — and ultimately secure more business

When you arrive at your appointment, the representative should first introduce the prospect to you and **EDIFY the PROSPECT**. Then, the representative should introduce you to the prospect and **EDIFY YOU**.

The dialog would go something like this: "Mr. Reynolds, allow me to introduce Sharon Skyler. Ms. Skyler is the Director of International Operations and she has been sharing with me some of the challenges they're facing where we might be of help."

"Ms. Skyler, this is Richard Reynolds, our Regional Director of Sales. He has been with our company for over 20 years — and has been instrumental in helping me develop solutions for my clients. I wanted the two of you to have a chance to meet."

Once the representative has made these introductions and properly edified the individuals, **YOU** greet the prospect and **EDIFY the REPRESENTATIVE**.

"Ms. Skyler, it's a pleasure to meet you. I'm so glad you're working with Jim. He's been with us for six years now and is one of our most respected representatives — and he's shared some very impressive things with me about you and your company."

WHEN it is Said

As you can see, the edification process generally takes place when introductions are made of the individuals involved in a business interaction — so in a sales situation, it occurs in the earliest steps. Delaying it further would put everyone in an awkward position, which would actually RAISE relationship tension instead of REDUCE it — and that's the opposite of what you are attempting to do.

Also, while it may seem that edification could be performed prior to the start of the solutions presentation — to do so will most surely damage the sale for at least three reasons.

First, to delay edification that long into the process would mean that since you arrived, you've been sitting there some mysterious stranger unwittingly raising tension the whole while.

Second, the longer your presentation is, the lower your prospect's tension sinks — so edifying would lower tension further than desired.

But **Third** and most importantly, your prospect didn't really agree to get together to hear about YOU or your company anyway — they just want to solve THEIR problem — so introduce and edify everyone at the beginning and then get on with business.

Remember that initiating, building and maintaining mutually-beneficial business relationships is an important part of MANY of your employee's jobs throughout your organization — and that means they should ALL understand the importance of proper edification.

Edify everyone at the outset of any discussion, and you're setting the stage for success!