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Details:

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs (SC-LEUA)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- [Committee Reports](#) ... **CR**
- [Executive Sessions](#) ... **ES**
- [Public Hearings](#) ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- [Appointments](#) ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- [Clearinghouse Rules](#) ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- [Hearing Records](#) ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- [Miscellaneous](#) ... **Misc**

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Shut sales crews out of Wisconsin

Wisconsin State Journal editorial
March 5, 2007

When Tracie Onaya Jones was last seen alive, she was part of a 10-member crew selling magazine subscriptions in North Little Rock, Ark.

That was in late November. A few days later the body of the 19-year-old from Albany, Ore., was found near Memphis.

Jones' death, among the latest in a long list of horror stories involving door-to-door sales crews, illustrates why Wisconsin families should beware.

This spring will be prime season for traveling sales businesses to come to Wisconsin in search of teenagers and college-age men and women to recruit into their crews.

Don't listen to them.

Typically, recruiters promise travel, cash and scholarships. But all too often the young people lured into traveling sales crews end up broke, stranded or even worse - the victims of accident or assault.

Wisconsin has firsthand experience. In 1999 seven young members of a sales crew died when the van in which they were riding rolled over on Interstate 90 near Janesville.

The van was driven by a 20-year-old serial traffic offender whose license was suspended. The company employing the crew was cited by state officials for nearly 100 violations of employment and wage laws.

Members of sales crews are not the only victims of the industry. With alarming frequency, crew members victimize customers. In the summer of 2005 a woman in Dunn County Wisconsin was brutally beaten and sexually assaulted by a man who came to her door to sell magazine subscriptions.

In August, Brandon Green of Minnesota was convicted of the crime.

Attempts to improve regulation of the traveling sales industry have been made at the federal and state levels with no success. A regulatory measure passed from the state Senate in 2005 but died in the Assembly. In Congress, bills from Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., and Rep. Tom Petri, R-Wis., went nowhere.

Improved regulation is needed. But the most effective way to protect against sales crew abuses is to deprive the industry of the two things it

SB 80
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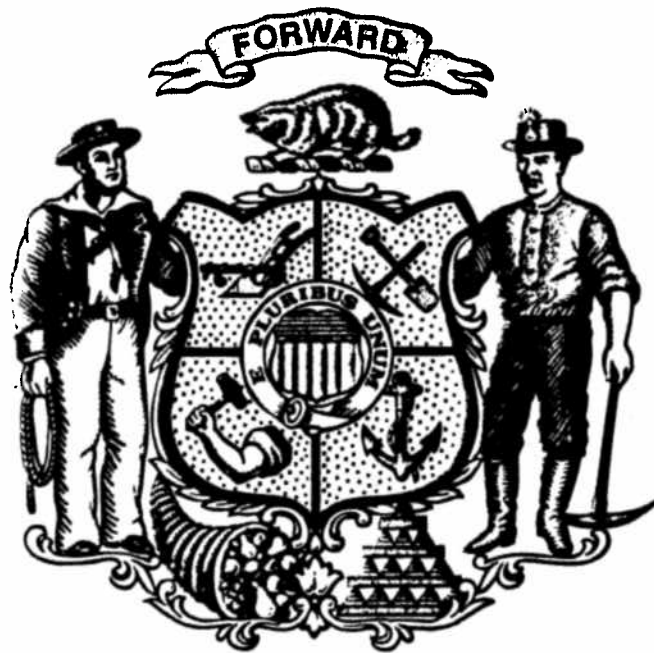
needs: employees and customers.

Not only should Wisconsin families reject the recruiting pitches of traveling sales crews but households also should keep their doors shut to traveling salespeople, unless they represent a local, identifiable group.

Wisconsin should make it clear that traveling sales crews are not welcome in this state. We are not buying what they are selling.

[Return to story](#)

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Bill would regulate traveling sales crews

Measure named for teen killed in 1999 van crash

By STACY FORSTER
sforster@journalsentinel.com

Posted: April 10, 2007

Madison - Phil Ellenbecker's daughter was part of a traveling sales crew when she died in a Janesville van crash in 1999, and he says she's in his heart every day.

And he's put his heart into passing legislation to regulate the traveling sales crew industry.

Ellenbecker, of Verona, was among those who testified Tuesday before the Senate's Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs in support of "Malinda's Law." The bill is named after his daughter, Malinda Turvey, who was 18 when she was among the seven magazine salespeople who died in the crash.

"There's nothing good about them," Ellenbecker said of traveling sales crews. With the bill, "we kill two birds with one stone, we keep the bad guys out and we regulate the industry."

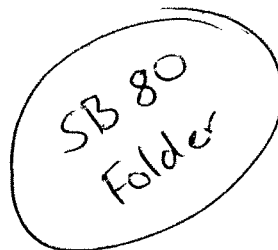
The measure drew objections from those who have worked for Southwestern Company, based in Nashville, Tenn., which provides training and sales opportunities for college students who want to work as independent contractors for the summer.

Sen. Spencer Coggs (D-Milwaukee), the committee chairman, said Ellenbecker's efforts are driving sentiment for the bill.

"He wants some vindication for the death of his daughter, and this bill is a representation of that," Coggs said. He said he expects the bill will pass his committee.

Under the bill, traveling sales crews would be defined as two or more people who travel together and live away from their permanent residences while selling.

Companies looking to employ such groups of sellers would need to register and be certified by the state Department of Workforce Development. The bill would also set some workplace standards for the industry, such as requiring semi-monthly paychecks and putting limits on work hours.



"It will allow us to know who exactly is selling here, and who is recruiting here," said bill author Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton). "They should know exactly what they're getting into, and employers should take responsibility."

Some have concerns

Rep. Terry Moulton (R-Chippewa Falls), whose committee will handle the Assembly version of the bill, said any legislation would have to strike the right balance.

"I'm concerned that it seems to create a huge bureaucratic jungle that might make it difficult for some reputable companies to sell door to door," Moulton said.

A similar bill passed the Senate last session, but got stuck in an Assembly committee because of objections from Southwestern.

The committee didn't hear from any representatives of the companies that Erpenbach and Ellenbecker said were being targeted by the bill. A legitimate company such as Southwestern should be able to meet the requirements, Erpenbach said.

Katie Barmann, a district sales manager for Southwestern, told the committee the way the company recruits and manages its student workers is far different from what the traveling sales crews do. For example, she said, parents must sign a form saying the student has permission to participate in the program, and the sellers must register in municipalities where they plan to go door to door.

About two dozen current and former independent contractors for Southwestern appeared in opposition to the bill, saying they didn't mind working 80 hours a week while running their own businesses.

Jessie Satran, a 21-year-old junior from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, said the law could require Southwestern to lose one of its most attractive points - allowing students to run their own businesses as independent contractors.

"Not having that be a part of the program would turn a lot of those people away, like me," Satran said.

But Kristen Rae Spicer, a student at the University of Georgia, painted a different picture. She came from Atlanta to tell the committee that during her summer of work for Southwestern in 2005, she was brainwashed, left physically exhausted and raped by a co-worker.

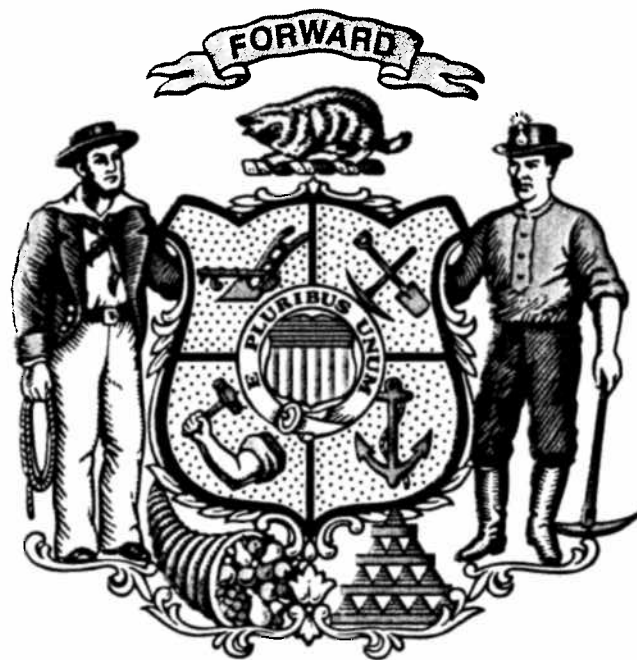
"It's unhealthy, it's breaking labor laws," she said.

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From the April 11, 2007 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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Traveling sales crew safeguards urged

Bill would regulate working conditions for traveling sales crews

By Ryan J. Foley
Associated Press
April 11, 2007

Recalling a 1999 crash that killed seven in Wisconsin, some lawmakers pushed Tuesday for regulations on traveling sales crews that they say exploit young people with poor working conditions.

But opponents of the bill said the regulations would be the toughest in the country, drive legitimate sales businesses out of Wisconsin and rob college students of meaningful summer work.

Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, said his bill was meant to improve working conditions for employees and protect consumers targeted by roving crews who travel from town to town selling everything from knives to encyclopedias.

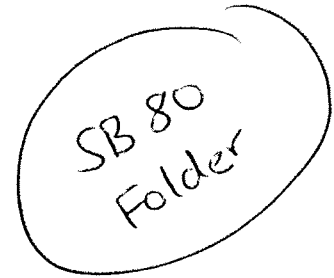
One student flew to Wisconsin to describe the terrible experience she had working for Southwestern Co. selling books door-to-door in summer 2005 after her freshman year at the University of Georgia.

Kristen Rae Spicer, 21, said she worked more than 80 hours per week, totaled her car and was raped by a co-worker. She said she did not make any money and suffered anguish from the rape and what she called company "brainwashing."

"They say the job is not for everyone," she said. "And I'll just say it's not for anyone because it's unhealthy, because it breaks labor laws, because it's breaking the rights of students to know what the job requirements are."

But other students said they had great experiences working for the company, and three University of Wisconsin campus officials wrote letters to support it.

The plan is the latest attempt to regulate the industry after a March 1999 crash near Janesville killed seven members of a traveling magazine sales crew and injured five.



The speeding van filled with 14 people crashed after the unlicensed driver tried to switch seats with another passenger after spotting a police car. The father of one victim, Phil Ellenbecker of Verona, has pushed lawmakers to adopt regulations designed to prevent another tragedy.

Critics say the companies mislead young people into signing up for work outside of their home states, pay them little and force them to work more than 80 hours a week while living in cramped spaces.

Erpenbach's bill passed in the Senate last year but died in the Assembly after Nashville, Tenn.-based Southwestern said it would harm its business.

The bill would require the companies to hire their sales crews as employees rather than independent contractors who aren't subject to labor laws.

Companies that employ crews, defined as two or more people, would have to give the state information on its owners, its sales activities and the vehicles it will use.

