

Discussing “Scammy” Competitors

By: Bob Burg, Coauthor of the Go-Giver

“Speaking respectfully about your competitor to your prospect shows you are confident, you are successful, you are safe.”

While most respondents agreed and provided some excellent examples, one young business person, Michael, wrote with a challenging question:

“What if you know for a fact your competitor is a scammer; hurting people and ripping them off?”

Here is my reply:

Michael, while thankfully this is not often the case, sometimes it is. Thus, you've asked an excellent and very legitimate question. For the sake of this post, let's assume you have in fact accurately described this person. Well, it's tricky.

Let me run a scenario past you. For example, if your prospect has already talked to your scammer competitor (and they like him or her) how do you feel it will come across if you say, “oh, that person is a scam artist and if you're not careful they'll rip you off big-time!”

It will probably only cause them to feel stronger about the other person and suspicious about *you*. That's just one example. Even if they haven't ever spoken with the rip-off competitor and you volunteer that info about him or her, they *might* become suspicious of them, but most likely they'll have less trust for you, as well.

It's simply human nature to believe or at least suspect that someone who speaks ill of others is most likely doing so in order to advance their own personal agenda.

What You Can Do

In my opinion, the only thing you can really do in this case is to advise people to be sure and really get to know the people from whom they buy, and suggest they ask for a list of testimonial endorsements from satisfied customers (of course, you should always have plenty of those on-hand yourself).

That's simply good advice you can provide to any prospective customer of yours. After all, you're suggesting that the ultimate buying decision they make should be after researching their supplier. It doesn't imply that you are speaking disrespectfully of your competitor.

Typically, Michael, this is one of those situations that, unless you want to take on a personal campaign to expose the person, at risk to your own reputation, as well, you still can't go speaking disrespectfully about them. 99.9 percent of the time, you'll be the one who looks bad...not them.

The very best thing you can do is conduct *your* business with such high integrity and “knock-your-socks-off” service and value that you earn the bulk of the market share.