



August 29, 2013

The Honorable Edith Ramirez
Chairwoman
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20580

Dear Chairwoman Ramirez,

The principle mission of MANA – A Latina Organization, is to support and empower Latinas through leadership development, community service and advocacy. MANA's membership is wide ranging from young up- and- coming middle school Latinas who want to make a difference to 70 year old- plus "abuelitas" who have advocated for their communities their whole lives. Together, we have proudly served the Latino community for almost forty years, providing and expanding access to educational, health, and leadership opportunities.

As our economy continues to experience steady but slow progress, we understand first hand our community's desire to seek out reliable, alternative ways to supplement their incomes. Furthermore, as a woman of color and the past national executive director of Federally Employed Women, Inc., a nonprofit working to improve the status of women employed by the Federal government, I am well aware of the punishing wage gap that many Latinas in this country face. These wage gaps can cost Latinas critical income annually that could be better used to help meet their families' daily fundamental needs. This is why I write today, to urge the Commission to conduct a full investigation of the multi-level marketing company Herbalife and their deceptive business practices and abuses.

Herbalife is very popular among Latinas throughout the U.S. and throughout Latin America, and has historically won distributors over with the guarantee of an exciting business opportunity, by making unattainable promises of wealth and success. Herbalife claims it is both a product company and a business opportunity, but clearly this is a deceptive claim since the majority of Herbalife distributors make little or no income. According to Herbalife's own 2012 data, 88 percent of their participants received no payments from the company at all. I firmly believe this company benefits mainly from its far reaching network of hierarchically organized independent sales people, who recruit others and in turn make a profit off of them. On a personal level, I believe they prey on our most vulnerable, and I have seen some of my own friends in my home state of Texas fall victim to these terrible practices.

As a community, Latinas are always looking for ways to advance, get ahead, support our families and achieve our own piece of the American dream. There have been far too many troubling claims about Herbalife this year and with more conflicting issues continuing to come up, we strongly encourage the Commission to carry out a full investigation and thoroughly examine this company's practices as soon as possible. An investigation like this will serve an educational tool for many of our organization's members and their families who may have fallen prey to these schemes in the past.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Alma Morales Riojas
President and CEO
MANA, A National Latina Organization

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