The companies would have to post a \$10,000 bond and tell potential workers in writing where they will work and what they will be paid.

Dean Heyl, a lobbyist for the Direct Selling Association, said the bill would unfairly target independent contractors who work for its members, which include Southwestern, Mary Kay and Pampered Chef, and do little to stop abuses by "bad actors."

He said many workers like being independent contractors because they can choose how they sell products and run the businesses themselves.

Katie Barmann, who worked for Southwestern while a UW-Madison student and is now its recruiter in Wisconsin, said the company plans to employ about 90 students from the state this summer. The bill would take away their ability to run their own businesses and instead give them less meaningful "sales jobs," she said.

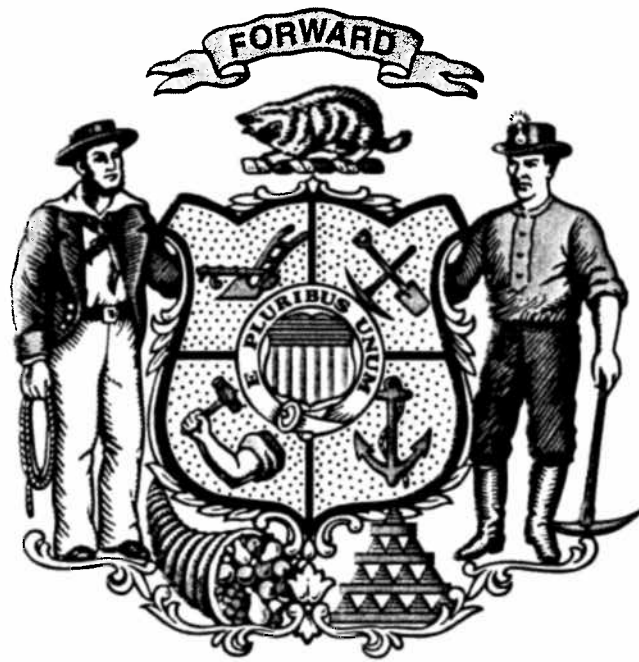
Southwestern has proposed amending the bill to exempt it from the regulations. A message left after business hours at Southwestern Co. was not immediately returned.

Erpenbach urged lawmakers not to change the bill, saying the amendment would create a loophole that would render it meaningless.

State agencies who enforce consumer protection and labor laws also called for quick action without amendment.

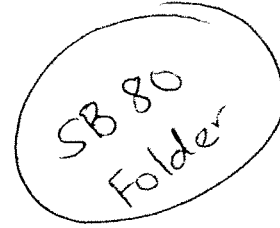
"The bottom line is that this industry must be curtailed and it must be cleaned up," said JoAnna Richard, deputy secretary of the Department of Workforce Development.

[Return to story](#)



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Bill would regulate traveling sales crews

Ryan J. Foley, Associated Press Writer

April 12, 2007

Madison - Recalling a 1999 crash that killed seven in Wisconsin, some lawmakers pushed Tuesday for regulations on traveling sales crews that they say exploit young people with poor working conditions. But opponents of the bill said the regulations would be the toughest in the country, drive legitimate sales businesses out of Wisconsin and rob college students of meaningful summer work. Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, said his bill was meant to improve working conditions for employees and protect consumers targeted by roving crews who travel from town to town selling everything from knives to encyclopedias. One student flew to Wisconsin to describe the terrible experience she had working for Southwestern Co. selling books door-to-door in summer 2005 after her freshman year at the University of Georgia. Kristen Rae Spicer, 21, said she worked more than 80 hours per week, totaled her car and was raped by a co-worker. She said she did not make any money and suffered anguish from the rape and what she called company "brainwashing." "They say the job is not for everyone," she said. "And I'll just say it's not for anyone because it's unhealthy, because it breaks labor laws, because it's breaking the rights of students to know what the job requirements are." But other students said they had great experiences working for the company, and three University of Wisconsin campus officials wrote letters to support it. The plan is the latest attempt to regulate the industry after a March 1999 crash near Janesville killed seven members of a traveling magazine sales crew and injured five. The speeding van filled with 14 people crashed after the unlicensed driver tried to switch seats with another passenger after spotting a police car. The father of one victim, Phil Ellenbecker of Verona, has pushed lawmakers to adopt regulations designed to prevent another tragedy. Critics say the companies mislead young people into signing up for work outside of their home states, pay them little and force them to work more than 80 hours a week while living in cramped spaces.

Independent contractors issue

Erpenbach's bill passed in the Senate last year but died in the Assembly after Nashville, Tenn.-based Southwestern said it would harm its business. The bill would require the companies to hire their sales crews as employees rather than independent contractors who aren't subject to labor laws. Companies that employ crews, defined as two or more people, would have to give the state information on its owners, its sales activities and the vehicles it will use. The companies would have to post a \$10,000 bond and tell potential workers in writing where they will work and what they will be paid. Dean Heyl, a lobbyist for the Direct Selling Association, said the bill would unfairly target independent contractors who work for its members, which include Southwestern, Mary Kay and Pampered Chef, and do little to stop abuses by "bad actors." He said many workers like being independent contractors because they can choose how they sell products and run the businesses themselves. Katie Barmann, who worked for Southwestern while a UW-Madison student and is now its recruiter in Wisconsin, said the company plans to employ about 90 students from the state this summer. The bill would take away their ability to run their own businesses and instead give them less meaningful "sales jobs," she said. Southwestern has proposed amending the bill to exempt it from the regulations. Erpenbach urged lawmakers not to change the bill, saying the amendment would create a loophole that would render it meaningless. State agencies who enforce consumer protection and labor laws also called for quick action without amendment. "The bottom line is that this industry must be curtailed, and it must be cleaned up," said JoAnna Richard, deputy secretary of the Department of Workforce Development.

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From Wisch's office

Senate Bill 80 regulates companies who conduct traveling sales.

The bill would make the company accountable for Workers Comp issues, Unemployment issues, and would require the company to register with DWD and eliminates the idea of "independent contractors."

Wisconsin AFL-CIO is registered in FAVOR of the bill.

Meeting with Pete Christianson (lobbyist for Southwestern) and Katie Barmann (from Southwestern)

Southwestern Company is a company based out of Nashville, TN that recruits college aged students to become independent contractors and sell educational materials. The company provides a week long training in Nashville and then the students travel (by themselves) to a place dictated by Southwestern (students from Wisconsin do not sell in Wisconsin).

The employees then set up their own business, find their own place to live and must have their own form of transportation (different than other traveling sales companies that provide a 15 passenger van and have the people go together).

Southwestern feels that SB 80 wouldn't allow them to employ Wisconsin students because it would make them change their "business model" – ie it would make them have to be accountable for the people that they employ.

The employee obtains a sellers permit, manages their inventory and money and works in their own area for the summer. They use their own vehicle and Southwest doesn't ensure that the people driving those vehicles have valid driver's licenses or insurance but are told to not even bother applying if they don't.

It is important to note that although Southwest does recruit on college campuses, they employ a small number of students (average is between 40 and 60 from Wisconsin)

Southwestern is looking for an exemption from this bill and worked with Rep. VanRoy's office last session to kill it. When asked how they would change it they had no answer.

DWD – Discussion with Joanna Richard

There has been a recent federal worker's comp court case that has brought problems with Southwestern to light. Apparently Southwestern doesn't operate much in Wisconsin, they just recruit here.

However, if SB 80 became law, Southwestern would have to follow the Worker's Comp laws of Wisconsin for its Wisconsin students, regardless of where they are working, and Unemployment for those people working here in Wisconsin.

DWD would prefer that the bill be as written.

DATCP – Discussion with Jim Rabbit

DATCP's main concern is worker safety and for that reason that don't have as big a stake as DWD does in the bill. Jim is not sure of how to create an exemption that will not create a major loophole for other businesses.

Sometime in the early 90's Southwestern was banned from all UW campuses for about 5 years because students were coming back and complaining that they didn't make any money after expenses. Because of this, Southwestern now has to release a list of all UW students it "employs" to DATCP each year so that the department can be in contact with them.

Amending SB 80

The amendment last session that was created by VanRoy's office virtually gutted the bill.

Pete Christianson said that he was going to work with Russ Whitesel from Leg Council to work on an amendment that would create an exemption for Southwestern. Russ Whitesel never was contacted.

Pete may have contacted Sen. Grothman to put together an amendment that will look similar to the VanRoy one last session.



TALKING POINTS ON "MALINDA'S ACT" – TRAVELING SALES CREW REGULATION



- The tragic traveling sales crew van crash on March 25, 1999 in Janesville, which killed 7 people and severely injured 5 others, brought the need to regulate this industry to my attention.
- This bill is named after Malinda Turvey, one of the victims of the Janesville van crash. Her father, Phil Ellenbecker, has worked tirelessly on this legislation with me.
- There are few regulations on the traveling sales crew industry and those regulations that do exist are nearly impossible to enforce.
- Passage of this bill will ensure that the abuse of traveling sales crew employees and customers comes to an end or is curtailed significantly.
- I have worked closely with DWD, DOJ and DATCP to ensure they have the tools necessary to enforce regulations on the traveling sales crew industry.
- After the creation of the No Call list, telemarketing operations are being converted into traveling sales crews—once again bothering people at their homes.
- The bill creates a definition of traveling sales crews, so it will not affect non-profits, such as Girl Scouts (definition: two or more individuals who are employed as salespersons or in related support work, who travel together in a group, and who are absent overnight from their permanent residences for the purpose of selling goods or services to consumers from house to house, on any street or in any other place that is open to the public.)

Bill also states that this: "bill does not apply to fundraising sales by a nonprofit organization or school and does not preempt a county, city, village, or town from enacting a local ordinance regulating the sale of goods or services to consumers from house to house, on any street, or in any other place that is open to the public."

- The traveling sales crew industry often attracts employees who are trying to escape from something—such as runaways or criminals with a prior record.
- The transient nature of the industry makes it difficult to catch any of the employees or their employers when a crime is committed. For example, if a crew is caught selling without a permit in a community that requires registration of sales crews, the manager of the crew will post bail for the employee that is arrested and then skip town. Even though it is the fault of management that they did not follow the law—it is the employee who is left with the criminal record.

The intent of this bill is to address the two primary problems of the traveling sales crew industry:

1. Abuse of employees, through the industry's flagrant regard for federal and state labor laws
2. Protection of consumers to ensure they are receiving the product they have ordered and also to ensure homeowners are not facing dangerous criminals knocking on their doors

Key components of the bill that protect traveling sales crew employees:

- Prohibits the hiring of minors
- Requires employers of sales crews to issue a disclosure statement to salespersons at time of hire providing specific information about the business and how it operates.

