

Doing Money Work in a Door-to-Door Sales Organization

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Previous sociological accounts of money have focused on meanings that attach to types of money but have given insufficient attention to how these meanings arise out of and are sustained by their use in interpersonal interactions. In this case study of a door-to-door sales company, we use a "cultural toolkit" conception of money meanings to show how managers and salespersons draw on these meanings to get things done. We examine how money meanings are used in three settings: (1) the salesperson–sales prospect interaction, wherein the presentation of self takes center stage, (2) the managerial relationship between the salesperson and his or her manager, and (3) salespersons' time "between doors," when they attempt to make sense of their situation and motivate themselves to continue. We show how money work is used for persuasion, worker control, decision making, and impression management.

Meeting of Enterprise Company¹ student dealers-in-training, Midwestern University Conference Room, April 1997—The meeting begins with Sue, one of the two Enterprise managers recruiting on campus, asking each of the future salespersons what they hope to get out of spending their summer vacations selling educational books door-to-door. The first recruit, Cindy, answered simply, "Money." Obviously unsatisfied with this answer, Sue cut in: "What do you want the money for?" Cindy then gave an account of the money's future use for her. She wanted to move into an apartment building with her three best friends, but her father told her she needed to make up the difference between the cost of the new apartment and campus housing. The tone of Sue's question had clearly indicated to the other dealers in the room that money alone was not a good answer to why they would want to sell books door-to-door. Although some of the college students mentioned money in their answers, all added another reason, such as, "It would be an opportunity to run my own business." Joann, another student,

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said, "Three weeks ago the answer was money. Now it is meeting people to see how I react to situations, to learn how to deal with people."

Enterprise Company sales school session, South City auditorium, June 1997—Linda, Enterprise's vice president of finance, presents the driest part of the sales school training, including how to compute sales tax, using a credit card imprinter, keeping records, and ordering books from the company. Linda is the only sales school instructor who has never sold books. She presents her information with enormous patience, answering all questions and often repeating facts several times. To keep the trainees' attention from flagging, she periodically sounds an air horn. At this cue, the assembled student dealers are to chant, "Books = Money!" If she is unsatisfied with the result, Linda will blast the air horn again until the chant is loud and enthusiastic.

Money, far from being "the economists' neutral, fungible medium" (Zelizer 1994), is routinely "earmarked"—labeled with meaning that distinguishes it from other monies and limits its use. This "multiple money" approach rests on the assumption that money "is a social convention, and, as such, people's response to it is determined by what they collectively think everyone else's response will be" (Carruthers and Babb 1996:1557). Although this approach shares the symbolic interactionist premise that people act toward things, in this case types of money, based on their meanings, it largely neglects how these meanings arise out of interpersonal interactions and are modified through interpretive processes (Blumer 1969). In this article we put forward an interactionist perspective on money meanings by focusing on how individuals use money to get things done, that is, their "money work." We argue for conceptualizing money meanings as a cultural toolkit (Swidler 1986) that individuals and organizations use to pursue their purposes in emergent interactions that are embedded in economic and organizational structures.

As the two opening vignettes suggest, money meanings in the Enterprise Company's educational book door-to-door sales division can be confusing and seemingly contradictory. At times members elevate and celebrate money; at others they view money as harmful, and salespersons attempt to avoid speaking or thinking about it at all. We argue that multiple meanings of money coexist at the company because all of them have some use to salespersons or sales managers who are attempting to get things done, either interpersonally, for example, with sales prospects, or when alone with their thoughts in the "book field." These social actors choose appropriate money meanings from their cultural toolkits to pursue their goals in particular settings.

We examine the use of money meanings in three key settings regularly encountered by Enterprise salespersons. During the sales demonstration, the salesperson tries to convince a sales prospect to buy a set of educational books. Impression management (Goffman 1959; Prus 1989a) is paramount here, and money meanings are chosen by salespersons to present the best impression and to enhance the chance of making the sale. In the recruiting-training setting, sales managers attempt both to convince potential salespersons that they can make money doing the job and to prepare them for the book field. Money meanings are also important when salespersons

are by themselves. Because they work alone, the interpretive processes by which they attempt to make sense of their work in the book field and to motivate themselves to knock on the next door are important for themselves and the organization. They must engage in emotion work (Hochschild 1983) to deal with the negative emotions elicited by the grueling working conditions. Salespersons who want to continue selling attempt to think or not think about money in ways that motivate them. These intrapersonal, interpretive efforts constitute the final setting in our analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current sociological approach to money meanings focuses on meanings attached to types of money, for example, gift, entitlement, or compensation (Zelizer 1996), or to “domains” where money is used. Viviana Zelizer’s (1989) term “*earmark*” describes how people mark types or forms of money to differentiate their use from other monies. The resulting systems of monetary differentiation can be thought of both as “*cognitive maps*” and as “*shared meanings systems*” (Zelizer 1998). Different “*social domains*” (Carruthers and Espeland 1998) or “*circuits*” (Zelizer 2002), for example, the family versus the workplace, “*incorporat[e] somewhat different understandings, practices, information, obligations, rights, symbols, and media of exchange*” (Zelizer 2002:277). This “*multiple monies*” approach largely consists of describing and tracing the historical development of the meanings of types of money in particular domains (Carruthers and Babb 1996; Helleiner 1998; Siegel 1998; Zelizer 1994, 1996). Carruthers and Espeland (1998) systematize this approach with three independent variables that determine the meaning of money: (1) the flow of money, that is, where it comes from and where it is going; (2) the limits placed on money’s use, for example, its exclusion from women’s housework; and (3) the form of money, for example, gold versus greenbacks.

Although this multiple monies approach is an improvement over viewing money as “*the economists’ neutral, fungible medium,*” two shortcomings have been identified. First, it focuses on money meaning as a dependent variable (Baker and Jimerson 1992), that is, on how money is earmarked rather than on how these designated meanings affect (or are used in) social life. We note, though, that accounts of how money is earmarked are usually descriptions of historical, not interactional, processes. Second, it focuses on less obviously commodified domains, especially the family (Baker and Jimerson 1992), not on more seemingly straightforward monetary transactions, such as sales. This approach attacks the stereotypical economist’s model of money by analyzing transactions that have resisted commodification or by demonstrating that money does not destroy social ties in intimate relationships, rather than showing that all economic transactions are embedded in social life (Nelson 1995).

Our work addresses these limitations by focusing on how salespersons use multiple money meanings during seemingly straightforward economic transactions. Using a symbolic interactionist approach, we conceptualize money meanings as resources

or conventions that people draw on to get things done, including constructing joint lines of action (Becker 1982; Stewart 1998; Swidler 1986).² Individuals draw on these meanings and modify and apply them creatively to pursue their purposes in a variety of emergent interactions in economic and organizational structures.

