

John Reese Apology Letter

Tali,

About two weeks ago, I sent you an email that I absolutely should not have sent you. I've waited until now to say something because I wanted the "smoke to clear" and give people a chance to express their concerns.

The email I am referring to is the one that promoted the "Rich Jerk Playboy Mansion Party."

I used completely bad judgment and it was something I should not have done. So I am sending you this message to apologize for my actions and to admit that I made a major mistake...

Several months ago, I was invited to attend a charity networking event at the Playboy Mansion and I agreed to attend. I was asked to promote the event to my customers and I also agreed.

But before I agreed to attend or promote the event, I am willing to admit that I had some major reservations about it and this was for two main reasons...

1. The company that was putting on the event uses offensive and 'controversial' marketing.
2. Half of the event was being held at the Playboy Mansion. (The rest of the event was more formal networking in a hotel conference room.)

So my initial thinking was that if I attended this event and/or endorsed it, I would be supporting the kind of marketing that this company creates AND many may also think that I am promoting pornography.

But the other part of my thinking knew that many GOOD PEOPLE I was friends with had already committed to attend the event AND I know of many others that have attended charity functions at the Playboy Mansion in the past and I realize how exaggerated things are said about it -- and most people don't realize that the mansion property cannot be used unless money is raised for charity.

On top of that, I figured if I just explained to my list that I did not condone the offensive marketing tactics of that company that they would understand -- after all, MY CONSISTENT ACTIONS over the course of the past FIVE YEARS speak for itself and people already know what kind of person I am.

BUT I WAS MISTAKEN.

After I sent out that email, and clearly tried to make it known that I did not condone the offensive marketing tactics that company used in any way, shape, or form, my office started receiving phone calls and emails...

Several customers and newsletter subscribers complained and let it be known that they were ANGRY. Very angry.

They accused me of having no integrity. Some of them said that I had sold my soul to the devil. Others called me a liar and "just another greedy guru."

I just couldn't believe that so many people were so angry from what I said in the email I sent out...

AND THEN I DISCOVERED IT WASN'T JUST ABOUT THE EMAIL...

It was about the "sales letter" that the email linked to.

Say Hello To The Biggest Idiotic Mistake I've Ever Made In My Entire Life...

When I sent out the email that said I was going to the charity event (and didn't agree with that company's marketing) the official sales letter that 'sold' the event wasn't online yet -- it was using a typical "come back soon" type of LAUNCH page that the Internet Marketing industry uses to launch new products...

But shortly after I sent out my email the official site went online and it was DISGUSTING. It was one of the most offensive pieces of writing I've ever seen. And, unfortunately, many people on my list had already seen it too.

I'm sure there will be a few that might say I am full of it, but I can honestly say that I NEVER SAW ONE WORD

OF THAT SALES LETTER BEFORE I SEND OUT MY EMAIL.

BUT...

I take full responsibility. I emailed my list. I was dumb enough to link to a site that is run by a company that has used GARBAGE marketing in the past. So the fact that I didn't know what was going to be shown really doesn't matter.

I still promoted it and now I have to live with the results of my actions.

Many other marketers that agreed to promote the event (along with me) complained about the offensive sales letter. The company eventually took it down and replaced it with a much 'tamer' version -- although many people (myself included) still didn't like it.

Keep in mind that this was truly the WORST thing (by far) that this company had ever done. It wasn't even close to things they had published in the past.

BUT I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

Again, it doesn't matter. I should have known better because I knew this company used marketing that I didn't agree with, so the 'degree' of how disgusting it was really doesn't matter.

I used bad judgment and I paid a heavy price for it. With many people I lost the respect and integrity that I had worked very hard to build during the past 5 years online as a teacher. And I don't blame them. If someone sent me an email (no matter how it was justified) and it linked to the garbage that my email linked to, it would make me re-think my opinion of that person as well.

BUT HERE'S THE WORST PART...

More than anything I am concerned about how the marketing of this event was damaging to the hard-working WOMEN of the Internet Marketing industry.

The marketing was very sexist and took the position that the networking event was purposely only for men --

nearly implying that Internet Marketing was no place for women and that they weren't allowed.