- Requires that all members of sales crews be considered employees and prohibits the use of independent contractors as crewmember salespersons. Defining the employees as independent contractors allows the business to avoid paying taxes and worker's compensation.
- Requires at least semi-monthly payment of all wages earned. (some employees never see paychecks)
- All vehicles used to transport workers must be certified to all safety codes. (seat belts for all passengers—might have helped in Janesville van crash)
- If the transport of hazardous materials is required, the type of materials to be sold must be disclosed and proof must be given that the employees are trained to safely handle the hazardous chemicals.
- Employer cannot abandon employees because the employees are injured or have been arrested. (this happens far too often—employees are abandoned without any money, food or ID—no way to call family to tell them where they are)
- Prohibits an employer from taking away a worker's money, ID, phone or any other personal property during the course of employment with the traveling sales crew. (they take away these items from the workers so they cannot try to flee from these situations, which can be abusive—no way to call family or friends to rescue them.)
- Prohibits the employer from restricting communication between the worker and family or friends.

Key components of the bill that protect consumers and homeowners:

- Requires employers who utilize traveling sales crews in Wisconsin or who recruit crewmembers in Wisconsin to obtain a "certificate of registration" from DWD prior to entering the state. The information collected as part of the application process will allow us to know who is selling here—and if any of the crewmembers has a prior conviction record.
- Creates a DWD ID badge for traveling sales crew workers—workers must carry this state issued ID, as well as a copy of the certificate of registration with them at all times.
- Prior to selling door-to-door in any community, a stamp must be requested and issued by that municipality. The stamp must be placed on the registration certificate. The employer is also required to notify local law enforcement when they plan to begin sales activities.
- Requires employers of traveling sales crews to post a \$10,000 bond or equivalent as part of the registration process.
- Limits the times of day salespersons on a traveling sales crew can engage in sales activities. (between 9AM and 9PM only)
- Allows local law enforcement to issue citations to any crew workers violating the provisions of the bill—money collected through citations to be retained by local governments.



QUESTIONS FOR SOUTHWESTERN TESTIFIERS

SB 80
7.

1. The Southwestern business model treats the employees as Independent Contractors, yet this bill will affect the model because the employees are grouped together with a “manager” that they report to each day – Sounds like the business model is set up to call them one thing, treat them another way. Why can't Southwestern Company change their business model and truly treat these employees as true “Independent Contractors” and that way not be affected by this bill?
 - a. With Q's 2, 3, 9, 10, & 11 – get Katie Barman from Southwestern to describe the business model focusing on the discrepancy between their being “independent contractors” and having Southwestern require things like carpool, selling outside the state of recruitment, operate in crews, etc. Have her describe the typical day for a seller.
2. Couldn't Southwestern simply not remove the students from where they reside, eliminating the need to relocate them, assist with arranging transportation and housing, which, in effect, forces their “independent contractor” into traveling sales crew models? IE: Let the students live and work where they are already established instead of relocating them – seems there is an ulterior motive in this practice.....
 - a. See 1a. A recurring question – how difficult would it be to alter the business model to conform to the new bill?
3. Why can't Southwestern employees work alone, instead of in a Crew that subject them to the provisions of this bill? That clearly diverts the issue...
 - a. See 1a. Have Katie confirm this before asking, they may have a sufficiently vague answer to this question.
4. How would Southwestern propose altering the language, that won't create a loophole for others to utilize to continue operating in Wisconsin?
 - a. KEY QUESTION – To me, this is the problem with attempting to create an exemption for them. In addition, if they are an upstanding company that already follows most of the provisions of the bill, what effect does the employee provision have for them?
5. How many kids don't succeed working for Southwestern?
 - a. I would avoid this one.
6. Do kids ever end up owing Southwestern money at the end of the Summer selling season? How does that work?
 - a. This apparently was the heart of the problem when they were banned from UW campuses in the early 90's. We may not have anyone there to confirm the entire history on that issue, so we could reword this to ask “what, to your recollection, is the reason for the ban from UW?” That would only be after the ban issue is brought up and anecdotally confirmed by DATCP.
7. Exactly how many kids are hired from Wisconsin each year and from which college campus'?

- a. A fair question, follow up with – “if this only affects X number of your employees, would it be that difficult to accommodate?” My understanding is that they higher 40 – 60 Wisconsin students per year.
8. Which states are our college kids shipped off to? Why?
 - a. Or, “why are they shipped out of state instead of working in the state in which they’re recruited?”
9. If they are independent contractors, why does Southwestern arrange the carpools?
 - a. They’re going to say to facilitate the process and make it easier. I think Question 8 is better than this one.
10. Why does Southwestern orchestrate the living accommodations for these workers, where they often live in groups of 3 or 4, if they are truly “independent contractors”?
 - a. Same as Questions 9.
11. Isn’t Southwestern’s business model really just a means of circumventing labor laws in each state?
 - a. Not a bad question, but re-word to ask “does the status as independent contractor affect how Southwestern is treated under state labor laws?” And ask that of both Katie Barman and Joanna Richard.

In general, I think we need to be careful about attacking Southwestern. The main focus should be how can we create an exemption for Southwestern? Both technically, and in a way that wouldn’t create a loophole for some of the less reputable companies to avoid the new regulations.



Joanna Richard, DWD

SB 80
?

I just talked to Joanna Richard. Apparently Tryg's characterization of Southwestern is pretty accurate. The recent Worker's Comp court case brought the problems with Southwestern to light for them. Apparently SWern doesn't operate much in Wisconsin, they really just recruit students from Wisconsin. There are degrees of coverage based on residency as far as Worker's Comp and Unemployment are concerned. WC applies to Wisconsin students working anywhere. UI is only for people working in Wisconsin.

According to her, the classification between independent contractor and employee doesn't matter as far as UI is concerned. There are a series of criteria that employers have to meet, which SWern does, to be required to pay UI.

DWD was part of trying to compromise last year, but then Van Roy even backed out of the compromise and that's where the wheels came off the wagon. DWD would prefer that the bill be exactly what they have in SB 80. I don't know that they would say that publicly or not.

Jim Rabbitt, DATCP

Talked to Jim Rabbitt at DATCP, VERY interesting. DATCP's main concern is worker safety, and for that reason they don't have as big a stake as DWD does in the bill, but he had the same opinion about the way the process went with the amendment last session. As we know, their main concern is the employee versus independent contractor issue, but Jim doesn't know how to get them an exemption without creating a major loophole.

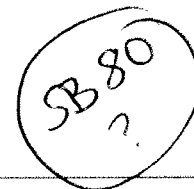
Now, here's the really good part. Remember how they said they've had a great relationship with UW campuses for recruiting? Sometime in the early 90's, they were BANNED FROM ALL CAMPUSES for about 5 years because so many students were coming back and complaining that they wound up not making any money after expenses. They were finally readmitted when they promised to release a list of all UW student "employees" to DATCP each year so the department could contact them directly if they wanted. Apparently they continue to send that list to this date, even though for DATCP it's a mostly moot issue.

I asked Jim to track down the name and phone number of the now retired UW job center director in case we'd like to have him come and address that issue, but I'm going to ask Spencer if he wants that to happen.

So, the tack I'm going to suggest to Spencer is that we can't give them an exemption without creating a major loophole. Even with the UW ban, I don't see how asking people testifying how much money they earned will help the cause.



The Enigma of Madam Mim



Mental jizzum or creative genius? How about somewhere in between...

« [Pridefest 2006](#)

[Southwestern...again](#) »

USA Today recruiting for the Southwestern Company?

Today the USA Today published an article about my arch nemesis... the Southwestern Company. The article was quick to praise the lessons students learn while working for such companies. I could hardly contain the foul thoughts filling my head as I read it. So I decided to write a letter to the editor!

I doubt my letter will get published; it's too long, it's too negative, and I'm just a lowly college student. But I tried, and here is a copy of what I wrote:

Oh and you can find the USA Today article [here](#).

I was surprised to read the article in the USA Today about college age door-to-door salespeople ("College students learn from job of hard knocks," Money, July 20). Having worked for the Southwestern Company last summer as a "book-girl," I'd say that the article sounded as if it came straight from the mouth of a company spokesperson.

The article was quick to point out the wonderful "lessons" these college students learn in such harsh environments, but overlooks much of the mismanagement and unethical actions of people in charge at some of these companies.

For example, the article mentions that students pay for all of their own gas, food and housing, but misses that the company often tells students when recruiting that housing networks and resources are already in place for them in their designated territory, yet when students arrive on the scene, they are expected to knock door-to-door to find a place to live, without prior screening of families to see if it's actually safe. *find housing*

Numerous other safety issues arise when these programs are examined carefully. My personal experience serves as a perfect example; when I first arrived in my sales territory in Garland, TX, it seemed everyone I talked to warned me to carry a weapon and doubted the sanity of my parents for allowing me to participate in such a job. One pastor of local church actually sat me down and said that if he had a pistol, he would give it to me, because statistically speaking, I was more likely to get shot in Garland than if I was in Iraq. The memorial I walked past every morning for the boy, who, two weeks earlier had been beaten to death and dropped at that specific corner, didn't do much to ease my nerves either.

The article also forgot to mention the manipulation and emotional abuse sponsored by not just the student management, but by higher up officials as well. Students, once in the field, were regarded as "failures at life" and emotionally bullied if they harbored feelings of quitting, and many felt forced to sneak back home if they decided the job wasn't for them. A friend who tried such a route was picked up by his manager at the bus stop to prevent him from leaving. I was once compared by management to people that were "half retarded" because my sales that week weren't up to quota.

The list of grievances goes on and on, and for many, didn't stop once their time in the field was over. Numerous people I know, myself included, suffered nightmares about book-selling for weeks after the fact. How humiliating and ridiculous is that, to admit that you wake up cringing at the thought of spending a day simply "selling books?"

So yes, that summer working as a door-to-door salesperson offered me many lessons. The most important, however, is

easily summed up by, “When you meet the friendliest people you have ever known, who introduce you to the most loving group of people you’ve ever encountered, and you find the leader to be the most inspired, caring, compassionate and understanding person you’ve ever met, and then you learn the cause of the group is something you never dared hope could be accomplished, and all of this sounds too good to be true-it probably is too good to be true! Don’t give up your education, your hopes and ambitions to follow a rainbow.”

This entry was posted on Thursday, July 20th, 2006 at 9:37 am and is filed under [General](#), [Articles](#), [Politics](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.

16 Responses to “USA Today recruiting for the Southwestern Company?”

1. *Michael* Says:
[July 20th, 2006 at 2:50 pm](#)

Love the letter. Fingers crossed it gets published.

Try contacting the person who wrote the article. kchu@usatoday.com

I’m going to do it myself.

2. *Michael* Says:
[July 20th, 2006 at 3:01 pm](#)

Here’s what I wrote to her.

Hi Kathy,

I just had the pleasure of reading your article July 20,2006 article on the Southwestern Company and other door to door selling groups who often hire college students for the summer.

