

Some Manufacturers Make it Easy for ‘Do-it-Yourself’ Recruiting

Dear Stephen,

I hope you don't mind, but I have to ask an unusual question about do-it-yourself recruiting. I am attaching a screenshot from the website of a Herman Miller owned dealer that I compete with, DWR Contract. I own a Herman Miller dealer, and as if business isn't hard enough today, I have to compete with another "contract" dealership, this one owned by my primary manufacturer. DWR Contract has the resources of a publicly traded company and a well-known retail brand, now promoting their contract division to the A&D community and end users. Design Within Reach is a glossy brand with the star power of RH or Knoll, except Knoll is not competing with its own contract dealers, and RH is a stand-alone brand.

Like most dealers and manufacturers, I am recruiting salespeople even in today's new normal, because we still need the best salespeople to survive and thrive. We saved money this year by not going to NeoCon and by lowering T&E expenses, and we got some PPP money, so I want to invest in salespeople.

I do not have the budget for a recruiter so I am doing it myself, along with our HR manager. Simply put, our formula has been to just cold call our competitor's salespeople or, where

possible, contact them on LinkedIn. It is not easy. Most of the sales people are not listed on the company website, and most companies are smart enough not to put their best people on LinkedIn.

Recruiting is a complicated chore, very time consuming and a lot of hit-and-miss. I have a stack of resumes on my desk but have found the hard part is figuring out which is the real deal, the top performer. As I struggle to survive, the fact that I now have to compete with the same manufacturer I helped grow by selling so many of their workstations and chairs is disheartening. I think of it as sort of like eating one's young.

OK, so look at what I emailed you — a screenshot of a page from the DWR Contract website (<https://www.dwrcontract.com/SalesReps>). It's literally all the salespeople and everything needed to recruit them! To me the photographs look like expensive glossy headshots a regular Herman Miller dealer could never afford, but when you have shareholder's money I guess you can. They are all smiling, and every woman is wearing lipstick! Very sexist to me. The salespeople look like models from a Banana Republic ad, and not exactly overwhelm-



You can send your workplace questions to Stephen at: StephenSays@bellow.press

Questions selected to be answered, will appear in this column. Please use the Subject: Stephen Says for all emails. Stephen Viscusi is a bestselling author, television personality, and CEO of The Viscusi Group, global executive recruiters located in New York. Follow Stephen on Twitter [@stephenviscusi](https://twitter.com/stephenviscusi), Like [Stephen on Facebook](#); and follow him on [LinkedIn](#).

ingly diverse. Here is the best part: Their name and e-mail and direct phone number! My HR person said this is a recruiting dream come true. My view is, I think it is important to have a website to showcase product and your company's capabilities, but this is like a Tinder meets Nike advertisement. Why showcase all these model-like salespeople and provide a smooth pathway to recruit them? Is that a marketing strategy?

And finally my question: We have contacted some of the people by using the phone numbers listed on the website (I did not use their work e-mail) — is this ethical? I am about to extend an offer to someone I found like this way, and it seems too good to be true. Hey, I saved your fee! What do you think?

Signed,

Frugal Dealer Recruiting Salespeople

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Sales Reps

Lets get your project started.

DWR Contract Reps are ambassadors of modern design. Your dedicated Rep works with you to consult on products, quickship needs, specifications and customization. From concept, to presentation, to shipping, they act nimbly to provide the resources, and products, you need to realize your projects. Find your area Rep below or [contact us](#).

Meet the Team

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Dear Frugal Dealer,

Well, you have discovered a secret that most good recruiters already knew about. Yes, some companies (not too many) naively like to show off their salespeople, let alone give you their phone number to call and even those beautiful headshots (not too many do that). Yet remember you cannot evaluate a candidate by the way they look, and I suspect Herman Miller is a lot more diverse than this one page reflects. Why do you think they do it that way? Do you think they think if an end user or designer from say, Gensler, sees what the rep looks like they will call and request a presentation or an RFP on a project they are working on?

A lot of what you wrote is just complaining that the manufacturer you feel you have helped grow is now competing directly with you. And you may be right — why do they still need you? I'm not sure of the answer to that but I do know that historically, manufacturers that have abandoned their distribution chain have seen sales volume go down, not up.

To answer your direct question, go for it, recruit away. If they are putting the salespeople right out there, every other manufacturer, independent rep and dealer will start to call them now anyway. And if you are a manufacturer or dealer reading this, take note — your salespeople are your best asset. They deserve to be

rewarded and thanked and showcased, yet in my opinion some of the specifics should be your best kept secret. A team picture is one thing, but once you start showboating them in glossy headshots, and even tell us how to reach them, you are not really doing a service for your customer because they are easy for them to find anyway. You are doing a disservice to your own company because a smart competitor is just going to poach them.

And if showing off your attractive young sales team to prospective customers is a new marketing strategy, shame on you! Hashtag you know what!

Stephen