METHODS

We conducted this study in 1997 using varied research methods, including participant observation, interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and surveys. Berns, who had been an Enterprise salesperson from 1990 to 1992, gained permission to conduct this study provided that the company not be named. We examined salespersons' experience from their initial contact with the company through a summer of sales. From February through May we observed recruiting and training conducted by three "full-timers," recent college graduates who moved to Midwestern University to recruit teams of college students. We observed company interviews and group training sessions and interviewed the managers, members of their teams, and students who had joined but then quit their teams.

During the summer, we attended two weeks of sales school (eleven one-week sessions are held throughout the summer). Since rookie and veteran dealers often attend different sessions, we observed both types of sessions. We also obtained copies of a variety of company manuals, motivational audiotapes and books, and historical documents (e.g., business and sales records, company-commissioned histories) and distributed a survey to approximately 460 first-year dealers (327 were returned, for a 71 percent response rate). After sales school, we conducted two types of observations of salespersons in the book field. First, the first author observed seven salespersons for one day each. These days typically lasted around 15 hours: an early morning breakfast, 12½ to 13½ hours of going door-to-door, and a return trip to the salesperson's residence. We also attended eight "Sunday meetings," group meetings of salespersons held during their only day off, in five states.

At the end of the summer, we attended three days of "check-out" at company headquarters to talk to student dealers who had just completed a summer of selling. We held nine tape-recorded focus groups with a total of thirty-four participants. The company gave salespersons from our initial sample a copy of our follow-up survey; ninety-one of them returned it. The survey data were combined with individual sales data from the company. We also reinterviewed salespersons from the Midwestern University teams after they returned to school.

Over the course of 1997, the primary year of the study, we attended more than twenty Enterprise gatherings of various types in addition to spending two weeks at sales school and a week at a recruiting conference, both events that featured gatherings throughout each day. We conducted thirty formal interviews and engaged in many more informal conversations during our participant observation, including conversations throughout the seven days Schweingruber observed dealers selling.

Initially, we focused on Perrow's (1986) concept of unobtrusive control to learn

how managers attempt to change the way salespersons think and how salespersons themselves use or do not use these new ways of thinking to negotiate or resist the demands of their jobs. From early research, we identified key variables that managers and experienced salespersons claimed were important for working in the book field: self-transformation, teamwork, positive mental attitude, and money. We developed survey questions based on these variables and our understanding of salespersons' terminology and concerns. Our end-of-summer focus groups emphasized the techniques that salespersons use in the book field to motivate themselves.

The multimethod approach produced complementary data. Company training documents and sessions provided the company's official position on how the job should be performed and what obstacles salespersons face and how they are to overcome them. Although sales managers were aware that most salespersons fell well short of prescribed routines, we were able to learn just how salespersons perform the job and what they think about it. The quantitative data confirmed several of our hypotheses.

We adopt a symbolic interactionist perspective about the influence of social structure on interactions. Sales interaction patterns and the meanings used in them are embedded in a macroeconomic order and in an organization (Fine 1996). This structure shapes interactions (Blumer 1969; Fine 1991) by creating a series of standard settings (e.g., the sales demonstration) where actors act repeatedly and by providing a set of meanings, or tools, for making sense of these settings and maneuvering within them. This structure patterns the use of money meanings to some extent. However, the use of money meanings in these settings is not standardized, because (1) salespersons may reject or modify the company's prescribed meanings and purposes in favor of their own, (2) salespersons differ in their interactional skills and style, and (3) the use of money meanings takes place in emergent interactions.

MONEY MEANINGS AT ENTERPRISE

Historical Perspective on Money Meanings

Enterprise's founder, a Southern minister, began the company's student sales program in the wake of the Civil War to meet the needs of young Southern men. Shortly after the war began, the company smuggled Bible plates from the North and became the only Bible publisher in the Confederacy. The Bibles, sold for fifty cents and distributed to Confederate soldiers, would be the company's most prominent product for the next century. (The company currently sells mostly educational books.) At the conclusion of the war, Enterprise began organizing young Southern men impoverished by the war to sell the Bibles and other religious books to earn money for college tuition. Originally the dealers worked in crews that shared their profits at the end of the summer, but the company abandoned this system in favor of individual commissions in 1909.³ According to the official company history, a sales manager instituted the change. In 1905, his first year of selling door-to-door,

he had lost money because the rest of his crew fell ill during an outbreak of malaria. Despite this shift in distributing money, the primary meaning of money earned from selling books was a means of paying for college. It remained the dominant money meaning for nearly one hundred years.

The development of the second significant money meaning took place in response to expanding educational opportunities in the 1960s. The sales managers who took over the company at that time found that money had a different meaning for their student dealers than it had had for them when they sold books. The then-president of Enterprise reported in his biography:

I was a product of the Depression. I *had* to sell books to get through college. There was no other way for me to go. But a high percentage of today's youngsters don't have to do this. They can get a job on campus, borrow money, or have their parents pay all or a part of their way. They *do* have other ways. Money was the big—in fact, the only—incentive for many student salesmen in the past. Today, it is often something else.

Enterprise managers responded to this problem by creating alternative, non-monetary motives for selling books, in effect, to define the sale itself as a nonmonetary process. Chief among these motives was a student dealer's personal transformation, which came from the hard work of the book field and the guidance of his manager. This allows some students to feel good about the job even if they do not make very much money. One salesperson told us, "I would have made more money if I would have stayed at home [and worked another job], but I wouldn't trade this experience for anything because of the amount of personal growth you get in this job." Money remained an important benefit of the job for salespersons but not necessarily the most important one.⁴ It became a side effect, or evidence, of the creation of a better self, but it also became something that might distract salespersons from working on this better self.

Thus within the company multiple, sometimes competing meanings of money co-exist. Some dealers, like the one above, define the job primarily as an opportunity for personal growth. By deemphasizing money, they may imperil the company and their sales managers' profits. Others, for whom making money is the primary reason for joining the program, may undermine the focus on personal growth and interfere with the performances of other salespersons. One student, who did not earn a great deal of money, told us she resented the recognition given to those who do:

I didn't have a good summer as far as units go, or money. But I still worked through it and I still kept my commitment. To this day I have a positive attitude about this job. And a lot of times in Sunday meetings they don't recognize that. They recognize how many units you sold. And to me that's not what this job was about. So I kind of got resentful as far as recognition, like, I had a really hard time too, but I'm still here. Shouldn't I get recognized for that?

Since the risk of quitting the job is high—about one-third of salespersons leave each summer—company managers must carefully balance these emphases.