I felt there were a couple of points that you failed to address.

1. While the entrepreneurial spirit no doubt lives in these students working hard to make themselves a success, it seems that as much as the students suffer, the company gains. Without having to hire a serious sales staff, Southwestern (and other companies like it) have a workforce to whom they are largely unaccountable. With each student as an “independent contractor” the company is easily denied to be a major factor in sales success.

2. For every student that you talked to making a rousing success from the program, you fail to find any student who may have left the program. This is the ultimate hook of sales firms, and your reporting seems to fall right into their trap. The people who rave about their successes wouldn’t be in the jobs if they had failed. When their wages (and in this case, housing accommodations, gas, and food) depend on their success in the field, how long can someone afford to do the job if they aren’t finding the success they need to survive?

I will admit I have a bias in this matter as I myself have participated in similar sales schemes while in college and do know of people with less than stellar Southwestern experiences. Nevertheless, I feel your article did a poor job in mentioning the negative sides of this issue.

Any comments you have to offer would be greatly appreciated. My contact information is listed below.

-Michael

3. *Administrator Says:*
[July 21st, 2006 at 5:51 am](#)

Wonderful. Your letter highlights two points I left out that are definitely worth mentioning. I'm just so surprised that this journalist didn't take these perspectives into account when writing this story.

4. *Megan Says:*
[July 21st, 2006 at 9:15 am](#)

I'm so proud of you Brittany. How did you come across the article? That fucking company probably paid the bitch to publish that so when people get some college student knocking on their door they'll know the company and won't freak out as bad...maybe even buy more which I'm sure they would love. I really hope if gets published!

5. *Tony Says:*
[July 23rd, 2006 at 7:01 pm](#)

Great article Kathy!

I myself sold books for four summers through college and full-time recruited one semester after graduating college. I think it was the best thing I could have done to get myself on the fast track to success in life. I still have several friends knocking away this summer.

I can also speak about the negatives of the program after recruiting my sister and her having a miserable experience. Of all of the students that I saw that had miserable experiences, including my sister I can truthfully tell you that there are two main reasons they did. One they did not do what was required to be successful - work the hours - give the demos - have a great attitude. Two they let other circumstances determine their success instead of creating circumstances to be successful.

I see the same exact situations in my current sales position. Example,

6. *Tony Says:*
[July 23rd, 2006 at 7:23 pm](#)

oops the mouse clicked.

My current sales job of three months I started training with about fifteen people. Today three remain and the job has a 2500 dollar salary every month if commission does not eclipse that. Not one person has been fired...most people are just not willing to put forth the effort to be successful.

Sales is a challenging career because the only thing present in each unique situation is you. Great sales people figure out how to stop making THEMSELVES the problem - mainly with their attitude.

Success is something you have to continually work on like being a great parent - staying in shape - a great marriage - a strong faith - good grades - etc.

Inclosing Southwestern was a great experience for me because of the extremely hard things I went through - Knocking on doors to find a place to live - getting rejected 1,000s of times - working 14hrs and not making any money - problem solving through crazy problems without my parents being there - Learning to overcome failure to achieve success - Learning how to have a great attitude and control my emotions - etc.

The other reason Southwestern is great is the people you become friends with - Every successful book person I know is also success in their lives - It is not so much what you know, but who you know - What a great group of friends to have!

Tony

7. *Megan Says:*
July 25th, 2006 at 7:49 am

Okay Tony. How do you feel about selling things to people that they don't need. Sales is, and always will be, a sleazy way of making money. Talking people into things so that you gain. Before I became a book girl I had a job in retail sales in high school at Lady Footlocker. You must know even selling in store, where people come to you, they are not necessarily looking to buy things. But you are on commission so you have that extra motivation to be friendly and talk about your great sales that are going on to make an extra profit in that next paycheck. My manager said I wasn't "pushy" enough in my sales so he told me what he does to make sure people buy other assessories besides just shoes. I followed his instructions one day when a woman came in and he was happy that I added on assessories to the sale. I however felt guilty. I encouraged her to buy something she didn't need and wasn't even a good product. I had the same shoes and knew they fell apart really fast. But when I was recruited by SW, I thought that the product was good. That I was helping educate kids by making these books available to people. What I soon realized out on the book field though was that the people who actually needed the books were people that could not afford it. I knocked on there door and gave them all these wonderful promises that the book hold but when it came time to tell them how much it was like I was taunting them. I was stopping by showing an opportunity for their kids, kids who they truly loved, but the money was something not even all there love could make appear. The company tells you that you will be in middle to upper class neighborhoods. Middle to upper class neighborhoods could afford \$300. Actually, they can afford a shit load more than that and that is why all the people in those neighborhoods had kids with tutors if they really did need extra help. This is kind of what Brittany touched on in her last entry. I just don't understand how you can feel good about yourself at the end of the day when you will do anything you can to make a sale. Taking the money of poor people. You would sell to a retarded person to make a sale. And don't tell me you wouldn't. When my student manager came with me on my day to have her join me, it was her turn to show me hows it's done. What does she do? She does anything to make this retarded man who lives with his sister on an allowance, save his money up to pay for a book he can't even read. This goes way against any of my morals. This was the example I was supposed to follow?

One more thing. You say that you make your own circumstances? How can you even say that? You don't pick the neighborhood they throw you in or the people who live there. You don't pick that the summer just before you came there, there was a huge magazine scandal and no one trusts anyone coming to their door besides those people who are actually nice enough to let you in to find out they are the ones who can't afford the books and probably couldn't afford the magazines the last summer so they were never victims of the scandal.

Actually one more thing. How can you be so incensitive your sister's experience with the program? Wouldn't that be an eye opener? Nope, instead of trusting your sister's opinion you side with the company as they tell you why your sister failed. How it's all her fault. She didn't fall into the bullshit promises like you did. She stayed true to herself and I'm sure she will be successful in the future doing something that is completely free from the manipulation of others. Southwestern tears to you down to build you back up again. You might think that it makes you into something better than you were before but it just turns you into another clone. Why do you think you like your friends you met through it? Because they turned you into identical people.

Okay, I'll stop now before I write even more. I don't know if this even makes sense cuz it's too long to read over but they're just my random thoughts about the issue.

8. *Tony Says:*

July 25th, 2006 at 10:30 pm

Hey Megan,

Thanks for your response - I'm sorry if I have opened a few old wounds...I will answer all of you concerns and or comments but it may take a page or two.

First, Sales I define sales as this – Sales – find out what people want or need and helping them get it. I know I have never tricked or deceived someone into buying something from me because that is just not the type of person that I am. Example with Southwestern you probably know that out of the 30 people that you show the books and cds to everyday you only have to have an average of two people pick up something to have an awesome summer. If I sell a product I for sure want some to use it. In four summers I had several parents tell me that even if their kids never touched the books they bought they wanted two things out of it- One that if they needed it down the road that at least they had given the kids the opportunity to use it- Two that the kids saw their parents take an invested interest in their education...because education is important in life...Oh and three they respected a kid busting their butt and they hoped that their kids would end up like me. I didn't always agree with the comments but that wasn't my decision.

And you are right about the parents that sometimes NEED it the most cannot afford it, but that is the same parents that would get paid on Friday and have the pay check gone by Saturday on video games, toys, cigarettes, etc. They also knew that the only way for the kids to go farther in life is through a good education. Sometimes I would just give them a set...because they needed it. Most would give me their word to save up and I would help them budget for the 300 dollars or less for three months...75% would have the cash waiting at the endThey told me the kids had been waiting all summer just for my return. I'm guessing that you might not have made the return trip just by you comments.

9. *Tony Says:*

July 25th, 2006 at 10:34 pm

Saying all that I have a different perspective on the whole Southwestern Situation....

I feel like I have been through the whole cycle (4 summers.) There is a huge difference in experience something and doing something for a long time and then looking back at it.

....Let me explain...I sold my first summer and fourth summer in South Carolina about thirty minutes apart. It was a cool deala couple of girls that worked in my group sold over my first summer area...It was really cool to hear stories from the girls about my old customers that still used the books and CD packs...the people that could remember an excited college kid named Tony...AND THESE PEOPLE I PROBABLY spent a combined FORTY MINUTES in their homes. Now think about something that you tried a few times....and are now really good at it. Playing golf is a good example. People that have only golfed a couple of times think that it is really hard to make par....most quit before it becomes fun....it is frustrating, challenging, a waste of time etc.Now think about a person that has played for a long time they like to play because it is a game of challenge. They notice it is nice day- it is a good game to spend time with friends and family of all ages – it helps keep some people in shape – they notice the beauty of the golf course, etc. A sales career is the same way. You work all day to try and provide a service for someone that will help them for a long time to come, but many people in sales quit before they have the chance to see the fruits of their labor. I was lucky enough to stay in it long enough to get that perspective.

Now some back ground about me – Before this I had never done sales – I signed up ten days before the summer- I had 300 dollars to my name – I knew it would be the hardest thing I had ever done- I knew it was 80 hours a week – door to door – straight commission – And the first two weeks are on the job training- I didn't know anyone else doing it. I study my materials and sales talks hard, but my first week I was last in my group of fifty

some kids 54units which was like two customers. WEEK 2 I was 2nd to last, one kid quit after the second week 56units. WEEK 3 I was even worse than the first two I had 34 units.

That Sunday I had a long talk with myself about the type of person I wanted to be.....the 4th week I doubled all three weeks combined 270units....and went on to be in the top 5 % of not only my group but the country... Making over \$12,000 dollars

What did I talk about....I told myself to stop cutting corners ...BECAUSE I WAS....I told myself to except my situation...(because I thought I was the only one with permit problems, missed my friends and family, that had unethical sales people in my area before, that everyone had tutors or no money, etc.) I MADE EXCUSES FOR WHY I WAS DOING BAD INSTEAD TRYING TO GET BETTER....I told myself to be a champion... (because they listen to the coach....they run the plays they are suppose to run....the come early and leave late....the make everyone around the team better....they don't blame the ref or teammates for a poor performance....they treat everyone with respect....and they do what it is right when know one is watching.) I did this talk because after talking to kids that were doing well I realized they thought differently than I did....They weren't cooler, better looking, smarter, more fortunate.... I was the PROBLEM and I had to figure out how to fix it.

Is the guy at the end of the game that misses the last shot the reason the team didn't win the game? Is it the teacher's fault you didn't study the night before the test? Why is it that the same people always raise to the top? (Michael Jordan, Lance Armstrong, Tiger Woods, etc.)It is because they live for the moment and have prepared hours and hours for that moment. Statistic shows that the Top Sales people work harder and smarter than the rest...not that they are born that way, I sure wasn't.

