

# Can You Avoid Scam? Yes, of Course.

By Irena Whitfield

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Internet opens new horizons, brings us loads of opportunities and vast possibilities of all kinds. As everything, it has two sides: it can be a dangerous weapon for anyone not knowing how to handle it right, and a great, helpful and obedient servant for everyone knowing how to use it.

One of the major problems is scam and waste of time because still too many people don't recognize it in time, before they lose either their money or credibility or even all business. It is crucial to tell the hype, scam and waste of time, and protect yourself, your business, your time and your money. To protect your name, your business, your brand, and in the first place your credibility is the same important as to protect your money and your time.

First, let's try to clarify the mysterious words 'scam' and 'hype': it is an activity aiming at getting other people's money using unethical tools. Purposely I don't say 'illegal' but 'unethical' because many of the tools are legal. However, the result is scam or waste of time anyway. And the result decides.

It is also necessary to realise that there are basically two kinds of 'scam': intentional and unintentional. I consider the latter even more dangerous. I will explain this in a minute.

Second, your credibility: All of us make mistakes. It's OK, but the way you treat your mistakes decides about your success or failure. Once you are in business, you must care about your name and your credibility. Sometimes it may happen that you lose some money. It's 'fine' if you yourself lose the money, but you can survive and no one knows. You at least know the way wasn't the right to take. You received your lesson, and will be more careful next time.

However, you must be extremely careful to lead people trusting you into such a loss. Even if you can survive financially, mentally, your business will not because your credibility is ruined. So, be very cautious before you recommend something to another person.

And in spite of this, we can see literally thousands of people claiming to be netpreneurs recommending scams and hype all over the Net. If we suppose that most of them don't do it intentionally, then there are only two reasons: carelessness or inability to recognize scam. And both are absolutely unacceptable within an entrepreneur.

So, how to tell the scam and not only on the Net. The immediate signs:

1) unrealistic promises, one-time opportunities

- 2) upfront payment to join an opportunity
- 3) unprofessional behaviour
- 4) lack of proper communication
- 5) misleading information
- 6) hype advertising
- 7) fraudulent conduct

Now, you say you can't imagine much.

So, let's have a look at the individual items:

ad 1) unrealistic promises, one-time opportunities - this says it all. If someone claims you can develop a steady income of thousands of dollars within a week without work, you must know it's a lie. If someone invites you to copy a one-time opportunity, he's either a liar or not a professional, business person able to recognize a one-time opportunity. Of course, you can sell scam, even be making some money on it though not for long, but definitely you can't successfully copy a one-time opportunity.

ad 2) upfront payment to join an opportunity - you should realize that once you join someone's opportunity, you help to build his business, you take up the obligation to work for him, you endorse his business, so never pay for this. The other point is that it is an opportunity for you to build yours as well, a chance for a successful business relationship - what quality the co-operation will be is up to both of you, and beyond the scope of this short article.

ad 3) unprofessional behaviour - a couple of examples: a) you receive an ezine singing chorals about a hype and/or having your first name all around the issue, b) you come to a website and you can't make out a business theme, the actual offer, their business line (please don't confuse with the technical side, nor the products offered, we're talking about the people behind now), c) showing your cheques.

ad 4) lack of proper communication - a couple of examples to get the feeling: a) you receive a reasonable email offer, you reply and that's it - no response b) you come across an interesting service or product on a website, you contact the webmaster for more info, and again, no response c) or you receive a response but it's clear that the person just replies without reading your mail at all d) correspondence containing bad language, no structure, no names, no facts, you don't know why the person writes you, just advertising.

ad 5) misleading information - eg if someone promises something free to you but you've got to pay a membership fee or any other cost to get it.

ad 6) hype advertising - as soon as you see an ad or receive an email promoting hype or scam you know that you're not dealing with a proper business professional, so it's a waste of time for you to start a co-operation.

ad 7) fraudulent conduct - a completely different category is a person intentionally trying to get your money ie a person who knows he's promoting hype or scam or behaves fraudulently on purpose, trying to rob you of money or time and credibility - just a little example: companies trying to make you promote them, work for them or offering a service or product but knowing that you wouldn't for a reason, so they don't tell you but they (=the better ones) state this in their terms of use, knowingly expecting that you won't read it, others (=the worse) don't tell you at all until you sign up a contract and learn yourself on the way, companies not paying out your earned money within an acceptable period though cashing their commissions and using your money to finance their business.

The above are just little examples occurring in thousands every day. And now you're asking how to cope, what to do to avoid it and to protect yourself, your time and your business.

The only way to go is to develop your sense to know at once, as soon as you come across such an item.

How to learn: experience is the answer. Learn, read, apply, test, take your time to study, listen to others, learn from others, stop your chaotic run from one opportunity to another, don't think you miss something if you stop for a day, a week, a couple of months and study and grow. The vital point is to read, and to learn how to read: once you utter you have no time to read, you're finished. The real start is to grow yourself into a true entrepreneur, and you can't without reading and studying. It needs a complete change in thinking, in the attitudes, in the life values, responsibilities, discipline.

An entrepreneur is not a person making a few bucks for a couple of months without working, but who is able to work hard, to accept risks, to be responsible for himself, for his business in good and bad, for the people dependent on him, to develop and accept the lifestyle he imagines, and support it and retain it not for a couple of years but for a couple of generations. An entrepreneurship is not a seasonal job, it's not a job at all, it's not a business opportunity, it's a lifestyle, a specific way of thinking, it's the ability to accept obligations, hard work, discipline - the bigger and tougher, the higher the lifestyle you want to have for yourself and your people, not only your family.

The good news is that it's not necessary to be born an entrepreneur (though it's much easier if you are) but you can grow yourself into one. And the other good news is that good, real opportunities will always be around because true entrepreneurs invent them all the time, and as soon as you grow into a real, professional, a true entrepreneur, you will discover your own inventiveness, you will be able to develop your own ideas into opportunities for yourself and the people you want to help to achieve what they imagine for themselves.

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