Money Meanings at Enterprise Today

Enterprise presents a nearly ideal case of what Perrow (1986) calls premise control, the control of workers by attempting to change the way they think. Enterprise dealers work alone, without direct supervision, and are legally independent contractors, which limits the type of bureaucratic control the company has over employees. This situation is not unusual in sales jobs. Both Biggart (1989) and Leidner (1993) have described the way in which sales organizations manipulate meanings to control workers, but neither focuses in depth on manipulating meanings of money. Enterprise managers describe the process of changing the way salespersons think as “emotional training.” They expect salespersons not only to think differently about themselves and their job but also to feel differently. The managers believe that emotional training is much more important than “technical training,” which consists of learning sales scripts and techniques. A topic of emotional training at Enterprise is money, and this training uses a variety of money meanings—claims, stories, arguments, and accounts about money. Some parts of training, like Linda’s air horn–induced chant, aim to get dealers to realize that “books = money”: successful dealers will make money, and making money is something to celebrate. However, in other parts of Enterprise training, like Sue’s training meeting, the company tries to convince student dealers that money is a bad reason for selling books door-to-door and that they should avoid thinking about it. Managers define the sale itself as a nonmonetary interaction.⁵

Money meanings are part of a larger toolkit of meanings that Enterprise managers and salespersons use to get things done. Managers use money meanings as tools for recruiting, organizing, and motivating their salespersons. Their ultimate goal is not to construct meanings of money but to construct an argument for selling educational books door-to-door. Money is just one link in a “chain of meaning”⁶ that includes meanings about the company itself, its products, its prospects, and, importantly, the present and future selves of its salespersons. Likewise, Enterprise dealers attempt to construct an argument for buying Enterprise books, using money meanings along with meanings of education, family, and the past and future selves of the prospects and their children. Salespersons might be presumed to suffer “cognitive dissonance” (Festinger 1957; Festinger and Carlsmith 1959) with regard to competing money claims and the desire to develop a coherent theory of money meanings. Although the apparent contradictions often confuse the salespersons (as do other aspects of the job), their job is practical, not theoretical. Multiple meanings of money coexist (even with explicit contradictions) because they are useful for solving various recurrent problems that arise while selling books door-to-door.⁷

RECRUITING PROSPECTIVE DEALERS: YOU DON’T HAVE TO SELL A LOT TO DO WELL

During recruiting “interviews” on college campuses, managers present claims, stories, and examples regarding the money students can make through the Enterprise

summer sales program. Managers believe that if only recruits will accept these “rational” proofs, they will banish the “irrational” fears that are keeping them from going door-to-door. In this setting, managers view the potential of making money as liberating college students from their fears and beginning them on the road to self-development. Some student managers believe that it is completely irrational, even nonsensical, not to sell books. One of them told us, “If you knew you could do it, you couldn’t throw \$10,000 away. It doesn’t make sense.” This manager conceded that some college students may not believe they can make \$10,000, but if he could convince them it is possible, it would be foolish for them not to do it. Some managers pressed this point during recruiting by asking students if they would take the job if they were given \$6,500 in advance. If so, they should take the job on the commission system since it had been proven to them that they would make \$6,500. It was a “guarantee.” The recruiting manual written for student managers expressed this view:

The vast majority of times, you’ll have trouble answering objections until you really get down to the real problem—*fear*. Fear is the problem all of them have. There won’t be a person you talk with this year who won’t have this problem. The ones who say they could do it, but won’t—why don’t they do it? Doing it provides money and experience, and that is what all of them say they would like to have. No matter what part of the country you recruit in, the biggest problem they all have is that they’re afraid they can’t make the money.

In the company interviews we observed, managers drew on three major arguments to “prove” that dealers will make money if they join the program. First, they show potential dealers statistics on the incomes of previous dealers. During the 1997 recruiting season, managers told prospects that first-year dealers the year before had averaged about \$5,600 and displayed a colorful bar graph depicting how average earnings increase every year, up to \$20,079 for a fourth-year dealer. (The sales manager responsible for the campus claimed that the students in his sales organization averaged \$6,500 and used that number.) The company plays on students’ expectations that they will earn even more with recruiting flyers like this one:

Students in our summer program make what they’re worth.
The average summer income was
\$5,600
Are *you* average?

Second, prospects learn about dealers who have made money. The *Superstars* book contains pictures of the previous year’s top dealers and their profits. Managers also point out dealers they have worked with and tell stories about them. Prospects meet experienced dealers who tell how much money they have made.

Third, the managers explain “how the money works” and the high commission. Since dealers are paid a 40 percent commission on their sales, a dealer can exceed average earnings by selling just two lead products (multivolume book sets) a day.⁸ An audience participation device relied on the prospects’ inflated idea of how many books they could sell and explained the commission system. After watching a sample sales

demonstration, managers asked the students how many sales they could make if they gave thirty demonstrations. Their answers typically ranged from ten to fifteen. The interviewer then informed them that they only had to sell two sets a day to earn \$6,500 for the summer. They would sell two a day because of the “law of averages.” According to this “law,” two out of thirty prospects will buy the books regardless of the dealer’s selling ability. Mandy, a manager who used this device, explained to her prospects:

I can’t teach you to sell twenty, fifteen, ten, or even five. I can teach you to show to thirty families. If you do this, the law of averages says you will sell to two. If you sell to two, you will save \$6,500. Would your coach put you in the game if you shot 2 of 30 in basketball? Would you be happy if you scored 2 of 30 on a quiz? This is bad sales ability, but there is a good commission. . . . You don’t have to sell a lot to do well. . . . Could you sell two a day? They sell themselves. [A company official] said you could tie the books to a dog’s butt and send it around the neighborhood and it would sell two a day.

Obviously, these “rational” claims, presented to prospective salespersons to free them from supposedly irrational beliefs and emotions, contain a number of logical fallacies; for example, not every student can be above average. These claims and stories exemplify the types of money meanings managers use to get things done. The company provides a collection of stories, statistics, and other pieces of evidence that managers selectively employ to make their argument. Some, like the bar graph of average earnings, were standard. Others, like the story of the book tied to the dog’s butt, was used only by one of the five managers we observed on that campus. (Note, though, that she had heard it from someone else in the company.)

Although managers design these “interviews” to be largely one-sided, potential salespersons bring their own money meanings to them and may challenge the framing being put forward. For instance, a prospect may inquire about the hourly wage, a common and “rational” way of evaluating jobs. The answer to this question is not very impressive, since salespersons are asked to work eighty hours a week for thirteen weeks (an average of \$6.25 an hour if the total profit is \$6,500). Managers attempt to counter this framing by focusing on the wage for the entire summer rather than calculating its hourly equivalent.

WHY MONEY DOESN’T WORK

Once a dealer signs a contract, managers begin training her with an eye to the settings she will encounter in the book field. As the opening excerpt suggests, managers tell dealers that money is a bad motivation for selling books door-to-door. This argument largely succeeded in changing the recruits’ views of money. According to our survey, 62 percent of rookie salespersons indicated that money first attracted them to the summer sales program. By the time they attended sales school after their college terms end, only 36 percent say that money is their primary reason for selling books for Enterprise, and only 14 percent say that money is the primary thing that will motivate them to work hard during the summer.