MY SISTER-First off I love my sister, but she did not work more than a couple days the whole summer. How do I know? I drove three hours one way to follow her after being concerned about her summer. That one day was by far the best day she had all summer...50unit (her total was only 270.) The next closest day she had another manager follower her for half the day earlier in the summer. She took the easy road for most of the summer and hung out and the mall, the movies, the park, talking on her cell phone to people back home....Yet all the while she told me she was doing 30 demos and work all the hours for weeks. Only after the facts of HUGE cell phone bills and credit card bills did it come out in the wash. It wasn't that she failed; it was that she never tried. Now I know you are thinking that she didn't want to disappoint me – true – or be called a failure – true – but it comes down to the fact that I didn't force her to make the decision to do it in the first place – I tried to help many times with problems that she was having, but it is like telling a doctor that you are having head aches when you ACTUALLY have a broken leg. It hurts to think back to this because I did not want her to do it- she told me that she not only wanted to do it she wanted to be the best. I am sure you were similar as far as your intentions, but I have no grounds not knowing you and all. Now my sister admits that she has problems with personal accountability and knows she needs a career with less responsibility and more supervision. And it was probably better to learn that in a summer job verse trying several jobs like it and not doing well. I'm sure you know many similar kids from school or sports that had all the talent in the world, but didn't have effort to carry them through. If 270 was her best it would have been perfectly fine with me.....because to me Success is doing your personal best! And I will take full responsibility for failing as a manager because I wasn't able to help her achieve that.

Sadly my sister is like many early leavers that I have known not only in Southwestern, but in sales. I sincerely apologize for you having a bad experience. I'm sure that was not your intent or the people surrounding you that summer. From experience I just question if you truly tried being a champion or if you just told yourself that you did? And remember maybe what you did that summer really did help people out; maybe you just didn't get the chance to see the end result. Were you stuck in the thunder storm and didn't make through to see the rainbow after the storm had passed. Best wishes in your current and future endeavors. I will post an email that I strangely got today from a friend I sold books with to explain this.

Tony

P.S. A great book that I recently read is called QBQ that talks about personal accountable and a winning attitude.

10. *Tony Says:*

July 25th, 2006 at 10:38 pm

This is pretty cool.....enjoy...ML>

> Date: Sat, 22 Jul 2006 17:11:11 -0500

>

> Hello Mike, I am taking a chance that you perhaps may recall who I am.

> While I was not one of your own recruits, I did sell in the Power
> Division in 1996 while in Georgia and in 1997 in North Carolina. If I am

> remembered, I have little doubt that it was in regards to my sales
> numbers as they were pretty dismal. However, I wanted to say that my
> exposure to you and several others made a favorable impression on me.
> Many lessons that I was slow to learn in the bookfield eventually set
> in, and as I look back to that time and the approaches I use at work
now

> it is clear to say that it was an extremely valuable experience that
has

> shaped my life and career. I did get accepted to Medical School and
> graduated in 2005. I am now in my second year of residency in
Internal

> Medicine in Manhasset, NY with the thought of pursuing a cardiology
> fellowship. I cannot deny the impact that some very hard lessons
learned

> now a decade ago have given me some of the tools to reach the place I
am

> today. I just wanted to extend my gratitude for your role in making
some

> of those lessons a little more palatable. I hope all is well with
you.

> Sincerely, Sam

>

>

11. *Megan Says:*

July 26th, 2006 at 10:21 am

I appreciate your reply. You have to admit though that sales isn't for everyone because there really aren't people cut out for it no matter how hard they try. It's like that with anything. I know that you said being your personal best is all that matters but what about the people who get sent home early because they are not making enough? My friend Ken is bitter to this day. He's a really hard worker and there is no doubt in my mind that he tried his best; he really did want to succeed. For you something clicked and you were able to improve, that's great. But I don't think you can say that the only reason people fail is because they don't try in the first place. That may have been true for your sister and a lot of other cases, but not all. And one more thing...why was that letter addressed to a Mike? Isn't your name Tony?

12. *Michael* Says:
[July 26th, 2006 at 12:31 pm](#)

Tony - what the fuck is wrong with you? You think big important people are reading this blog? Are you a fucking moron? Is that why you are stuck working in sales?

13. *Administrator* Says:
[July 26th, 2006 at 1:07 pm](#)

I'd have to agree with Michael here. I'm all up for debate, but it seems your only responses to legitimate critiques of the Southwestern Company, Tony, are thinly veiled personal attacks. Sorry, but Megan and I got enough of that when we actually worked for Southwestern, and definitely don't need any more of it now. I respect your work ethic, your commitment, and I see evidence of your loyalty, especially to the Southwestern Company and to your mentality as a salesperson. But those three assets do not a decent person make (and they say nothing about your skills as a debater).

If anything, your posts here have only served to prove my point; that management at the Southwestern Company revolves around manipulating and emotionally assaulting its "independent contractors" until they break down, and can therefore be built back up into perfect, bookselling clones that don't have the mental and emotional resources to question the bullshit SW feeds them. If an individual tries to resist such abuse, then he or she is ostracized and labeled as lazy, incompetent, or, in my situation, "half retarded." It seems Megan and I can't even escape this now, and we haven't worked for SW is over a year.

So if all you're going to do is regurgitate Southwestern babble, then there is no need for you to continue posting here. Like I said earlier, we've heard it all before. Though I don't know what I expected from someone who in one swift sentence would write off the dire situations of those in poverty as something they simply brought upon themselves, you know, through all their wasteful buying of "video games, toys, cigarettes, etc." Absolutely genius.

14. *Megan* Says:
[July 26th, 2006 at 1:39 pm](#)

Haha! So right Brit. Yep, all poor people waste their money on stupid shit. Uh huh. They work their 3 jobs to make money to waste instead of trying to better the opportunities for their kids. Maybe you should tell them about how great southwestern is and they can sell books door to door. Maybe then they would be more successful in life. Tony, your are such a fucking ass!

15. *Michael* Says:
[July 26th, 2006 at 5:24 pm](#)

I just wrote an article on my blog - <http://blog.thebriz.org> - about why jobs in sales suck. Check it out!

16. *Mai* Says:
[August 8th, 2006 at 2:22 pm](#)

Man, this was a FACINATING read. I loveloved it! But boy, did we have a lot of GRAMMER PROBLEMS!! (= It's like a par-tay in here! Where's the chip and dip?

Ok OK--Ladies and Gents, can't we all just get along? UGH, I'm looking at the dates and this all happened in July...I'm so out of it. Don't worry little ones, Mai will take care of you--wait till I come back and cook you a meal, we'll talk sensibly about matters that ACTUALLY matter, like politics (bc, I'm really good at it) and art.



[Back to top](#)[profile](#) [pm](#) [AIM](#)**cutTHIS**

Posted: Tue Sep 20, 2005 6:24 am Post subject:

[quote](#)Joined: 20 Sep 2005
Posts: 1

if you dont wanna read my "essay" just go to this website for those who it may concern:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/vector/petition.html> or<http://www.radified.com/blog/archives/000055.html>

If you know what Im talking about its the Vector Marketing company.... you see on the street or on your campus a job that offers \$16/ per appointment after training(which isnt paid) and the rest of the bullshit comes from there...

if you still dunno wat im talkin about, its the job where you try to sell those high quality CUTCO knives... either ur a victim of ur time bein wasted with that company, know a friend, or ur jus familiar with it... im making this post to inform potential people who would wanna try it out and hear feedback from others... heres my quick story:

total scam... its so embarrassing because i have to eat it all up inside because i cant let my friends know what a bullshit "opportunity" it was, when they were making more money than me weekly working their regular jobs(catering hall)... i "worked" for the one in New York in the WINTER.. having to trade my warmer jeans n sneakers to dress up in thin dress pants n shoes and walk through snow and 20 degree weather with wind chills at night... constantly wanting me to go to these weekly meetings that STARTED at 9PM!!!! got out at about 10:30 to watch the 2 or 3 LUCKY reps who happened to have good PAYING customers. we had to cheer for them and be "INSPIRED" ...then had to make my way back home on BUS, since i had no car, though the cold and get home at midnight... constantly calling me to "check up" and asking why i didnt call daily..... the stress of sitting there to gain courage to call potential customers, (who if you go deep into referrals, YOU DONT KNOW) then having to listen to the "im busy" "not interested".... after all that only making one HALFWAY DECENT CHECK of 96 dollars for a few appointments cuz after a few bad no sales, ur manager will put you on a no base pay list and its supposed to "MOTIVATE" you to do better and you can only earn money on comissions... IF you even sell anything!!!!!!

[Back to top](#)[profile](#) [pm](#)**Jim008**

Posted: Tue Sep 27, 2005 10:24 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)Joined: 27 Sep 2005
Posts: 1

Vector is a cult and the only person profitting are the cult leaders making you believe in the lies.

Notice that every person who posts for vector does not refute any of the facts presentated other than calling us cry babies. That's what they brainwash you into believing in their day long seminars, those who question the cult are "negative thinkers".

If you have or will go to a seminar, record the things they say and research them. I found that every word that came out of the cult leader's mouth was a lie.

Just don't fall into their trap, because you'll either become one of the con artist recruiters or get finiacially leechd dry by the company.

Don't believe me? Just research every fact and statistic that they tell/give you and you'll find out that the company is pulling one of the longest running cons.

It's fucked up when i realized how these seminars are mind control sessions that makes you vector slaves.

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[Back to top](#)[profile](#) [pm](#)**jaja**

Posted: Tue Aug 09, 2005 12:09 am Post subject: cutco cutlery and vector

[quote](#)Joined: 09 Aug 2005
Posts: 1
Location: so cal

Wow you kids must've really sucked! All you have to do is read this stuff out of a book, you don't even have to memorize it and it sells itself! Stop crying about it, there's no excuse except that you didn't follow simple directions and gave up.

[Back to top](#)[profile](#) [pm](#)**memememe**
Regular

Posted: Thu Aug 25, 2005 9:49 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)Joined: 25 Aug 2005
Posts: 2

i am not a brainwashed cult member of vector most importantly- i used to work there and let me say, it is only a scam if you make it one. It is actually the opportunity of a lifetime IF you have what it takes, which most people don't. if you follow the program and give it the good old 'college' try you will be so freaking loaded in no time and not even have to work if you didn't want to. i saw people come & go because they didn't have the drive to succeed, it aint hard just do something besides sit on your butt and it could happen to you too.

about the people you saw in there being paid to do that, that is beyond false. the sales reps that go into the office for something besides a meeting are the best in that office and enjoy being there.

i agree with the 'poor me' crap- it is nobody fault but your own if you sign something without reading it, if you needed more time to read it why did you sign it.

vector can make u rich or it can kick the crap out of you- whichever one you let it do oh and CUTCO freeeeaking rocks, best cutlery for sure, ask ANYONE

sincerely,

someone who is able to think on their own and not cast judgement on things i don't know about

[Back to top](#)[profile](#) [pm](#)**Keither**

Posted: Thu Sep 08, 2005 9:34 am Post subject: Dont knock vector til you try it eh? I TRIED IT YOU NIT!

