

## **Brand You: Never Trash Your Competitors**

So many of the things that are important are pretty darn simple-minded truisms. And I've spent the last 35 years of my life stating and re-stating, often in very high volumes, the obvious.

And so, here goes another one: Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, regardless of the circumstance, regardless of your personal experience, never trash your competitors. Sell yourself. The competitors may be nasty, they may be brutal, they may have done horrible things to you. But when you walk in to be involved in that transaction, selling a training program, selling a jet engine, selling pharmaceuticals, it is, "What we have here is special and different than what other people have."

When you trash your competitor—to once again state another piece of the obvious—you're simply going down into the gutter and convicting yourself. And if it happens to be trashing a competitor who has a sizable piece of the business of the person you're talking to, they may have worked with a fabulous person in that organization or their reputation may be tied to that other company, the competitor company. So, it may be simple, it may be obvious.

I actually learned this from IBM many, many years ago, where if you ever badmouthed a competitor, and I don't care whether you were the number one salesperson in the district or the region, you were out of there on the next train or the next bus. It was just about as simple as that. And when IBM started breaking those rules, incidentally, which they did when the arrogance got a hold of them, it was part of their near-demise before the comeback of recent times.

Never ever, ever, no matter what your personal circumstance, memory, whatever, never badmouth a competitor. Sell yourself. And if you ain't got nothing to sell, then just stay away.