Enterprise trainers preach the message that money is a “corrosive force” (Leyshon and Thrift 1997) that can ruin a salesperson’s summer. Most salespersons—including the managers who conduct Enterprise training programs—claim that thinking about money while going door-to-door reduces sales for two reasons. The first reason, which arises from the internal conversations that go on in the book field, is that door-to-door sales is an emotional job that they must justify by “emotional purposes,” not rational, monetary ones. Managers and salespersons use the term “emotional purpose” to talk about nonmonetary motivations for selling books. The second, which derives from salesperson-prospect interactions, is that money causes dealers to mismanage their presentation of self, leading prospects to “see the dollar signs in the eyes” of the dealers and thus to reject these dealers and their products.⁹

Part 1: “There Has to Be a Bigger Picture”

Many dealers insist that the Enterprise sales job is so unpleasant that no amount of money would provide a good incentive for doing it. During a long day under the sun, lugging a heavy book bag, facing rejection at door after door, money loses the importance for these dealers that they may attribute to it at other times. Money is insufficient to overcome many dealers’ dislike of the job. According to one dealer, “There has to be a bigger picture to it. You have to get the big picture. Because no amount of money was worth what we went through. Really. It wasn’t. I would rather wait tables at home and get way less money than do this. So it has to be something more I’m out here for than the money” (white female, first-year dealer).

Dealers describe the book field as a world of deep negative emotions that they must deal with emotionally, not rationally. The company recommends that dealers’ emotion work (Hochschild 1983) focus on “something more” than money. According to another dealer, “You have to say, ‘I’m out here selling books so I can pay off my credit card debts’ or ‘I’m out here selling books so I can pay for tuition.’ Or something like that that’s more emotional. Because if you just do it for money, it’s nothing. You can’t think moneywise. You have to think about what the outcome is” (Asian female, first-year dealer). This dealer’s emotional purposes—paying debts and paying for college—most easily translate directly into monetary units. However, a dealer must reframe an abstract amount of money into something she feels deeply about, such as going to college. Dealers cannot easily translate many emotional purposes, for example, personal growth, family, commitment, into monetary amounts. One Enterprise manager described an emotional purpose to his sales organization: “An emotional purpose has a physical effect on you because it is so important to you. . . . It is something important enough to you that when you think about it, it’s a big deal. It makes your throat tighten and your eyes water.” Enterprise managers and dealers claim that money cannot produce this “physical effect.” Often described as a “reason to keep you going when the money no longer does,” an emotional purpose, by definition, excludes money.

A major factor contributing to the emotional nature of the job is its seemingly random outcomes. Since dealers are paid by commission, many feel that there is no direct short-term relationship between work effort and money. According to one dealer, “This job is so weird. You do the same thing every day and you get 15 [units; the equivalent of \$60 profit] one day, 115 [\$460] the next” (white male, first-year dealer). Almost all the salespersons had days when they made no money. During the initial interview managers describe the variable pay in positive terms. Dealers find it difficult to draw on the “law of averages” concept to comfort themselves during a “zero day,” when they have made no sales and have no promise that a sale will be forthcoming and, therefore, have no reason to knock on the next door. During these days, thinking about money is a negative experience. For some dealers, the first zero day brought about a change in the way they thought about money. According to one dealer, “Money used to be a huge motivator for me. It was such a huge motivator. Once I had my first zero day, it was, like, maybe I’m not out here for the money. I realized it was experience that was teaching me. You can’t buy experience” (white male, first-year dealer).

Salespersons bring to the job many ways of thinking about money that the company does not promote. As a door-to-door participant observer, Schweingruber learned quickly that most dealers considered it taboo to discuss how much money they were making. Beth, a fourth-year dealer, was an exception. As the most successful salesperson observed in the field, she made eight sales and collected \$705 in down payments (no one else collected more than \$200) in one day. However, she also worked less than other salespersons, slowing down in the afternoon and ending the day early. She explained that she compared her profits with what she would be earning if she worked at home during the summer. Anything she made over \$80 a day exceeded what she would have made working as a substitute teacher in her hometown. Since she could make much more than this (around \$800) Monday through Wednesday, she spent most of the next three days at a bookstore or shopping mall.

This was a tempting line of thought. Since dealers could make much more money than they ever had before, it was sometimes hard to keep working to earn even more. However, for many more salespersons, the problem was making less money than they would at home, either as the total amount or hourly wage. One dealer from Midwestern University quit the job after three days because he did not believe company claims that he would earn a great deal of money: “I couldn’t see doing it for the whole summer. . . . I would rather have a weekly paying job where the money is guaranteed” (Latino male, first-year dealer). He believed, correctly, that he could get work back home and compared it to the book field, a common kind of comparison. Our survey indicated that salespersons who believed they had no other job opportunity for the summer sold significantly better than those who did not.¹⁰

The existence of both types of deviant thinking—making positive or negative comparisons to imagined earnings at another job—supports the official line that thinking about money is counterproductive when dealers are alone in the book

field, as does the surprising finding that some dealers get sick of dealing with money. One salesperson told us, "Money was not a motivating factor. It was almost a turnoff after a while. We always talked about units and how much people were making" (Asian female, first-year dealer). According to another dealer:

I was interested in making money my first summer. This summer I realized that at some point, you know, you make two or three thousand or four thousand in a week, it's just money. . . . Money gets old. You get tired of dealing with money. I get so sick of the money. You think about the money. You get stressed out about the money. And you get to that door and you're thinking about the money, you're not going to be successful that way. (White male, second-year dealer)

The finding that mentally attaching money to a task may make it less rewarding is counterintuitive but is widely believed among Enterprise managers and dealers. Focusing on money interferes with thinking prescribed thoughts, which involve emotional purposes. Instead, dealers are taught to use particular money meanings (actually antimoney meanings) intrapersonally to convince themselves to continue going door-to-door.

Part 2: Presenting a Nonmonetary Self

The second major reason dealers suspect the influence of money arises from another aspect of the Enterprise sales job—the need to control the impression presented to sales prospects. Enterprise advocates using a "soft sell" approach to selling because "people love to buy things, but they hate to be sold," and because "when they're free to say no, their mind opens up, and they can say yes." The process of convincing prospects that the salesperson does not care whether they buy is called "creating a buying atmosphere." Salespersons do this through both scripted sales talks and deep acting. Just before the demonstration begins dealers use these key lines to create a buying atmosphere:

Let me just give you a real quick look at how it works and you can tell me what you think, okay? If you like it, fine, I take orders today and deliver them at the end of the summer. If not, that's okay too. Whatever you decide is fine with me but since I am trying to show this to thirty moms every day, you could just let me know yes or no when I am finished. Fair enough?

Actually, most moms I talk with don't mind getting something helpful if the kids will really use it. So kids, take a close look and let me and your mom know when we get through if it is something you think you would use. Will you do that? Great! (Selling 101)

Dealers find that convincing a customer that they do not care about the sale is much easier if they can convince themselves first. According to one dealer, "All I would think about was money. So I would go to a door and dollar bills were in my eyes. And people can see that. . . . Money did not help me out at all" (white female, first-year dealer). Whether dealers reveal these "dollar signs" in their eyes or through facial expressions, style of speech, or choice of words, they are examples of what

Goffman (1959) called “unmeant gestures.” He argued that performers attempt to make sure “that as many as possible of the minor events in the performance, however instrumentally inconsequential these events may be, will occur in such a way as to convey either no impression or an impression that is compatible and consistent with the over-all definition of the situation that is being fostered” (p. 51). This is especially a concern when “the audience is known to be secretly skeptical of the reality that is being impressed upon them” since they tend to “pounce on trifling flaws as a sign that the whole show is false” (p. 51). Enterprise dealers find themselves in precisely this situation during demonstrations.