[quote](#)Joined: 08 Sep 2005
Posts: 1

Yeah, Vector does suck.. and for all you people out there saying "dont knock it til you try it," well guess what @sshholes, i did try it and i was damn good at it, til my office decided to screw me and about 35 other young kids out of a tidy sum, my tidy sum being about 13 grand.. now put that in your pipe and smoke it! I saw a few other guys there the day i went down to the office, and we were gonna go in together, because they too had checks that had never been mailed to them. when we went downstairs in the building the office was in, a janitor notified us that there was nobody using the office space once used by vector, and they had moved out about 4 days prior. He ended up letting us in the room, and if i was alone i wouldnt have believed it... this joint looked like it hadnt had a human enter it in years... almost like creepy sort of, it even smelled old... all the folding tables were gone, the folding dividers... gone..... and most of all, everyone that worked there... gone. iit was like they had never been there... and like i said, if there werent a few other guys with me, oh scuze me, and one girl, i would have thought i was crazy and i had imagined the whole thing.. the only thing left in that room were the two desks that came with the office. i swear, its one of the wierdest things ive ever seen.

back to what i was saying though, later on when i got home, i checked online with my girlfriend... and all i can say is I WAS S-H-O-C-K-E-D
SHOCKED! at all the horror stories just like mine that i found / read. I could only read about 20 of them before i got a pounding migraine(sp?) but im telling you, there were hundreds and thousands of them... so yes... VECTOR / CUTCO... are nothing but scams. so you people who stick up for these huge corp's can die many years from now knowing that you lied to your friends and family to make a quick buck.. your are horrible people.. and when it happens to you, you know, what happened to me, youll see... ROT IN HELL CAPITALIST BASTARDS!!!!!!

strange...

2. The feel of the class is, "lets have fun." It was actually, quite childish to me. The loud music, the attitude of my manager, even one girl in particular.
3. The managers are never clear about the product til the first day of training.
4. "Employees," which aren't by law employees, must sit for 6 plus hours straight, three days in a row, with no bathroom or lunch breaks.
5. Through out the presentation students are entering and leaving the office. "students" who haven't been on the job very long... hmmm.. wait a minute.. didn't the sales rep say we met on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, something like that.. I could have sworn I saw a whole bunch, Friday, Saturday, Tuesday. every day I was there actually, and some how ALL of the ones that stopped by were doing REALLY well? It leaves me to believe it's a scam, and they're either paying people to lie, or paying high end workers to come in in the middle of the presentations.
6. Another thing, Notice when you're signing those two forms, The manager doesn't give you ANY time to read the information, and again, turns on the loud music so It's impossible to read it. with like, the minute we have.
7. Hey, you know how your manager says how much he cares, and wants you to succeed, and to call him any time, when you're in the middle of a meeting, and he'll be there? It isn't because he cares, he doesn't give a damn about you. He gets a chunk out of what you sell. About half the cost of the product goes to upper salesmen. A good chunk of what you should get, goes to the guy ahead of you. That's how sales work.
8. I have relatives that worked for vector, if I had known I wouldn't have chose vector, that were charged for the set, because they weren't given the time to read the contracts.

These people posting, all though they don't put it in the most professional way, are correct. They are correct because vector chooses, or shall I say, prays, on young students who have never been employed, know nothing about sales. If these were grown business men, I'd agree, they should get on with their lives, but these are students just looking for a good way to pay college bills.

You state people complain because they aren't very good. Do you want to know something? I've been a top seller before. However, that was because the product fit their current pay check and it was reliable. I had used it and could show them first hand it worked. Cutco may be a good product, but I can't verify that. All I know is my manager said, "well some people say" I hear no names. I also know, the people I know live from pay check to pay check. Sure, they buy crappy knives and they go out in five years (which I don't believe. you can get them professionally sharpened. I have.) but that's the money most families currently have in hand. It's like renting an apartment. Sure, you pay 600 a month and you won't have any thing to show for it, but you don't have 1200 a month to start paying house payments.

I know from previous sales that I'm more than average. I also so believe that some of the success stories are fabricated. I notice my manager using this phrase all the time, "I know these people" and who are these people.

"Rag on the people even though there aren't too many companies with executives who are so tied in to their people that they lose sleep when something has gone wrong and they are the first to get on the horn to celebrate even the little successes. "

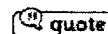
I don't know how you can dis these people when you say thing like this. The executives don't give a damn about you. They feed off your sales. You make it seem like all these people don't know what they are talking about. It seems like you don't know much either.

comment, everyone of them have thanked me and invited me bac kto their home for future business. ON top of all that i have made 34 credits for college, and vector is a course taught at some large colleges. i have gained communication skills, sales skills, advertising skills, marketing skills, become a certified field trainer, and i am on my way to becoming a district manager, all in one year. so learn what you are talking about befor you comment. And there is no door to door or cold calling (telemarketing). i hate when you people talk about things you never tried or tried half assed.....

Back to top

Guest

Posted: Mon Dec 27, 2004 5:12 pm Post subject:

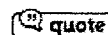


The person above is either full of crap, top 1% of sales, or management. Why would they post on this unless they were management, or recruitment? They just want to sell their product. Selling their product means misleading more recruitment "representitives" because they say vector is sold through word of mouth of customers. This is false. Vector is really sold by the word of the representitives mouth and connections, rather than the customers. The new "representitives" could mean less to the managers, besides the fact that every "representitive" knows hundreds of people. That is the only reason why they recruit new people so often. The recruits connections is their real marketing campaign. If this wasn't true, at 18\$'s an hour (what I was promised) their sales positions would be full all of the time.

Back to top

Andy Baby
Guest

Posted: Sat Feb 12, 2005 7:30 pm Post subject: Cutco scam

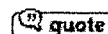


This company is a rip off. Expect loud music and a very high energy sale pitch when you get to the interview. They change locations frequently and when the time comes to close an office - make sure they don't owe you any money or incentives. It will be very difficult to collect.

Back to top

tcyung

Posted: Mon May 30, 2005 11:38 am Post subject:



Joined: 30 May 2005
Posts: 1

I would soo have to agree that this vector marketing is full of fucked up crap... It's a TOTAL scam... they r saying that u get paid \$15 bucks per appointment and each appointment is about an hr.. .but the truth is that, it's like \$5 an hr afterward without the time and gas wasted. I have wasted soo much \$\$ on this job and more importantly the time!! I cant get another job even they say that it's flexible hrs. But they have all the shitty team meeting and stuff...

They keep telling you all those successful story, but the truth is that those are the TOP 1% of people in the company. This thing is earning sooo much from the product and US !!! They are sooo taking advantages of the students.. !

COMMON VECTOR ~! GIVE IS A BREAK ! WE ARE ALL STUDENTS ... WE DON'T HAVE MUCH, WE HAVE TO PAY FOR TUITION, DON'T SCAM OUR MONEY!!

**To MIKE SMITH (York Region Office - Ontario): Stop the scam! u r just being a total jerk there! you r gay

Back to top



a former employee

Posted: Wed Jun 08, 2005 5:37 am Post subject: Stop being so angry



Joined: 08 Jun 2005
Posts: 1

I'm a former employee of Vector. And when I say employee, I mean employee. I worked at one of the regional headquarters. And I left under some of the most unfavorable circumstances, so indeed, if I was feeling bitter, I could come up with all kinds of negative things to say about this company. What I am seeing here is a bunch of made up speculation and, frankly, a lot of bitter

junk being sprayed left and right. I see a lot of 'poor me, poor me' - are you people really such pathetic little victims?

One of my main duties was to ensure that people's base pay was handled properly. I also handled complaints regarding managers, sales reps, customers, legal inquiries. I saw everything there was to see in that company, I was very much behind the scenes. It's all fine and good for people to go through the interview process, launch and then not make much of the opportunity, and that is their choice, but to come around, finding these little niches to tell their sob stories is... pathetic at best. To say that Vector is a scam because not everyone makes it to the top is silliness.

What you are really saying is, 'I'm average and I wish I could be better than that, but I don't want to work at it, so it must be their fault.' You can not deny the success stories that come from that company. You can minimize them, down play them, high light all the people who didn't make it, but to deny the good that has come about in the people who have made the most of their opportunity is to speak of what you do not know.

I *saw* the Executive Vice President or Regional Sales Director upset or in turmoil when a sales rep encountered a problem or a manager got the bad end of a deal. I saw these people bend over backwards to help a customer whose order wasn't handled the best way, I've seen them come down on a big seller when they tried to go around the rules of competition set up for the entire company - it's a big company, these things happen. I have seen such amazing success stories come out of that company. The bottom line is that all it takes if for you to want the success. Vector is but a vehicle. No, they aren't going to hand you the money, prestige and perks of becoming an established, proven sales person, but they certainly go out of their way to ensure your success, I mean, obviously, theirs is contingent upon such.

You can go around spouting off quite old information about two lawsuits, but... seriously, what have you got lately other than a bunch of internet corners full of whining complainers, 'poor me, poor me, I'm a starving college student and someone held a gun to my head and forced me to accept the position...' Those law suits did in fact happen. Hello? TWO lawsuits in two decades? Hmmm. We're talking about a multi million dollar company. Sounds quite impressive to me.

Rag on the product if you wish. It's sitting in my kitchen right now and it rocks.

Rag on the pay program even though I spent six years helping people get the money deserved (and for some, money not deserved).

Rag on the people even though there aren't too many companies with executives who are so tied in to their people that they lose sleep when something has gone wrong and they are the first to get on the horn to celebrate even the little successes.

It doesn't matter. The people who are here complaining about Vector will be complaining about many other things throughout the course of their lives. Good luck with that.

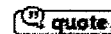
Sincerely,
Not brain washed. Not a manager. Not a Vector spy. Seeing is believing.

 [profile](#)  [pm](#)

[Back to top](#)

drhazeem

Posted: Sun Jul 03, 2005 7:04 am Post subject: Cutco

 [quote](#)

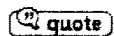
Joined: 03 Jul 2005
Posts: 1

I'm not here to rag on Cutco. I'm here to tell the truth about what I've seen.

1. Cutco hires inexperienced students with no sales background experience... hmmm...

admin
Regular

Posted: Fri Sep 30, 2005 8:47 pm Post subject:



Joined: 10 Sep 2002
Posts: 100
Location: Philadelphia, PA

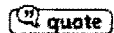
I wonder what other corporations are trying to scam young people? I guess they assume that young people are more likely to fall for their schemes, which is sad.

