

A Brand Journey:

Installment 1: "Sales Stars of the Slums"

July 6, 2016

Hear the word "saleswoman" and what do you think of?

This? ("Woman A")



Or this? ("Woman B")



Both of these women are commission-only saleswomen, and each is the primary breadwinner in her family. Each uses her commission checks to feed and clothe her children and to keep a roof over her family's head.

Both of these ladies' selling programs are based on research, with on-going monitoring and evaluation.

The more Woman A sells to her handful of business accounts, the more money she makes and the more money her company makes. If she's lucky, she'll hit her goal again this year, make a sizable deposit into her kids' college funds, and make it to President's Club in Cabo San Lucas.

The more Woman B sells to her 70 clients, friends, and neighbors in her community, the more money she makes and the higher the number of families who practice basic hygiene behaviors to decrease the incidence of diarrheal disease in her community.

Why? Because Woman B is selling a product called Power Soap in her community and training her clients in proper hand-washing techniques. As a result of her skills and hard work, 65% of her clients will improve their hand-washing behaviors by using soap more consistently within six weeks of her selling them soap and training them in behavioral change.

The higher the number of clients who make this change, the faster her sales and intervention program is working to reduce the death rate of children under the age of five due to diarrheal disease (Black et al., 2010). Why is this important? Because every year

diarrheal disease kills an estimated 1.5 million children globally (WHO and UNICEF, 2009). **Inadequate sanitation, limited access to clean water, and poor hygiene practices are responsible for 88% of diarrheal cases (African Population and Health Research Centre, 2002).**

An amazing woman I met recently from Boulder, Colorado, is the Executive Director and braintrust behind Power of Hope Kibera (www.pohk.org).



“POHK’s mission is to reduce diarrheal disease and mortality among children under five years of age through micro-enterprise solutions that also empower women,” says Fenson-Hood. Why the focus on hand washing? “Because the Kibera slums have no sinks or running water, and soap is a precious commodity, hand washing is often an overlooked activity. However, we have extensive research documenting that basic hygiene efforts like washing your hands with soap are the most simple, cost-effective, and successful approaches to preventing diarrhea.”

A few quick stats about POHK’s unique trifecta of micro-enterprise, improved behavioral health, and women’s empowerment:

- Sellers have approximately 70 clients each and earn twice as much as monthly rent.
- 1,400 people potentially impacted by the hand-washing intervention (based on average household size of seven).
- **Overall impacts of the intervention were statistically significant and were submitted for publication in an academic journal.**
- POHK’s goal is to within three years partner with 100 sellers and 10,000 clients.
- Sellers can earn enough to feed, clothe and house a family of seven in Kibera. (based on an updated business model).
- 70,000 people may be impacted by the hand-washing intervention within three years (based on average household size of seven).

- POHK is part of the community. Local Kiberans started Power of Hope Kibera in 2005, and in 2013, U.S. non-profit status was established through fiscal sponsorship.

You can read more detail about the problem and solution at pohk.org/pohk-model/problem/.

Now, picture a woman selling to another women. Do you see this?



Or this?



“Sales Stars of the Slums” is first in 10-part series (bondbrands.com) that will take writer/consultant Robin Bond to Kibera with POHK to document the organization’s recruiting and training program as she works with POHK Executive Director Kelly Fenson-Hood and her Kenya-based team to re-brand the organization for optimum impact.