
David M. Untied

June 21, 2006

Federal Trade Commission/Office of the Secretary, Room H-135
(Annex W)

Re: Business Opportunity Rule, R511993
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580

RE: Business Opportunity Rule, R511993

Dear Sir/Madam or to whom it may concern,

I am writing with respect to the proposed New Business Opportunity Rule R511993 and as it stands, if not modified, will be a significant impediment and burden to the network marketing industry. This new rule, as it is currently written represents a significant burden to the free market trade and it violates the Constitutional Right to earn a livelihood as well as other privacy laws.

7-DAY WAITING PERIOD

The proposed rule would require a de facto seven day waiting period to enroll new distributors. If this is applied, one would have to sell a person twice on the same business—even if the start-up fee is a mere \$19.95. While I support some of the disclosures with modification, I am strongly opposed to a seven-day waiting period because it is excessive burden to any company and distributor who would be required to document and follow-up on the process and an impediment to new business development.

PROPOSED DISCLOSURES AND OFFER MODIFICATIONS

(Earnings disclosure) The rule requires that any earnings claim statement made by the distributor or company to a prospect, whether written or oral, general or specific, be validated with a detailed “Earnings Claims Statement Required By Law.” Additionally, the distributor would be required to provide written substantiation of any earnings claim made upon request. I support the disclosure of an average earnings income statement because it is good business practices to establish realistic expectations. However, I oppose being forced to provide written substantiation because it is an excessive burden considering the investment of money to enter into the business is nominal.

(Previous litigation) The rule also calls for the release of any information regarding prior litigation and civil or criminal legal actions involving misrepresentation, or unfair or deceptive practices, even if you were found innocent. In our lawsuit-happy culture, anyone can be sued for anything almost with impunity. Irregardless of the outcome, you would have to disclose it and explain it to a new business associate which is patently unfair. I would only support the disclosure of previous litigation of companies, executives, affiliated companies and the like involving fraud and misrepresentation only if the party is found guilty. If the defendant is found not guilty, the opposing parties agreed to settle without admission of guilt or the case is still pending, then it should not be necessary to disclose this information. If the parties agreed to settle without admission of guilt, there usually is some public document available, particularly if it involves a government agency and further disclosure therefore would be unnecessary. If a case is pending case, it shouldn't be commented upon.

(References) Lastly, the rule *requires* the disclosure of a minimum of 10 purchasers closest to you. While it is a good practice to provide references of satisfied customers, this is a burden for small businesses and, as a requirement, is a violation of personal confidentiality of the 10 purchasers closest to the distributor. Purchasers may not want their

information put out there. This Rule could also lead to other future rules where local stores must disclose their customer base for example. In fact, this new law would require Citigroup, MCI and IBM to divulge their customer base because these companies do utilize network marketing. Unfortunately, requiring the release of this information will threaten the business relationship of the references who may be involved in other companies or businesses. In addition, **it subjects these references to cross-marketing by competitors.** I am recommending that contact information for purchasers be available upon request, that their availability be published on company materials, and that due to Internet-marketing, they not be limited to geographic proximity.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The network marketing industry is one of the few remaining opportunities for people to leverage their time and limited resources to earn additional income or to create a new career. Network Marketing Companies were at one time scoffed at by investors, now many network marketing companies are publicly traded on Wall Street including Herbalife, Nu Skin, Pre-Paid Legal Services, USANA and many, many more. Network marketing is being used by blue-chip corporations including Citigroup, MCI and IBM. Top business management leaders and *New York Times* best-selling authors Robert Kiyosaki, Paul Zane Pilsner, and Steve Covey have endorsed network marketing. Even Donald Trump publically announced that if he had it all over to do again he would purchase Network Marketing Companies.

The industry is growing in popularity and contributes to the US economy. This growth should be encouraged. There are well over 13 million Americans involved in this network marketing industry today. **Crucial thought must be given to the fact that in depressed areas, where un-employment is high, Network Marketing allows people to earn a livelihood beyond their geographical boundaries.** This allows

people to survive without relocating, which is nearly impossible for many people forcing people on public assistance. Lastly, the network marketing industry contributes to our growing economy. Sales of products and services through network marketing are estimated at more than \$29 billion in 2003.

I have been involved in the network marketing industry for many years. I have met some of the finest people and have been introduced to some of the best products. My home based business has helped me significantly, and allowed me to spend more time with my family while earning additional income.

I understand the role of the FTC mission “to stand up for America’s free market process and for its consumers, who benefit from competitive markets in which truthful information flows.” However, I believe this proposed new rule exceeds what is necessary, violates constitutional provisions, violates privacy laws, and must be significantly modified. We live in a free market economy where people have the responsibility of making informed decisions based on best information. A better approach would be to provide consumers with objective criteria when analyzing a business opportunity and let an informed market proceed. I am in support of the disclosures should be made during the sales process without the requirement of a seven-day waiting period, only if modified as suggested.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Business Opportunity Rule, R511993

David M. Untied
Paralegal

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