

I Also Refuse to Participate in a Recession

By Trey McAlister

I was at the Referral Institute conference in Arizona several weeks ago and had the opportunity to chat with Dr. Ivan Misner (Founder of BNI-Business Network International and Entrepreneur magazine's *Networking Guru*). We were talking about the economic atmosphere and the conversation got around to the "R" word floating around and he surprised me (pleasantly) by emphatically stating that "he refused to participate."

I replied, "What?"

"I have been in business through several 'recessions' and I have found that with the right approach things actually can work out good for people. I do attribute this approach to a conversation I had back in the 90's during another 'recession.' I was at a business mixer in Connecticut meeting many local business professionals. It seemed that everyone was feeling the crunch from the slow economy. Throughout the entire event, the favorite topic of discussion was how bad the economy was and how things were getting worse. The whole affair was depressing because nearly everyone was obsessed with the problems of the economy and its impact on his or her business.

I was introduced to one of the many real estate agents attending. Given the decrease in property values in the state, I was leery of asking this gentleman the standard 'How's business?' question. He shared with me, though, that he was having a great year. Naturally, I was surprised and asked, 'You did say you were in real estate, didn't you?'

'Yes.'

'We are in Connecticut, aren't we?'

'Yes,' he said with a slight grin.

'And you're having a good year?' I asked.

'I'm actually having my best year ever!' he said.

'Your best year!' I said in amazement.

After thinking for a moment I asked him, 'Is this your first year in real estate?' 'No,' he replied with a laugh. 'I've been in real estate for almost 10 years.' I asked him how he was doing so well, given the conditions of the economy and the stiff competition. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a badge that said:

I Absolutely Refuse to Participate in a Recession!

'That's your secret?' I asked. 'You refuse to participate in the recession, so business is booming?' 'That's correct,' he said. 'While most of my competitors are crying the blues about how bad business is, I'm out drumming up a ton of business networking with my contacts and generating referrals.'"

Considering what he said, I looked around the room and listened in on people for a while as they complained about how bad business was. While nearly all were commiserating with one another, I concluded that very few were actually networking and working on seeking new business. As a result, very little business was actually being accomplished. If you want to do well in business, you must understand that it does absolutely no good to complain to people about tough times. When you complain about how bad business is, half the people you tell don't care and the other half are glad you're worse off than they are."

I have to say, after this conversation I took a different look at things. I have always had a positive attitude, but this just reinforced my belief that "our attitudes dramatically impact our altitude" (Dale Carnegie). I have always coached and trained that we need to continue to develop our networks and focus at least a portion of our efforts on generating referrals for others (so it will come back to us.) In times like now, it is even more crucial to keep that "attractive" attitude and work even more to help others so that things continue to flow back to us. While many are out there bemoaning the "R" word, let's turn tail and head the other direction and "refuse to participate" and instead enjoy great success and prosperity.