Back to top



memememe
Regular

Posted: Sun Oct 02, 2005 10:46 pm Post subject:



Joined: 25 Aug 2005
Posts: 2

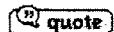
if it sucked so bad for you and you had to go through all that drama why did you stick around long enough to supposedly get scammed

Back to top



ladyslew

Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2005 7:12 pm Post subject: Cutco knives are the best!



Joined: 13 Oct 2005
Posts: 1
Location: Maryland

I purchased Cutco knives when my son sold them 3 years ago. OK, he didn't make much money at it and the job didn't last very long. I just figured selling wasn't for him, after all everyone is not good at that kind of thing. He kept the knife set and he uses it to this day. His new wife also loves the knives, says she never realized how easy it could be to cut things and she likes cooking more now. She's 19. ;)

I recently moved, and the moving company lost several of my boxes - almost all kitchen items. One of those boxes contained my own beloved Cutco knives. Yes - I really do love those knives. There is nothing else in all those boxes that I feel devastated over the loss.

So, with my own children grown and no longer in college, the prime spot to find a Cutco salesperson, I got on the Internet to search for Cutco knives. I was shocked to find this post as one of the top results on Google. Cutco products are worth every penny you spend for them. I much prefer my Cutco knives to my mother's even more expensive German knives (can't think of the brand at the moment). In the 3 years I had the knives they never once needed sharpening, and they cut every bit as well as the first day I bought them.

So, while maybe their recruiting practices are not the best, but their products are worth every penny.

Now PLEASE, those of you who sell Cutco knives I wish you luck, but stop contacting me! I replaced my knives long ago.

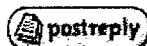
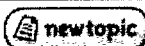
Diane Hain
Lady Slew
lady_slew@yahoo.com

Last edited by ladyslew on Mon Mar 27, 2006 7:37 pm; edited 1 time in total

Back to top



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CampusActivism.org Forum Index -> Main Forum

All times are GMT
Goto page 1, 2, 3 Next

Page 1 of 3

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Submitted: 3/4/2005 5:12:49 PM
Modified: 3/4/2005 5:13:00 PM

Category:
Sales People

Vector Marketing, Cutco SCAM Ripoff Peabody Massachusetts

Company
Cutco, Vector
Address:

**Peabody Massachusetts
U.S.A.**
Phone Number:
215-794-8330
Fax:

I was suckered into Vector a summer ago. They made me attend two 8 hour training sessions which were unpaid. In addition they require other meetings weekly which are unpaid and conferences which you must pay for to travel all over the country. **KEEP IN MIND YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR THE TRIP.** Then you must purchase a training set for 110 dollars and are very hostile when you try to refund the set. Vector Marketing makes claims of 15 dollars per hour or percentage of sales, whichever is greater. They do not pay 15 dollars an hour, instead they pay 15 dollars per appointment. It is impossible to set up 8 appointments in a day because of all the traveling you have to do. Usually you can get 4 appointments in a day, so you make a whopping 60 dollars which are taxed.

Did I mention that **YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR GAS AS WELL???** The managers call your house all day long making sure that you are setting up appointments and also require that you come into the office once a week to try and make appointments, this time in the office is also **UNPAID.** It is bordering harassment if you ask me. You must also put your family and friends through hell by making them sit there and watch your presentation and you feel even worse when they buy a set out of pity and it costs them 700+ dollars for stupid knives. After you give them a demonstration you ask them for names of people to give the demonstration to in the future, and most people are very reluctant to give you names, so you are basically left **BEGGING** them for names. I cant count how many times I have received "fake" names because the people were so against giving you contacts. If you dont get contacts, you dont get demonstrations, without demonstrations you make no sales, and make zero money.

The worst thing of all is the embarrassment you feel on the phone when you

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call some person you dont know and some old man YELLS at you and says he will report you to the police as a telemarketer and for going door to door. I was made a training manager, and was required to train others how to sell the knives on live demonstrations and figured this was my big break, I was wrong. You hold the manager position but get paid no better and you are also required to be in the office everyday and you are unpaid for these hours as well. My whole family also made jokes about the scam company I worked for and belittled me constantly because from day one my parents told me it was a scam. They (cutco) essentially brainwash you and make you memorize responses for customers who decline a presentation. Who the hell wants to have some unknown teenage boy with a set of knives into your house? Sound normal to you? As for the knives, they are great and I have no complaints with them, my problem lies with the company and the treatment of the employees. My story is all true, and you cant debate the facts.

Carl
Georgetown, Massachusetts
U.S.A.

Company Search

If you would like to see more Rip-off Reports™ on Cutco, Vector, please use the search box below

Cutco, Vector Search

In order to assure the best results in your search:

- Keep the name short & simple, and try different variations of the name.
- Do not include ".com", "S", "Inc.", "Corp", or "LLC" at the end of the Company name.
- Use only the first/main part of a name to get best results.
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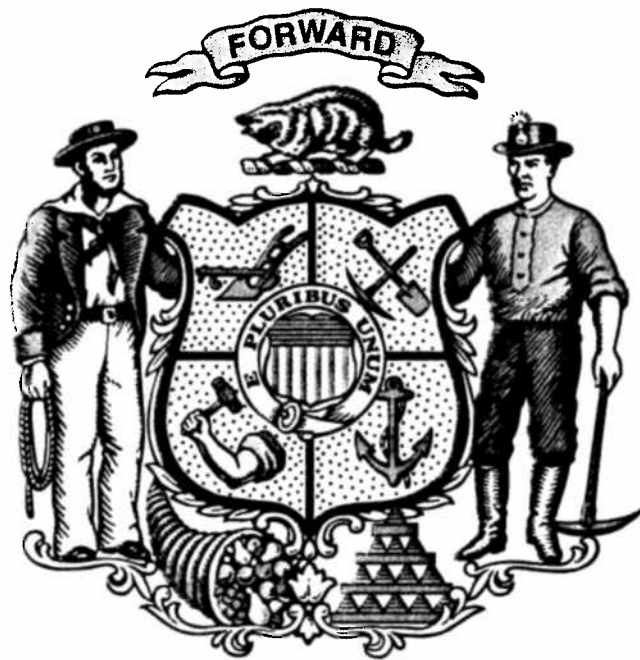
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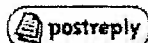
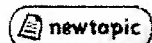
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Vector Marketing/Cutco knife selling scam

Goto page [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) [Next](#)



[CampusActivism.org Forum Index -> Main Forum](#)

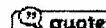
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Author

Message

aludate

Posted: Tue Oct 26, 2004 4:20 am Post subject: Vector Marketing/Cutco knife selling scam



Joined: 26 Oct 2004
Posts: 1

In case any of you didn't already know, this company advertises vague "Customer Service and sales" work in "housewares and sporting goods" with "no door-to-door or telemarketing" for over "\$12/base-appt" all over the US and Canada and it's main recruiting website is www.workforstudents.com

It turns out to be a kitchen knife selling scheme: after you pay about \$150 for a demo set (that may be refundable) you are turned loose to sell these knife sets to your friends and family costing anywhere from \$200-\$2000 with a starting commission rate of 10%. Then you're supposed to ask them for the contact info of their friends and family and do the same. As reps are often misled about their job, they are also often misled about the quality of the knives. You are hired as an independent contractor instead of an employee and that basically allows them to withhold pay for training, phone time, etc. There is a base pay per appt you don't sell at, as long as it is qualified by their standards (one-on-one done fully to someone over 25 with a job). They've admitted to fraud in settlements with the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (1999), Wisconsin Consumer Protection Dept and a County Court in Oregon (1994), and Arizona Attorney General (1992). Wisconsin surveyed 940 Vector Marketing recruits in 1992 and found that almost half either earned nothing or lost money working for Vector and they earned less than \$3 a day on average selling cutlery for Vector.

Many sites and newspaper articles have also been done on Vector such as:
RipoffReport:

<http://www.badbusinessbureau.com/reports/ripoff71189.htm>

Oregon Statesman Journal

<http://news.statesmanjournal.com/article.cfm?i=85450>

Channel 10 News Albany:

<http://www.wten.com/Global/story.asp?S=682631>

Cornell University:

<http://www.cornelldailysun.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2003/10/23/108143310240755c0e1bbe5>

[Back to top](#)



thewetzelpretzel

Guest

Posted: Thu Nov 18, 2004 4:54 pm Post subject: GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT



i started working for vector in august. its now almost december, and i have made about \$18,000. the knives are excelents, the sharpest things ever created. I know... I bought the 150 dollar starter kit and then the \$800 set i bought for my mother. All of my friends and family, and even complete strangers own it. It has been an awesome investment and makes the kitchen life so much easier. I have made a ton of cash and every single one of my customers i go back to i ask to write a report on their cutco, and out of 76 customers nobody had 1 bad



**Vector Marketing**

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Cutco Knives

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STOP the Scamful ways of Vector Marketing and Cutco Cutlery

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To: Vector Marketing and Cutco Cutlery

To whomever it may concern,

This petition is created in an attempt to stop the dishonest company, VECTOR MARKETING/CUTCO CUTLERY, and prevent the company from scamming any more innocent college students (victims).

I was actually one of the thousands and thousands of victims that have almost been apart of this ridiculous excuse of a company.

If you have been a victim (or know anyone who has been a victim) of this very dishonest company and their ridiculous ways of marketing, please sign this petition and get the word out to as many people as possible. Those people will also tell all that they can (much like Vector's very own pyramid scheme or Multi-Level Marketing tactic). The more people that know about this company, the less that will be apart of this "brainwashing cult".

Even if you haven't been employed at this company, and wouldn't like your friends/relatives to be part of such a company, please sign this petition.

Even the vector managers (if they were smart) wouldn't sign this!! if there are comments that defend Vector on this petition, you will know the people are Vector/Cutco "spies" as this is a petition 'Against' Vector. So Please keep a look out.

(Some of the following information has been transcribed from <http://vectormarketing.cjb.net>, a very informative website about the scamming ways of Vector/Cutco Cutlery that I strongly advice that everyone should check out before reading any further)! This website is admittedly, mostly one-sided. Use the following text at your own discretion:

To take a quote from 'The Complaint Station' from a person who works at a student employment office at a college in the US,
"Vector managers and former employees, including those who post at this site (The Complaint Station - <http://www.thecomplaintstation.com/cgi-bin/frames.cgi?0192>) are masters of 'spin.' If you talk with these folks, or read their posts, you'll see that any objections raised are answered with the same pat responses. But as is frequently the case, the truth has many pieces to it, and Vector's employees have mastered the art of 'choosing the truth, carefully.'

Well, enough from me. Look at these websites for complete information and make a wise decision. Don't be fooled by the trolls who defend Cutco here at The Complaint Station. Even if they are telling some version of the truth, they are the VERY small minority who do well with this.

FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS WORK FOR VECTOR!"