This was extremely poisonous.

The Internet Marketing industry is what it is because of MANY great women marketers. Women like Lynn Terry, Alice Seba, Rosalind Gardner, Alexandria Brown, Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero, and Liz Tomey just to name a few.

Many of them have contributed to this industry equally if not MORE than many of the men have. They bust their butts and work extremely hard. And they all (including many, many more I didn't mention) deserve RESPECT as well as RECOGNITION for their contributions.

The one thing they DON'T deserve is EXCLUSION.

And I'm afraid that's what the positioning of this networking/charity event has portrayed.

The RJ company made all of those 'moves' as they were primarily targeting men, but the "bi-product" of this marketing really alienated the women of our industry.

The RJ company DID however make some last minute adjustments and make it known that women could attend (and many women I hear are now going) but their marketing was still very damaging.

Many of these women publicly stated on their blogs that they didn't have anything against the Playboy location itself, but were disgusted with the sexist "women aren't allowed" angle that the marketing used.

I want to take a moment to publicly apologize to all of the women in this industry. *I* take full responsibility for my large part of publicizing the marketing that was used for this event -- even if I stated I didn't agree with it, I still put the link in front of people and exposed others to it. So I am partly to blame.

BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE EVIL MARKETERS THAT PROMOTED THE EVENT!!!

Many people that were upset by the marketing for this event posted on blogs and on discussion forums that they felt any marketer that promoted this event had no morals or ethics, only cared about making money, and were using a 'charity' as an excuse.

Well, I can't tell you how INACCURATE those claims actually are...

I know many (certainly not all) of the marketers that promoted this event. Many of them agree with me that the marketing for the event went TOO FAR and that the sexist positioning was disgusting. The majority of us wish we had never promoted it in hindsight -- but we did and now we have to live with it.

But I want to publicly state that I know many of these marketers personally and they are GOOD PEOPLE. I know many of their wives and their kids. And I know what kind of people they really are -- they wouldn't be personal friends of mine if I didn't feel they had incredible integrity.

Many of these guys, along with myself, were attacked and insulted online after the promotion for this event -- and rightfully so as I have already explained.

But anyone that truly thinks these guys are evil, greedy people don't really know them. I hope before people cast permanent judgment on them that they realize two things:

1. We all make mistakes.
2. It would be a bit unfair not to consider one's past, consistent actions before jumping to condemn someone.

It's important to note that NO ONE made any direct commission from promoting the event. The compensation was a free ticket to the event and additional free tickets for friends if they referred other sales. Some will say that there was some hidden agenda of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" but that really wasn't the case.

Free admission to the event, plain and simple. Maybe other marketers did it for other 'political'

reasons, but that surely wasn't MY case or others that I have talked to.

It's also very important to note that many of these marketers (along with myself) are the same group of people that donated their time, money, and resources to help the following causes:

(An incomplete list)

- Raising over \$600,000 for Katrina victims and recently over \$100,000 for starving children through Stephen Pierce's www.ForAGreaterCause.org
- Providing heart defect operations through Dr. Mani's "A Day For Hearts" fundraiser:
<http://www.chdinfo.com/chdaware/partners.htm>
- Recently raised money for autism to support Dr. Mike's fundraiser at <http://www.marketersonamission.org>
- Helped send a school teacher to El Salvador last Christmas to help poor rural children:
<http://www.myideaguy.net/es.htm>

And the list goes on and on.

I, personally, give a lot to charity (and individuals) every year. I just don't use it in my marketing to try and gain publicity -- because I don't want people to think that I am doing it just to make money, etc.

You can do your own online research and find plenty of proof of what I have done. (Along with what many other marketers have/are doing as well.)

And, by the way, a few people online thought the charity for this event was fake or something -- and I don't really blame them since the marketing for the event was so offensive; it would have made sense.

But the charity is real and IS going to greatly benefit from this event. They are called the "Urban Health Institute" and they provide medical services and help to those in need after natural and man-made disasters.

They are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and their records can be verified at www.guidestar.org. The full company name is "Urban Health Institute Inc."

