

Afraid of Being "Pushy?"

By Sue Rusch

Are you reluctant to ask? Many direct sellers share a common fear: reluctance to ask, for fear of being labeled "pushy." When I was in the business of doing home parties, I had an interesting interaction with one of my hostesses. What you learn from this experience may help you to shift your thinking. When you think differently, you will act differently.

At the conclusion of a show-closing phone call (wrapping up details and finalizing all orders) a hostess asked me a powerful question: "Sue, are you open to a few constructive remarks?" Sales at her show exceeded \$1,000, so her opinions were important to me. I quickly replayed her show in my mind, trying to guess at what she had to say. Even though I was bracing myself for her comments, I responded by saying "of course, there's always room for improvement!" She said, "I am disappointed that I didn't get more bookings. I think it's because of the way you approached bookings, and I know some of your other hostesses have felt the same way. We've talked about it. You told everyone about booking, and what they would earn for hostessing. You told of the fun of a party and how easy it is to be a hostess. But you never talked to people as individuals and told them how much you would really like to work with them. No one really got the impression you wanted them to book a show with you. No one felt personally invited."

I was surprised to hear this! After all, I consciously adopted a "hands-off" approach because I took pride in running my business in a professional manner, without being pushy. This hostess and I went on to talk about what it might look like if I asked each of her people. I asked her how she would feel if I had asked each guest, and she responded by saying "my sister-in-law came wanting to book a show, but you never asked her so she didn't book. It would help you and your hostesses if you let each guest know you'd like to work with them. If you seemed more interested in them as individuals, not just as part of a group." We had a healthy discussion about the limits of being "too pushy" with guests. We talked about ways to let guests know we really want to work with them. We discussed the warmth that comes with talking with people one-on-one instead of as a group. This powerful feedback was coming from a very successful hostess who felt disappointed that I didn't personally approach her guests. She didn't feel that it would have been "pushy" for me to talk to her guests. She would have appreciated it if I had asked. What, then, is the difference between asking and being pushy?

Here are some thoughts on "pushy":

"Pushy" says that we are going beyond our client's interest level. No one feels comfortable when a salesperson continues to sell long after the client has made it clear that there is no interest. Is it pushy to assess a client's interest level by asking a question? I don't think so. Furthermore, "pushy" implies that we are promoting something that is not of value. It implies that we benefit from the sale but our client does not. Most direct sellers are involved because of a passion for their products. Are you "pushing"? Of course not. What's the worst that could happen if you ask? Your client says "no." What 's the best that could happen? Your client says "yes" or "maybe." Think of what you could do with your business if you had more leads to work with. Think of all that you have to offer. Ask! Here are a few ways that you can ask:

- You had fun tonight, didn't you?
- Have you thought of hosting a show in your home?
- I can tell you love our products. Wouldn't it be fun to share them with your friends?
- Would you like to know more about hosting a show?
- I noticed that you are amazingly fired up about our products.
- Have you ever thought about doing what I do?

*The input from my \$1000 hostess was invaluable.
The key to sharing your enthusiasm for your company,
your products, and the career opportunity is this:
ASK!*