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Roland Hopkins - Founders Message: Profiling in business

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My favorite TV show is Criminal Minds. Why? Because they profile people, something I have been learning for years. We all know what we are thinking, but how many of us concentrate on what others are thinking?

Start caring what the other person is thinking and you will be learning profiling. When I started my business, I received a phone call from Dunn & Bradstreet. They offered a service checking people's credit and advised me that I should never sell ads to anyone until I had checked their credit. It made good sense, but being business-ignorant, I told them that just because a client doesn't pay one bill doesn't mean he won't pay mine "and I really believed that.

To this day I have never checked anyone's credit and never even wanted to know. I have never even suggested that an advertiser pay in advance, and ultimately got burnt very few times. I discovered that I had several clients who were notorious bad payers with other people, but always paid me when they received their bill. Why? I guess they thought it important to see their name in the paper and felt it was valuable to reach our readership.

Here's an important rule that I learned by studying profiling, if someone insists that you pay in advance they are suggesting that they don't trust you. How does that make you feel? They don't even know you and they don't trust you.

Here's the profile: If someone shows that they don't trust you right away, they are most likely untrustworthy themselves. Example: I recently attempted to buy an Internet ad, and by the way, I have an excellent credit rating. They insisted that I pay them in advance. Guess what? I didn't do business with them because they proved that they weren't interested in how they could help me, but only in my money. Thus, I could never trust them.

Next time you are buying an ad with newspaper, magazine, or on the web, or you are solicited and the salesperson insists that you pay in advance, tell them what you have learned about profiling and see what they say. I'm not saying that you should refuse to buy the ad, but the ensuing conversation should be interesting and enlightening.

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