

The Ultimate Responsibility Is Ours

By Bob Burg

I'll never forget when an early business mentor told me, "Burg, when the shooter misses the target...it ain't the target's fault."

It made sense as soon as he said it. And, the older I get, the more correct I believe he was. After all, Selling is simply determining the needs, wants and desires of our prospective customer, and then effectively communicating to them that we can satisfy those through our services.

In other words, we must understand our prospect...and they must understand that we understand them.

How often do we try and get our point across but fail? It seemed that "what (s)he thought I said isn't what I meant." Or even, "what (s)he thought I meant isn't what I said."

Whose "fault" is this misunderstanding? Who is to "blame?"

I believe the answer is . . . "it doesn't matter." In my opinion, fault and blame are both irrelevant.

On the other hand, if we were to ask whose "responsibility" it was for the message not being received as intended, I'd say it is the sender's.

Yes, the onus is on the communicator to ensure their message is understood.

When the late, Dr. Stephen R. Covey, in his classic, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* suggested (in Habit #5) that we "Seek first to understand, then to be understood," he was certainly right on the mark. Doing so is vitally important in the communication process.

Both parts are important. Here, however, we are referring to the second part of that Habit.

You were *not* understood. Your message missed the mark. It did not hit its intended target.

If that's the case, first, take responsibility for it. Then, look at why it happened and how to more effectively communicate that message next time.

Nine times out of ten, the major reason was that two different **belief systems** – yours and theirs – were at work in some way, confusing the issue.

And saying nine times out of ten is probably underestimating it by about a tenth!

Key Point: Be sure that what you said and meant...is what they heard and understood. How? Ask enough clarifying questions to be sure.

The anguish it will save you is immense. And, the number of customers whose lives you will bring value to, as well as the additional income you'll earn, will be well worth it!

Bob Burg is coauthor of the International Bestseller, *The Go-Giver* (over 500,000 copies sold in 21 languages). To read Chapter One and connect with Bob visit www.burg.com.