AND HERE'S WHERE JOHN REESE BECOMES A HERO

Now here's the part where John Reese becomes a hero... here's the part where I publicly denounce this networking/charity event and chastise any of the other marketers that won't TAKE A STAND and do the same...

Here's where I stand to get tons of new business and make a lot of money because I make myself stand apart from the rest of the market by publicly lashing out at this event that has gotten so many people upset. It would be the easiest money I will probably ever make...

BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

In hindsight, I wish I had never promoted this event and had anything to do with it. If I had known how offensive and sexist that original sales letter was going to be, and have known how everything was going to make people feel, I wouldn't have touched it with a 1,000,000 foot pole.

But I DID promote this event and I take full responsibility for my own actions. Many of my customers and other marketers are now going to this charity/networking event because of my promotion and it wouldn't be fair to them if I cancelled my appearance and didn't go -- I've received no less than 20 emails from people that said they are going and can't wait to finally meet me in person.

I know, I know, there will be a small few that will try and say, "Oh, he's just trying to justify his evil sinning ways so he can go to the Playboy Mansion!"

Umm, no, I'm not.

To be honest, I am looking forward to going just to say "I've been there and seen it in person" because it's a pretty famous place.

It's also important to note that the marketing for this event (and related to the Playboy Mansion) was completely BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION and anyone that knows about events at the mansion knows the truth -- you can research it yourself.

There aren't going to be sex acts and orgies taking place -- not even close. I imagine there will be 200-300 party guests and probably 10-15 girls working as waitresses and hostesses.

So the whole "image" of what goes on there is totally exaggerated. I know, because I have several friends (non-marketers) that have attended functions there and have told me it's the most overrated place on earth.

Some, however, have raised a reasonable issue...
"By going to the Playboy Mansion aren't you supporting everything Playboy stands for?"

I, personally, don't feel that way. It's a massive house with tennis courts and a zoo. It's not a porn factory.

But I totally understand the fine line and fully respect people that don't feel like I do that it's just a big house where people are getting together.

Marketing is always a very, very fine line. And supporting brands, companies, and certain advertising has all kinds of implications.

For example, did you know that the "American Idol" show is built on profits from vulgar and offensive rap lyrics about women being "bitches and whores" and condones using/selling drugs and committing murder?

Well, it's true.

Sony BMG Entertainment is the company that controls the record labels that all the contestants end up releasing their records through. Sony BMG essentially is the "backend" behind American Idol and is the primary reason it exists. Well, Sony BMG has *MANY* artists that produce rap lyrics like I just described. Go to their web site, browse through their different label divisions and see for yourself:

<http://www.sonybmg.com/>

So if you watch and support American Idol you are essentially providing financing for all that crap that is influencing today's youth (as well as adults.)

For the record, I'm a big fan of American Idol but I'm not happy about how Sony makes a lot of their money.

As I said, it's a very fine line and one we all must choose for ourselves.

I want to thank you for reading this long message. I feel it's an important one. I also want to say again...

I'M VERY SORRY.

I'm very sorry that I sent you the email that linked to such a disgusting web site. And I'm also very sorry to any of the women in this industry that were offended by the marketing for this event.

And for those of you that might feel I am "copping out" by still attending this event and associating myself with the RJ company that I have publicly stated to be so against, it comes down to one simple thing...

I am a man of my word and I intend to honor that.

As much as I am upset and bothered by how all of this turned out, and I truly wish that I never had anything to do with it, I still made a commitment to attend the event and others are expecting me to be there.

For anyone that's on my list and thinks that I EVER do anything purposely deceitful or to be dishonest, PLEASE remove yourself immediately. I don't want to do business with you.

In the past 5+ years online, and working in this industry as a teacher, I have never once lied or misled people about ANYTHING. And I don't intend to ever start. I have always been very open and honest about all of my marketing.

I am also able to admit when I make a mistake and that's why I sent you this message. For those that can understand my view of it all, and can forgive me, THANK YOU.

As for those that won't ever forgive me for what happened, I at least thank you for listening and giving me the opportunity to explain things.

Yours For Online Profits,

John Reese