

Should The PGMoms Disclose They're "On The Take"?

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Should The P&G Moms Disclose They're "On The Take"?

By Kim Klaver

When a friend or co-worker tells you about a product she likes, as women do, and you then bought it too, how would you feel if you found out afterwards that she'd been paid to tell you?

Most private product talk among women is not commercial. Among men, either. Think TIVO, iPod, movies or restaurants – people refer those to each other because they love them, not because they get paid to do it.

If they did get compensated somehow, and you found out later, would you be as trusting of their next referral?

People telling each other about products they like, like TIVO, iPods, or other products has been referred to in the past as word of mouth advertising or word of mouth marketing.

The trust that the recommendation is not secretly motivated in anyway by compensation from a third party is what makes it a recommendation accepted at face value from people who know and trust each other. That's what makes it so valuable to product manufacturers and marketers. Some of them, like Apple, try to make products remarkable enough that people will WANT to tell others about them.

Others pay to manufacture that word of mouth. They use people who are members of a group, like Moms, or Teens, and pay them to do so-called word of mouth.

Often, these newly created word-of-mouthers don't tell the others that they're being compensated, and that's where the question arises: Would you feel manipulated if you gave your trust to a friend's recommendation, bought the product, and then later found out that the friend got paid to talk it up to you?

You no doubt know that marketers are not a very credible bunch these days. One of the most popular business books today is entitled, All Marketers are Liars (

<http://www.bananamarketing.com/library.html>

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So now, must we add "All Friends are Liars"?

Proctor & Gamble Co. has quietly come out with an advertising program, Vocalpoint, that is such a manufactured word of mouth campaign. It was developed to pitch its own and other companies' products. (

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06_22/b3986060.htm

)

P&G has recruited 600,000 women into their new advertising army over the past year or two. All moms. All on the take. Here's how the company is using them:

"By crafting product messages mothers will want to share, along with giving them samples, coupons, and a chance to share their own opinions with P&G, the Cincinnati consumer-product giant is using personal endorsements to cut through advertising clutter."

And, says the company,

"We know that the most powerful form of marketing is an advocacy message from a trusted friend," says Steve Knox, Vocalpoint's CEO (

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06_22/b3986060.htm

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Right. So let's exploit that, he says. They're not his friends to lose. They're yours.

Ask yourself one question and you will know if you like this: Would you give your trust as freely to the recommendations of someone you know, if you can't be sure up front if they're on the take or not, for whatever product they're talking about?

Aside from the possible loss of trust between friends,

"...Vocalpoint also raises a serious ethical issue: Should the person spreading the product message disclose her affiliation?"

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association Code of Ethics requires "connectors" like these moms to disclose who they work for. But P&G does not require these women to do that. And many don't.

Ethics and morals aside, ask yourself: Do you want to be able to trust a friend's recommendation to be motivated by nothing other than the interest she has in telling about something she thought you'd like to know about?

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If you found out later that she DID get paid, in money or free product, would you weigh her recommendation differently next time?

If you, like me, would take any future recommendations from this person with a giant grain of salt, then we all know this gal has lost something she once had – my freely given, no strings attached, trust. This is not a good thing.

The FTC is looking into it... (

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06_22/b3986060.htm

)

P.S. Telling your connection up front is always good policy. And that's of course why I suggest that when you are introducing your product to others, you let them know right up front that you are marketing it and why – because it's helped you, say – and now you've decided to make a business marketing it – so you can do good AND make some income. (That's all laid out in the If My Product's So Great, How Come I Can't Sell It? book and CD program.

<http://www.bananamarketing.com/3scriptscd.html>

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Kim Klaver is Harvard & Stanford educated. Her 20 years experience in network marketing have resulted in a popular blog,

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<http://BananaMarketing.com>

which features hundreds of stories, tips, books and

CD programs for those who want to learn the art of network marketing.

Shop and Save! Then Shop More For Free! But That's Not All You Get!

By Audrey King

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There is still time to shop and save this holiday season, you can shop online or offline and actually get back what you've spent on gifts at ClubMom!

You can shop for everyone and earn rewards for the money you spend with over 100 retailers in the ClubMom online mall! Indulge yourself or buy more gifts...free.

How does ClubMom do this?

By bringing together millions of moms, ClubMom can do more and get more for moms. And by golly, it's about time.

Best of all...membership is free!

You'll be happy while spending your hard-earned money as a ClubMom member and save with exclusive coupons, offers, and discounts that your family can truly use.

With ClubMom you can be a happy spender! All because America's best companies—including RadioShack, Bed Bath & Beyond®, Nine West, Toys "R" Us, and many others—recognize you as CEO of the household and want you to choose their products. Plus, get deals and discounts on the spot when you shop with select partners in ClubMoms' online mall.

But that's not all you get.

You can also, find tips & time-savers to help you cut through the clutter and juggle all of your different roles as a mom all year round. ClubMom's recipes, tools, and advice are created by members and experts, with some input from the companies that know moms best.

For the millions of mothers who want to make our world a better place for our children and our children's children, there is a way to voice your concerns as ClubMom even lets you have your say on the issues that matter most to you, in the "Mom Opinion & Research Center". Answer daily online poll questions and see how other moms respond. Plus, stay tuned for the first annual "Voice of Mom Report", a chance for moms to be heard—by other moms, policy-makers, and the nation.

Not to mention, you can meet other moms who share your interests in ClubMom's message boards. This gives you connections with other moms who live near you through ClubMom online and at local member events such as the "ClubMom Day of Indulgence".

So what are you waiting for? Become a member of ClubMom now and start shopping and saving!

<http://www.clubmomlinks.com/up.asp?4491>

Audrey King is a WAHM of four. She offers a unique website called 'Links For Moms' that brings the internet to busy moms with weekly updated articles and resources for every aspect of a moms life.

<http://www.linksformoms.com/>

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