Enterprise teaches its dealers body movements and voice inflections to put on a good performance. However, dealers believe that it is more important to hold the prescribed beliefs about this performance. According to this view, dealers who focus on the interaction with the prospect as an opportunity to make money will reveal this through their unmeant gestures.

Thinking about money can lead to several mistakes in the demonstration, including going too fast, putting too much pressure on the prospect, creating frustration that can carry over to the next approach, and making it harder to use emotional lines. The following focus group exchange illustrates all of these problems.

Dealer 1 (white female, first-year dealer): If you’re unit focused and you go and give a demo, you have no reason for doing it because money is so arrrrgh. Your demo just sucks basically. You’re just like, Yeah, here’s a book. Duhduhduhduh, try to close them as fast as possible.

Dealer 2 (white male, first-year dealer): Put a lot of pressure on them.

Dealer 1: Yeah, and if you don’t give them an emotional or anything during your sell, then they’re not going to buy. Then you just get frustrated more and then you go to the next house with an even worse attitude. Yeah, here’s a book. Duhduhduhduhduh. It just doesn’t work.

The “emotional” means an “emotional close,” which the company urges dealers to use. These scripts “paint word pictures” that appeal to customers’ affection for their children, as in this “selling idea” from Selling 101:

Mrs. Jones, most parents I talk to want to be sure their children have a good education. You know, when you look ahead 10 or 12 years from now, it’s hard to imagine that these children are going to be finishing high school. But when you see them walking down that aisle in the graduation ceremony over there in the gym, walk across the stage all by themselves, shake the principal’s hand, and get that diploma right there, then it’s going to really be fun to look back on the time 10 or 12 years earlier when you made that decision to invest in an idea like this. You know, I guess that a good education is just about priceless, isn’t it?

Because the company views prospects, like dealers, as more susceptible to “emotional” than to “rational” appeals, dealers must be able to use this kind of script. However, many dealers resist using them because they seem corny and insincere. Thinking about money makes using these emotional lines more difficult.

TAKING MONEY OFF THE MIND WITH SERVICE-MINDEDNESS

From the 1960s, Enterprise managers' idea of personal development has developed into a standard menu or toolkit of emotional purposes that dealers use to motivate themselves in the book field. During spring training meetings, Enterprise managers meet with their recruits and attempt to learn what motivates them. Working from the menu of emotional purposes, the manager and the dealer agree on a personalized set that makes sense for that dealer. Most of these purposes focus on some sort of personal transformation. One type involves building a better self, for example, becoming a "finisher" or a "professional." Another type entails transforming relationships with other people, for example, becoming a better son or daughter or building relationships with Enterprise teammates. A variety of practices reinforces a dealer's chosen purposes, including writing them down, sharing them with other dealers, repeating them aloud while going door-to-door, and incorporating them in ceremonies, competitions, and other social events.

We illustrate the concept of emotional purpose through the idea of "service-mindedness," a common purpose aimed at redefining the demonstrations and sales as noneconomic interactions. Dealers who adopt service-mindedness as an emotional purpose focus on providing a service to the people who answer the door. This definition of the sale helps dealers both when they attempt to "create a buying atmosphere" with prospects and when they are alone between doors. As one dealer told us, "[What motivates me is] taking your mind off yourself and thinking about some of the kids you can help out there. And if you're sitting around and not working, you're not going to find those kids" (white male, second-year dealer).

Dealers referred to at least three "services" they could perform going door-to-door. First, selling educational books helps kids in school. Although managers tell student dealers not to oversell their products by making sensational claims, many dealers encounter families they believe will undergo a dramatic transformation because of the Enterprise books. For instance, one dealer described demonstrating books to a boy who was going to repeat the sixth grade:

And Ray was so excited. He saw these books and he saw that they could really make a difference. They could help him get back to where he needed to be. He just got so excited that I was there and that these books were available. They weren't a real well-to-do family and I'm sure that \$300 for a set of five books for them might have been a little bit of a stretch. . . . Whenever I had problems wanting to sell, I'd think back and I'd say there's a kid like Ray somewhere in this territory whose train has been derailed and he wants to get back on and really doesn't know how and these books can help him do that. Nobody has the right to ruin another person's dreams and I felt like I would help fulfill those dreams. (White male, first-year dealer)

Even if most families do not undergo this transformation, or even buy the books, dealers can define the job as a search for those who will:

After I got partway into the summer, I realized I had run across a lot of families that needed the books. . . . And I just need to find those families. Who cares if

these people are shutting the door in my face? Just not worry about that and go on. And so a lot of times I would get really down on myself, I would take it personally when they shut the door in my face, and that would make me not want to go to the next one. So I think what motivated me was just realizing that there was a bigger picture to it and it wasn't just my personal interests at heart. It was not how much money I made. It was that they could use the books. (White female, first-year dealer)

Dealers also thought they could perform services for prospects who did not even buy the books. They believed that many of the parents they visited were uninterested in their children's education and, in fact, their sales visit may be the only conversation a family has about education all year. They supported this view with the fact that most parents don't buy Enterprise books. However, even these families may gain a new appreciation for education because of the salesperson's visit.

Dealers also claim that they can exert a profound influence on prospects through their positive approach. Whether or not prospects buy the books, they can see that the dealers are special. This idea is expressed in a popular affirmation that is printed on a large red card included in dealers' sales kits: "This is the best day I've ever had! I can, I will, and I'm going to help 30 people today live a richer, fuller, more meaningful life because I stopped by and showed them my books."

EMBEDDING MONEY MEANINGS IN SCRIPTS

Creating salespersons who believe they perform a service poses a potential problem for the Enterprise Company. Some dealers' focus on service-mindedness, rather than sales, may work against effective sales presentations if they accept prospects' claims about what services they require. For instance, a prospect may report that she cannot afford a set of educational books because her husband is unemployed. If a dealer accepts this definition of the situation, the opportunity for a sale is lost. Focusing on building relationships with prospects may also lead to salespersons spending too much time with them. When dealers find a friendly prospect in an air-conditioned house, they may hesitate to go back into the hot sun (or cold rain) to face possible rejection at the next door.

Enterprise manages this conflict by incorporating meanings about the prescribed job goals into standardized routines taught to all dealers. These routines are clearly aimed, first and foremost, at making sales and collecting money. Thus dealers can adapt an emotional purpose to shape their interactions while still pursuing money by following standard practices and scripts. For example, Enterprise sets a twenty-minute limit on the time spent with any prospect and provides guidelines for spending more time with some prospects (those with school age children) than with others (the elderly). Of special interest are the sales scripts that dealers are supposed to memorize and use to guide their interactions with prospects. These scripts not only steer dealers toward money-maximizing strategies but also use money meanings interpersonally to convince prospects to spend money. Here we present five examples of how the scripts shape interactions.

