



IT HAPPENED NEARLY A DECADE AGO . . .

I personally created "StandBy." My vision:

- 1) Some newly organized contractors/tradesmen couldn't afford to exhibit. But, if they could, we might be able to create valued, repeat exhibitors. We merely needed to introduce them to our *splendiferous* and *magnifioshis* events known as the The Home ShowS.
- 2) To cater to these new exhibitors, we would make an "introductory offer" – a lower price.
- 3) We'll call it "*StandBy*" (like airlines do).

The rules: (– *there's always rules – even mad scientist's have rules*)

- 1) Since we don't want to create an expectation that this is an on-going offer, we'll limit *StandBy* to a single show. (No *StandBy* to repeat exhibitors. After all, it's an "introductory offer.")
- 2) *StandBy* exhibitors wouldn't receive prime space. They'll fill-in holes, if any, and we'll assign space at the last minute – where we need them.
- 3) If they're so poor that they might fall off the grid before the show (who knows?), we'll need a deposit. If they can't pay, well, a discount won't save 'em.

VISION . . . OR NIGHTMARE

I thought it was a brilliant way to compete in the ever-competitive home show industry. A lot of producers were giving discounts to anyone who asked. But *StandBy* was logical. It made sense. It would create new life, and infuse fresh blood, bringing needed revenue because even discounted space is better than dead space. "And after exhibiting, they'll become repeat exhibitors – a good thing."

Right? . . . Wrong.

From the instant of creation to the moment of implementation, the whole concept became bastardized. A monster was born.

THE MONSTER WITHIN

When company policy is over-ridden by an employee, the employee is running the business, not the Owner. ~ *The inmates have taken over the asylum.*

First, the Show Manager created a list of everybody he couldn't sell, regardless of why, or whether they exhibited in other shows (defeating the "introductory" part of *introductory offer*). Then, the list grew. Anybody getting a discount at any other show was added to "*StandBy*." After that, he added *friends & references*.*

* There's more than one reason to maintain an arms' length relationship with "friends" (customers) – the LESS they spend, the MORE friends come crawling out of the woodwork to bask in the beneficence of what was *once* a thriving, business. Their stock in trade? "*Use me as a reference.*" References like that, no one needs.



Next, those on *StandBy* stalled payment ... in fact, NO ONE EVER PAID THE DEPOSIT !
Finally, when *StandBy* exhibitors got into the show – at the last minute – they asked for and received booths anywhere they wanted them, like the front row. After that, they'd brag to other exhibitors in the about their *special* deal. It led to resentment and demands for even more discounts from loyal / repeat exhibitors. And why not! After all, they are LOYAL / REPEAT customers. You guessed it: they got *StandBy* discounts too.

StandBy was the mother of all monsters! It was a fiscal and management nightmare that nearly destroyed The Home ShowS, were it not for personal assets leveraged to cover losses.



KILL THE BEAST

What to do? ... what to do??? Kill *StandBy* and destroy the beast! HALT discounting IMMEDIATELY! It's all semantics, anyhow: "*StandBy* / Discount / Negotiated Deals."

What's the difference?

Let time heal the wounds (2 years of damage done.) Maybe we'll recover . . . maybe.

Discounting is toxic. It's THE slippery slope that nearly destroyed The Home ShowS business – over 12 years of of successful productions at the time – until we offered *StandBy*.

The lowest denominator of marketing is "price competition." *StandBy* by any other name was a "negotiated deals." Some got the *StandBy* price, while others didn't. Price was set to what the *deal-maker* was willing to pay – no rhyme nor reason. One window company was on *StandBy* – 30' away from another who paid full price. Why would a mortgage broker get a third off, and another doesn't? How can a pitchman, selling pots and pans, take four booths and pay for one? – amazing how many **friends and references you can buy**. The monster was not only loose, it was eating us alive.

Today, I see the *Other Guys* offering *StandBy* and discounts to buy and keep exhibitors. Is it worth it? Not to us. And it's not worth it to all those who pay full price.

What's sweet to one cannot be foul to another.

We offer reasonable discounts: *Early-Bird Discounts* to reward those who plan ahead (reducing late sign-ups); *Fall/Spring Combos* for year 'round exhibitors; *Multi-Booth* expanding presence at the show; and, *Multi-Shows* for those who are growing into new markets. Add these together and you've got the best deal going ... and, an honest one. These offers save time and money on our end so why not share that as "discounts" with you?!

When we offer a discount, EVERYBODY knows about it and EVERYBODY has the right to claim it. No more *StandBy* – no last-minute deals – no *friends & references* – no negotiating.

Discounting is evil, people. **EVIL!** That's my opinion.

Cautiously Yours, Lil' Johnny

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SOURCE: www.ChicagoHomeShow.Net/LilJ



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. . . & no more 'science projects.'