

The Primacy Effect & Your Initial Contact

Here is a great explanation of the primacy effect from David J. Lieberman's book "**Get Anyone to Do Anything:**"

"Regarding first impressions, there is something called the **primacy effect**: the process whereby our first impression of another person causes us to interpret his or her subsequent behavior in a manner consistent with the first impression. In English, this means our first impression of someone is so "crucial" because everything we see and hear afterwards gets filtered through our initial opinion. In effect, you create an image of the person and you see his subsequent behaviors through this image.

The importance of primacy is so important that even the order of information that we receive about somebody alters our impression of him. Take a look at these two lists of words:

A. **Cold person, industrious, critical, practical, and determined**

B. **Warm person, industrious, critical, practical, and determined**

In this study by Howard Kelley (1950), students who read the description of an upcoming guest lecturer on List A had a harsher perception of him than those who read from List B. As you can see, the words are identical except for the **first one**. Once we read the first word all of the other qualities are filtered through our initial perception of this person: that he is either **warm** or **cold**."

This exact same principle is brought closer to home in a network marketing context by this excerpt from Hubert Humphrey's (top earner from A.L. Williams) industry classic "**The Magic of Compound Recruiting:**"

"Approach every prospect about your marketing opportunity from the BEGINNING. There is a whole school of thought that says sell-sell-sell and only after you've clinched the sale do you talk to your customer about joining your business. There's no doubt that this works for a lot of people. But I personally think you risk losing a potentially good person by using this method.

I have some friends right now who live in Macon and they will **never** get in this business because I sold them insurance back in the early days when all I did was sell. Their total perception of me to this day is "Hubert the Insurance Salesman." It doesn't matter to them how much money I make now, what kind of car I drive, and the fact that I own an airplane from the money I earned. The OPPORTUNITY doesn't interest them because the very first impression they had of my job was selling insurance. And if it involves "life insurance sales" you can bet people don't want to be a part of it. Remember, by human nature, most people can't see themselves in "sales."

If I had gone in there and talked to them about a business of my own, and how much I was earning in extra income, and then showed them what I did to make that extra income, they would have looked at it in a whole different light. The way to sell the marketing opportunity simultaneously with the product is to always tell your own story. Tell the prospect how you got involved. This will show them how you were turned on by the product. Don't be so anxious to sell them product that all you do is pick up their check. **People blow it when all they talk about is the facts and figures of the product and nothing else.** They sound just like salesman. **It completely destroys the magic of the marketing opportunity."**

The application of the primacy effect to your Max business should be obvious at this point. Don't be perceived as just a "supplement salesperson." By doing so you dig yourself a hole that it is hard to come out of. Always remember that you should **(1)** not pre-judge who will or will not be interested in the business - - **you are not omnipotent**, and **(2)** as a rule "lead with the business" when approaching people or at the very least bring it up before finishing your initial conversation with them about Max.