First, the sales script requires that salespersons take an adversarial position vis-à-vis prospects in their actions, though not in their attitude. Although salespersons adopt a low-pressure approach, they must take the position that prospects should buy the books. They are never to agree with a prospect who claims she does not need the product or cannot afford it. Instead, they learn canned responses to the most common objections. For instance:

I don't have the money to spend for it.

I know how you feel; some of the other moms felt that way, too. _____, I guess it's kind of like I heard someone say one time—"When you put money into something like this involving children's education, it's not like you're really spending money at all. It's more like investing it—simply because of the tremendous returns the kids will be able to get from it." _____, can you see that putting money into something like the _____, which could really help the children, would be worthwhile? (Selling 101)

Second, dealers attempt to appeal to prospects' love for their children, as in the emotional close quoted above. These emotional closes implicitly or explicitly argue that the result of buying the set of educational books is more valuable than the books' price; for example, "You know, I guess that a good education is just about priceless, isn't it?"

Third, customers' "needs" are, by definition, reasons to buy the products. Salespersons attempt to determine customer needs by asking about the subjects in which the kids have the most homework and in which the parents are rusty. The salesperson then incorporates into the demonstration whatever needs he or she discerned. For instance, if a child gets a lot of math homework, the salesperson might show the math section of the book. Salespersons also suggest a variety of additional needs to prospects, such as their inability to help children with their homework now that schoolwork has changed so much.

Fourth, dealers use a "price buildup" to favorably compare the price of the educational books to similar but more expensive products such as encyclopedias or college textbooks. The object of the buildup is to induce surprise in the prospect when he or she is first told of the low price of Enterprise books.

Fifth, dealers use a hierarchical set of scripts for extracting as large as possible a down payment in the most desirable form (cash is preferable to checks or credit cards). Dealers want to get down payments of at least 50 percent, because lower down payments are deemed "weak sales" that do not count toward some sales awards.

It is no surprise that salespersons' practices are aimed at making sales and earning money. However, the company's "service-minded" rhetoric obscures these aims. Many salespersons claim, and at some level believe, that their job really is not to sell books. Given the service-minded discourse, it is unclear what typical dealer behavior would look like if dealers were not taught a standardized set of scripts and routines. Many Enterprise salespersons have difficulty taking an adversarial position with customers. Using a canned response to a prospect who claims not to have

any money and continuing to approach a laid-off worker are difficult sales skills for dealers to perform. Without the official sales scripts and routines, many more salespersons would likely succumb to the customers' initial definition of their needs and fail to earn as much money as they could.

In addition to emotional purposes and the sales scripts, the dealers' interactional toolkit includes a large collection of stories, arguments, strategies, and equipment to convince prospects to buy educational books. Although these tools undoubtedly increase salespersons' chances of success, they do not give them the upper hand over prospects, who usually reject salespersons' attempts to define the situation and refuse to buy from them. The seven dealers observed for one day contacted an average of 62 prospects and made an average of three sales (higher than the company average of 2.2), for a success rate of 5 percent. An average of only 7.6 prospects per day agreed to sit down for a product demonstration.

Two factors account for this disparity. First, the interactional setting gives prospects a tremendous advantage. The salesperson depends on prospects to earn a profit and has a short time to establish trust, convince them to buy an expensive product, and get their money. The prospect can end the interaction any time by closing the door or asking the salesperson to leave. Because federal law also requires salespersons to inform customers that they can cancel the sale within three days, customers can completely erase the salesperson's skillful interaction work once he or she has left. Second, the typical salesperson lacks the skill to successfully use even a fraction of the many tools provided. None of the seven dealers we observed in the field came close to presenting a sales talk that corresponded to the official script. Most left out complete sections; for example, none of the dealers used the emotional closes. Dealers gave several reasons for not following company scripts, including not being able to "pull them off," thinking they were too "corny," and simply failing to learn them. Dealers also left out parts of the script they thought disadvantaged them. Several failed to inform customers that they could cancel the sale; one told us that customers should not buy the books in the first place if they were going to cancel. The Enterprise Company, then, attempts to shape these salespersons-prospect interactions—and, incidentally, the meanings of money used in them—by providing a collection of tools for salespersons to use. However, the outcome of these interactions emerges from the joint activity of at least two actors, a salesperson who uses some but not all of these tools with varying levels of skill and one or more prospects who bring their own meanings and strategies to the interaction.

BANNING MONEY TALK

The company provides institutional support for both money discourses. A group ban on communicating about money supports the individual ban on thinking about money while going door-to-door. On Sundays, the dealers' only day off, they discuss and celebrate money in ceremonies. But beginning on Monday morning and extending

until the next Sunday, dealers are prohibited not only from talking about money but also from communicating sales performance in any way. When dealers return to their headquarters each night, the company does not want them to display any attitude or action that reveals a successful or unsuccessful day of sales. Their attitude should be uniformly positive. According to a company training manual:

[A] great headquarters is one in which daily sales are never discussed. Every member of a great headquarters comes home at night as though he or she had sold 10–15 customers that day—even though they may not have sold anything! In a great headquarters, sales are never discussed with roommates. It's always left as a great surprise at the weekend meeting.

This point needs to be stressed over and over—first-year people almost cannot resist the tendency to talk about their sales. So encourage them not to discuss them, because it will be in their best interest and their roommate's best interest to keep it in suspense until the weekend meeting.

The primary justification for the ban is to keep the atmosphere in the headquarters positive. A dealer's knowledge that his roommates are doing much better than he is casts his performance in a bad light. A dealer's knowledge that his roommates are doing much worse than he is destroys the illusion that everyone in the headquarters works hard.

What are roommates supposed to talk about when their day has been devoted to selling books? Enterprise suggests that they discuss a funny incident that happened during the day, or prospects they liked—but without revealing the sales outcome of the interactions. In practice, dealers sometimes break this ban on not talking about money. But those who talk about money, especially if they boast about a successful day, are often resented.

CELEBRATING MONEY

Enterprise Company managers devote considerable effort to convincing student dealers that money is worth pursuing. The chanted equation "Books = Money" seems obvious. Most for-profit organizations take for granted that employees want to make money. As we have seen, though, many dealers believe their job is so unpleasant that money is an insufficient motivation. Parallel to Enterprise's efforts to help students develop emotional purposes, it tries to convince dealers that money is worth pursuing by celebrating those dealers who make money and holding them up as heroes of the book field. Dealer success is celebrated in three ways.

First, the Company has established an elaborate set of dealer awards. Hundreds of dealers receive awards for various levels of monetary performance or improvement for the entire summer or specific weeks. Student managers of successful teams also receive awards. In addition, all dealers who earn over \$5,000 for the summer (a "big check") receive a metal facsimile of the check mounted on a wooden plaque. The awards add another layer of meaning to money. Dealers set goals of achieving

certain awards, which symbolize dedication, commitment, improvement, and other nonmonetary values.