Now, My opinion (along with many others) is that Vector Marketing is a SCAM. They might send you letters in the mail, put ads in the newspaper, on your campus bulletin, and in other creative places all boasting work usually for \$15+ an hour. Vector targets people just out of high school and maybe a couple years older in college because young students generally are trainable, ignorant of corporate practices, non-threatening to potential customers, and don't have many other work options. When you call up they probably won't tell you exactly what type of work you will be doing, but they will most likely say that it is not telemarketing or door-to-door soliciting. Telemarketing AND door-to-door soliciting is, however, what this COMPANY is all about, they just have had a miraculous way of disguising it.

The job is selling Cutco knives at peoples' homes and they probably want as many people as possible to sell them in order to sell as many knives as possible. You yourself have to fork out money for a set of knives too (\$175, supposedly discounted from \$650), in order to display them to potential customers, and they are incredibly expensive. Not only that, but they only give you one day to buy it at that price before they double it (\$350). If they were to tell you all of this straightforward and right away, they would probably have a more difficult time recruiting. But the knives are good, but not the best, and relatively NOT worth the high price. The knives most people have in their home are perfectly fine anyway, and they would only be throwing away cash on something they don't need. Besides, if they wanted new knives, they would go to the retail store and buy some, they don't need salespeople hunting them down and bothering them about it.

I also suggest that you check the following website for information regarding the performance and more regarding Vector/Cutco:

http://www.geocities.com/cutcocomplaints/cutco_vector_alcas.html

You do NOT get paid for training and throughout the job you will probably be forced to attend workshops (that are a lot like sale pitches) and meetings you don't get paid to attend either (some of their conferences you even have to pay to attend)! Many sales reps complain of needing to constantly check in to their office, which they aren't paid for either. Some people have even reported their office closing down and not getting paid at all. Some people even lose more money than they gain.

In order to get a regular (40 hour a week) full-time paycheck you must somehow manage to get to 40 or so homes a week (8 appointments a day, this may take at least 16 hours of work per day) which is almost impossible. Altogether it would take at least 2 hours (not to mention time spent training, checking in to the office, attending meetings and conferences, and more that you don't get paid for). Vector does not pay for knives, clothes, gas, phone calls that are involved in a typical sale. There are numerous occasions where the company doesn't even pay the employees if they do not meet certain requirements. It turns out most of the time, that a minimum wage job will earn a great deal more amount of money than being a Vector representative, not to mention there is a huge amount of time, money, and stress saved. With a normal job, you are guaranteed a paycheck, with Vector, you are NOT!

How many companies have a whole message board dedicated to complaints about their company? Vector probably pays people to seek out these message boards (The Complaint Station - <http://www.thecomplaintstation.com/cgi-bin/frames.cgi?0192>) and defend their company and it is one of the most popular complaint message boards around, none of their competitors seem to have one. What can one expect from a company that hires mostly young inexperienced people to sell knives, especially to their friends/family! Vector claims that the students will feel more comfortable, but actually friends/family are more likely to buy it from you than a stranger would. Think about it, the students are going into strangers' homes with a bag full of knives, doesn't that sound just a little bit suspicious and dangerous?

Vector defends their program and calls people who quit within the first two weeks either lazy or poor sellers. Finding out the truth about a shady company and quitting does not necessarily make a person 'Lazy.'

This page only covers a minor fraction of the MANY topics about the corrupted ways of marketing of Vector/Cutco Cutlery. But you get the point. I do not want to sound like a broken record, but please remember to check <http://vectormarketing.cjb.net> as not all topics were fully covered here.

So sign this petition and support our cause if you do not want your child/friend/relative to fall into this scheme. The more names, The Better!

Thank you for reading

Sincerely,

The Undersigned

[Click Here to Sign Petition](#)

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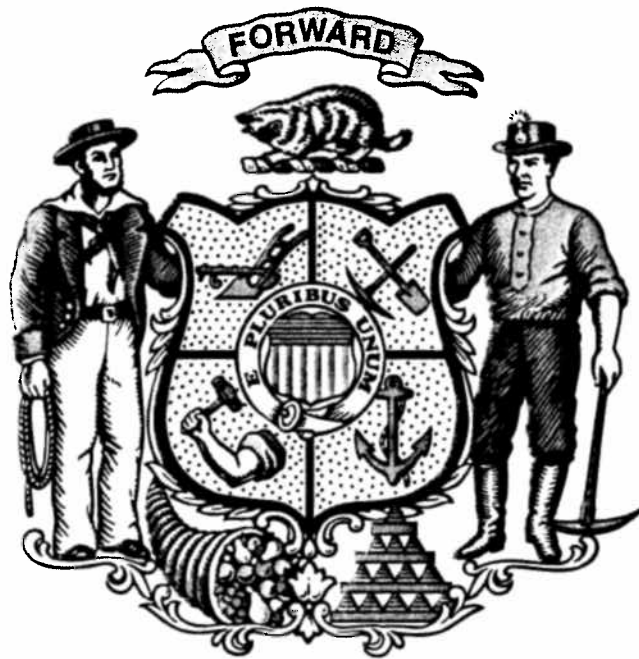
The STOP the Scamful ways of Vector Marketing and Cutco Cutlery Petition to Vector Marketing and Cutco Cutlery was created by Former Vector Employees (students/victims) and written by Disgruntled Worker. This petition is hosted here at www.PetitionOnline.com as a public service. There is no express or implied endorsement of this petition by Artifice, Inc. or our sponsors. The petition scripts are created by Mike Wheeler at Artifice, Inc. For Technical Support please use our simple Petition Help form.

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<http://www.PetitionOnline.com/vector/petition.html>

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Back ←



After you've worked hard all school year, it's tough to think about finding a job to raise money to do it all over again next year. Yes, it can be hard to find a decent paying summer job, much less one that's rewarding. But here's some practical information to make the search a little less painful and a lot more profitable.

Before you start job hunting, answer these questions:

- How much do you need to earn? Are you working to save money for tuition? Expenses? A car? Or are you looking for a rewarding experience? The amount of money you need by the end of the summer will restrict your choices.
- How mobile are you? Do you have a car? Are you willing to travel? Is a bus stop close to your house? Let potential employers know if you're limited to public transportation routes. And always factor in any transportation expenses and the time it will take you to get to and from work before you accept a job.
- What are your skills? If you have experience in any area, from child care to computers, it's a plus. The more

experience you have, the easier it is to get a job; and the more skilled you are, the hotter the job prospects, says Marty Rome, spokesperson for Kelly Services, Inc.

If you want to try something new, think of ways your skills could transfer to another job. For example, if you've waited tables for a few years and you want an office job, tout your customer service skills and your ability to handle many tasks at once. If you've been baby-sitting for years, your skills may be valued at a corporate day care, a health club, a city summer recreation program, or a summer camp.

- How adventurous are you? Are you a homebody or do you crave new experiences? If you want to get away for the summer but don't want to end up broke, factor in how much you'll be spending on phone bills, transportation, housing, and food.
- Do you know anyone who can help? Connections are still a great way to land a job. Some large organizations have summer job programs that give first preference to employees' children or relatives. Also, if you know anyone who works in a field where you either have experience or that is related to your education, give the person a call or send a note of interest with your resume.

Job hunting: on foot, on phone, or on-line

If you're in college, first check with your university's student job center, which serves as a clearinghouse for job opportunities. For example, the Student Job Center at the University of Wisconsin (UW) at Madison screens a variety of job postings, says Virginia Zwickey, coordinator of the UW job center.

Zwickey says local summer jobs are in relatively short supply, and the center has more listings for out-of-town jobs. "The best way to land a summer job is to find a year-round job that continues in the summer," Zwickey says. Rome agrees, "If students work for us during the school year, we can transfer credentials to their hometown Kelly office for quicker employment during the summer."

If you're connected to the Internet, you can find thousands of jobs posted on-line; just be sure to verify that they're legitimate and right for you. Your school's web page is

a great place to start. You also can search the web using search words such as *student jobs* or *summer jobs*. A search under *education and employment* at Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) listed thousands of summer job opportunities under categories such as national parks, summer camps, resorts, and ranches. The jobs ranged from wait staff, cooks, nurses, wranglers, maintenance, and security, to clerical positions.

Other web searches may yield sites for other university job centers, or summer job opportunities listed by state or job type. There is either an e-mail address or name and phone number to contact for more information or an application packet.

"There are wide-open opportunities for students at summer camps," says Zwickey, whose Student Job Center holds a summer camp job fair each February with eight to 10 states represented. With camps for inner-city kids, wilderness adventure, computers, performing arts, and canoeing, to name a few, the job experience can be varied and rewarding. And residence camps typically provide workers with food and lodging, which saves you money while you earn money.

Don't limit yourself to reading want ads. Many jobs never make it to the classifieds. You're better off visiting personnel offices at several companies and filling out applications to leave with your resume. Each spring the UW job center holds a job fair promoting local jobs. Check out your campus student job center for a similar program.



"You should never have to pay any up-front fees to get a job or information."

Job scams

Steer clear of classified ads offering cruise ship or postal jobs, or moneymaking opportunities such as stuffing envelopes or reading books. All you need to do is send in money to get more information! "These people are not employers," Zwickey says. "They are selling worthless books at inflated prices." One student showed Zwickey a cruise ship job book that she says "had 14 listings with only two working phone numbers. One job listing required applicants to go to Hawaii to apply."

"You should never have to pay any up-front fees to get a job or information," cautions Jody Collins, an assistant attorney general in Florida. "Anything that says money is required is a tip-off that it's a scam." Zwickey agrees and adds these other warning signs:

- The emphasis is on the money you can make, not on the job description.
- Company representatives are overly aggressive in efforts to recruit you.
- The language in the ad is vague, and you can't get information over the phone, only during an interview.

I was thinking of describing Southwestern here.

*Virginia Zwickey
4/10/07*

Although Zwickey says selling for an honest company can be an excellent background for students, there's a lot of hype and students have to be very careful. "We had a company that recruited kids and wouldn't let them sell in their own territory. They pressured kids to work unhealthy hours 12 hours a day, six days a week, and on the seventh day they have meetings," Zwickey says. Students had to pay for training, transportation, and lodging pushing overpriced books door-to-door using marginally ethical sales tactics. They were too far away and too broke to get home. Because of this, Zwickey says the Student Job Center generally does not post jobs seeking to hire students as independent contractors.

Selling yourself

Be honest, be direct, be neat, and show enthusiasm, advises Zwickey. "Most employers tell us they'd rather choose dependable over bright and difficult. Attitude and aptitude are the two most important things." She says a good attitude goes a long way and makes people want to give you a chance. Show that you can follow directions, be pleasant, and trustworthy.

Now you're armed with the knowledge to land a summer job that's right for you. Happy hunting.

GO TO

Table of Contents	Car Care	Summer Jobs	Smooth Flights
Education Expense	Fast Facts	Past Issues	