Second, the company publishes the winners of awards. Annual performances—the number of units sold and profits earned—of hundreds of leading salespersons are published in *Superstars*, providing a straightforward ranking. *Superstars* is not distributed until the January recruiting conference, but dealers can track their progress during the summer in the *Pacesetters Report*, a weekly report of performances. Featured on the cover of *Pacesetters* are the names of the top first-year dealer, top experienced dealer, and top team of the week, each with a paragraph praising their work. For instance: “Once again Sally is unstoppable. There is just not enough competition on the field. Congratulations with 651 units and 30 customers. Keep up the great work and we will see you here again next week. Keep rockin’. You’re a Rockstar Bookseller Sally! Way to go!” *Pacesetters* also includes the Progress Report, which lists cumulative progress toward the final individual and team ranks that will appear in *Superstars*. *Pacesetters* allows dealers to know the company’s current leaders and compare themselves in quantitative monetary units. One dealer said, “I pick out people I want to beat on the *Pacesetter* next week and keep that in mind throughout the week. . . . People who are on the list ahead of me, I’m like, I want to beat them next week. I always look for it the next week to see if I beat them or not” (white male, first-year dealer).

Third, the company honors worthwhile achievements, including monetary ones. Recognition varies from one type of meeting to another, but each version points out achievements that merit other salespersons’ praise. The most elaborate type of recognition takes place during Sunday meetings as a series of events that rank-order every dealer in the organization in some category until only one dealer remains. The categories honored typically include hours worked during the previous week, demonstrations given, and number of customers. At the beginning of the summer, units of sales are usually not recognized since the focus is work habits and emotional purposes. As the summer progresses, the emphasis shifts to making money, with honoring the leading earner of the week as the climax of recognition.

Each Sunday recognition event begins with all dealers performing an action-in-common; for example, everyone dances in place or does jumping jacks or the crab walk. A student manager who is designated as the recognition leader directs the action. He or she leader yells out increasingly higher levels of performance in the category. All dealers who achieved that level the previous week continue the collective action. Those who have not, sit down or move away from the center of the ceremony. When units sold are honored, the recognition leader yells sales levels until only the top producer remains and then honors that person with a ritual specific to his or her sales group. He or she is often literally elevated above the rest of the group (such as by standing on a chair or a table) and the salespersons praise him or her collectively. Praise ranges from simple applause to running around and around the dealer, sometimes coming close to knocking him or her to the ground. Many

groups chant, "How'd you do it?" which elicits an answer that confirms the value of prescribed Enterprise work routines (e.g., "Thirty demos every day").

Emphasizing monetary performance and publishing each dealer's results fosters easy calculation of each dealer's value. Many dealers begin to see their monetary performance as a key component of their selves. Enterprise encourages this as long as it results in a desire to improve the self by becoming a more successful salesperson. One dealer, who had developed this desire, said, "I feel like I had a whole lot more potential than my stats displayed. I really am looking forward to coming back and kicking this job in the butt" (white male, first-year dealer). Also, monetarily successful dealers should ideally want to maintain their identities, as another dealer told us, "I kept selling because I didn't want to go home with just twenty units. People expect more from me" (white male, first-year dealer).

However, the connection between money and the self can work against the company's goals. Some dealers do not want to adopt the identity of a top salesperson. Beth, the dealer who worked just three days each week, reported that she suffered from "fear of success." Performing up to her potential would mean "people looking up to you and having to hit PC [President's Club, earned by selling five hundred units] every week," a more difficult role than the one she was used to playing. Dealers' failure to achieve their monetary expectations may also lead, not to renewed effort, but to negative self-worth. Sales managers attempt to get low earners to focus on personal growth so that they will finish the summer with positive feelings about themselves and the company. Dealers who quit during the summer are encouraged to return to company headquarters, where they are told how to use their failure with the company to build success in the future.

DISCUSSION: USING MONEY MEANINGS

Recent scholarship in the sociology of money has focused on meanings attached to types of money and to particular social domains. This case study illustrates the usefulness of several concepts from this work. Monies at Enterprise are earmarked with meanings, and these meanings differentiate types of monies. The company elevates money earned from selling its books door-to-door above money earned from other summer jobs by connecting it to the creation of an improved self. Some types of "Enterprise money" hold more desired meanings than others, for example, money from "strong sales" and a "big check." Also, variables in Carruthers and Espeland's (1998) taxonomy affect the meaning of money at Enterprise. Enterprise money is valued because of its proximate source (i.e., from selling books) and its future direction (e.g., to pay for college tuition). Limits are placed on money's flow, and some interactions, for example, the sale itself, are defined as noneconomic. Money's form is also important, as different types of payment, for example, cash, check, and credit, are valued differently. These concepts by themselves, though, present money meanings as static and fail to show how "people routinely use monetary transactions—

as they do other cultural media—to create, define, affirm, represent, challenge, or overturn their social ties” (Zelizer 1998:1378).

In this article we show how the meanings that mark monies and social domains arise out of and are sustained by their use in intra- and interpersonal interactions. These money meanings are best conceived as a toolkit or set of resources, “from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action” (Swidler 1986:277). We have described five interconnected types of money work.

First, money meanings are used by individuals to persuade others to pursue desired joint lines of action. Enterprise managers use claims about money in this way to persuade college students to enroll in the company’s sales program. Similarly, Enterprise dealers use various money stories, such as those about the “pricelessness” of education, to convince sales prospects to buy the books they are selling. They are aided by scripts, embedded with money meanings, which were written for this purpose by Enterprise managers.

Second, Enterprise managers use money meanings as a form of worker control. By providing a standard toolkit of money meanings for dealing with problems in the book field, these managers hope to prevent dealers from having to rely on their own improvisations to solve them. When dealers consider quitting the job or taking a break because they have not made a sale, they are often able to remember their manager explaining to them the law of averages or warning them not to think about money when facing a prospect. Thus managers use money meanings not just to construct joint lines of action but also to influence dealer behavior when dealers are alone.

Third, dealers use money meanings intrapersonally to decide what course of action to take. In other words, they draw on stories about money when making decisions in the book field. Often dealers draw on and justify their actions from money meanings in the toolkit provided by the company, as intended by managers. However, dealers have a larger set of money meanings, drawn from the larger culture, they may use to resist the official company definition of the situation. For instance, some dealers calculated their hourly wage, which yielded a different value of money earned from selling books than the value as defined by Enterprise.

Fourth, money meanings are used in impression management. Enterprise managers not only draw on money-related scripts during their performances but also adopt particular beliefs about money themselves so that they present a “sincere” self to their sales prospects.

Although all of these types of money work help to create and sustain money meanings, a fifth type has this meaning construction as its primary purpose. This type of money work is ubiquitous at Enterprise, where seemingly contradictory ideas about money make it necessary to sustain particular money meanings through counseling, storytelling, and ritual. Money work is especially prevalent during Sunday meetings, which are designed to support official Enterprise meanings, including those related to money. The goal of this type of money work is clearly to attach money meanings to particular types of money or social domains. The other types of money work sustain these meanings through using them to get things done.

This toolkit model suggests that researchers should pay more attention to the money work that creates and sustains even taken-for-granted meanings of money. Money work becomes pronounced when meanings are precarious but is evident even regarding meanings that seem fairly secure. At Enterprise the simple idea that money is worth pursuing needed to be bolstered through ritual and ceremony. Although “money’s reproduction as an institution depends on how unproblematically it is taken for granted” (Carruthers and Babb 1996:1557), money work must sustain this taken-for-grantedness. Our examination of the seemingly straightforward and taken-for-granted commission sale has revealed a complicated (and seemingly contradictory) set of money meanings and an equally complicated set of individual and joint actions that both arise from these meanings and sustain them.

The money work required to sustain money meanings is evident in such routine social actions as family budget planning, shopping for new school clothes, and deciding how much to tip, as well as in the work of financial counselors, bankers, repossession agents, appraisers, and ministers to educate clients and publics about the meanings of money. In addition, a sizable literature, including motivational books such as those Enterprise dealers use, connects meanings of money to work, attitude, success, and religion. For example, one best-seller (Orman 1997) advises people how to achieve wealth by discovering their “money memories.” Unfortunately, we know little about how readers use this and other works that are intended to aid readers’ money work.

Our findings suggest three directions for future research. First, these findings qualify the claim that “people’s response to [money] is determined by what they collectively think everyone else’s response will be” (Carruthers and Babb 1996:1557) and point to the importance of asymmetrical money meanings and their use in persuasion, worker control, and social control. Many interactions of Enterprise dealers involved people who held money meanings that they had imported from other settings. Often one person tried to convince others to adopt new meanings or to invoke previously held meanings to influence their behavior. Obviously, these people shared some money meanings, such as the value of money for buying goods and services. However, asymmetrical as well as shared money meanings are important for understanding interactions. Such asymmetrical situations are most obvious in sales, but many transactions likely involve people who hold different beliefs and values about money that shape their interactions.

Second, our findings suggest the importance of the self and impression management in understanding how money meanings are used. Enterprise dealers use money scripts to present a particular self when dealing with sales prospects—one that cares about prospects and does not care about whether they buy the books. To make the scripted presentation as “sincere” as possible, many dealers make an effort to transform their selves to be consistent with their performances. The precariousness of the sales demonstrations requires the salesperson to avoid any inconsistencies that will discredit the performance. We propose, however, that impression management plays a part in taken-for-granted transactions, such as paying for

goods and services at department stores, markets, and other shops. Cashiers' demeanor (often prescribed by organizational regulations), props, decorations, and costumes help to define the meaning of these routine exchanges. Impression management is also likely related to such exchange elements as type of payment (e.g., cash, check, credit card, food stamps) and amount of gratuity.

Third, our findings indicate that multiple sites of money meaning, or circuits, are active within organizations and institutions and overlap with and constrain one another. Dealers' relationships with managers, with sales prospects, and with themselves each provide a context in which particular money meanings help or hinder getting things done. Meanings in each circuit are constrained by those in others. For instance, managers choose the money meanings to train salespersons because of the managers' knowledge of interactions between salespersons and sales prospects and of dealers' thoughts between doors. In the case we discuss here, the macroeconomic setting constrains to some extent all uses of money meanings within the company. We would expect that most social settings would have similar multiple money meaning circuits.

We see the toolkit approach outlined in this article as a valuable addition to the standard sociological approach to money meanings and a contribution to sociology's growing understanding of the social underpinnings of all economic activity. By focusing on the work that people do with money meanings, we show how their actions provide the foundation for institutionalized meanings that other scholars have explored, which, in turn, provide a context for monetary interactions.

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NOTES

1. The Enterprise Company, Midwestern University, and all the names of Enterprise officials, managers, and dealers in this article are pseudonyms.
2. In general, we follow Prus (1989a, 1989b), who, in the most comprehensive symbolic interactionist analysis of sales, shows how salespersons skillfully manipulate cultural resources to prepare for and carry out interactions with sales prospects. Prus also demonstrates that selling is symbolic activity, with neither sales products nor money having intrinsic meaning but only meanings derived from "prospect's perspectives, ongoing exchanges with vendors, and anticipated lines of action" (Prus 1989a:64). However, regarding money, Prus focuses, like the scholars discussed above, on the constructed exchange value, which is derived from "what people (regionally, nationally, and internationally) will offer in exchange for it" (p. 65).
3. Technically, Enterprise does not pay dealers commissions, which would suggest they are employees. Instead, dealers buy products at a wholesale price and resell them. If they sell at the company's recommended prices, they receive the equivalent of a 40 percent commission. This article adopts the convention used by both managers and dealers of talking about the job as a commission job.

4. According to our survey of first-year dealers, only 23 percent indicated that money they earned themselves was the most important source of money for their college education.
5. These two principal money meanings map roughly onto what Leyshon and Thrift (1997) call the discourse of liberation and the discourse of suspicion. The discourse of liberation occurs most clearly during recruiting, when the company portrays money as emancipating people from the “passion” and “violence” that hinder commerce, and during recognition rituals. The discourse of suspicion is seen in managers’ and students’ belief that thinking about money makes it harder to sell books. They then portray money as “out of control” and a “corrosive force” that destroys social ties and promotes individualism.
6. Terry Besser (pers. com.) suggested this term to us.
7. Swidler’s (2001) analysis of the ways people talk about love provides a paradigm for understanding the seemingly contradictory meanings that may adhere to the same situation or object. She identified two contradictory views of love, which she labeled “realistic” and “mythic.” Rather than attempt to reconcile these views, though, she argued that both are grounded in the institutional reality of marriage and the common dilemmas this structure poses. Similarly, Kleinman (1996) describes multiple money meanings attaching to the same object in her study of an alternative health care organization where members’ “money talk” constructs the organization as both “alternative” and “conventional.”
8. The company also offers children’s books, religious books, and cookbooks, which cost less than educational sets and earn the salespersons a smaller commission.
9. Although none of the differences are statistically significant, the presummer survey suggests that dealers who focus on money may sell less than those who do not. For instance, dealers who identified money as a goal for the summer averaged 761.5 units of sales (approximately \$7,615), whereas those who did not mention money as a goal averaged 843.2 units (\$8,432). We found similar patterns on questions regarding “your primary reason for selling books with Enterprise this summer” (“money,” 753.2 units; other answers, 831.9 units) and “the primary thing which will motivate you to work hard this summer” (“money,” 733.0 units; other answers, 815.6 units).
10. The presummer survey asked, “Do you have another job opportunity available if you don’t finish your summer with Enterprise?” Salespersons who answered “no” averaged 1037.1 units of sales; “maybe,” 756.1 units, and “yes” 756.3 units. The “no” group differs from combined “yes” and “maybe” groups ($p < .05$).

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