

THE ULTIMATE SOCIAL BUSINESS MODEL

Why Now Is Prime Time for Direct Selling



From March 2009 to May 2011, the top 7 publicly traded direct selling companies averaged a 268 percent increase in stock price.

In 2010, direct selling companies generated over \$125 billion in revenue in 150 countries through more than 75 million men and women who are changing lives serving others. **This is the story of direct selling.**

INSIDE: DSN Global 100 Listing of the Top Direct Selling Companies in the World

Cover Story

The Ultimate Social Business Model

by Katherine Ponder



Direct selling is the *original* social networking business. Long before we even knew what a computer was, people were getting together for fun, socializing and shopping. Add in technological power and globalization, and you've got a winning formula.

Model Advantages

Whether a company is working in a mature market or an emerging one, the direct selling model has many advantages. In mature markets, the existing infrastructure and high technology saturation

make interacting with customers extremely easy. Advancements in mobile devices and apps, as well as in social media tools, simply increase the reach of this socially driven model. Far-flung friends and family are now easily included in a tight circle, and new friends across the nation and world are made through common interests.

In an emerging market such as China, having scores of salespeople working directly with friends and family to make the personal pitch just reaches back in

time. The direct selling model is over 150 years old; it has never needed technology to be successful. A social network and a good product is all that is necessary. Additionally, the social connections put you far ahead of the competitors who either can't get product on the shelves or are pushed into obscurity. And those competitors don't have a constant line straight to their customers to gauge demand and feedback.

Products and services delivered directly to customers through personalized presentations that are

often educational, entertaining and certainly social have enabled direct selling to thrive for decades even through recessions, including this latest one. The effect holds true no matter what the category as direct selling companies represent virtually all goods and services customers want and need. The DSN Global 100 list of the top revenue-grossing direct selling companies in the world represents \$66 billion in revenue for 2010, proof that this social business model has economic power.

The products and services sold by these companies range across such diverse categories as cosmetics, financial planning services, home decorating, home improvement and solutions, energy services, personal-care, health and wellness, apparel and accessories, legal services and fine wines. Each company on the list had to have reached \$80 million in 2010 revenue just to be listed.

Analysts have noticed some of the advantages of direct selling. Doug Lane is Managing Director at Jefferies, a full-service securities and investment banking firm that was recently ranked No. 1 in U.S. stock picking by the *Financial Times* / StarMine Research Analysis. He thinks that direct selling companies are successful because they have "strong top-line growth driven by outsized exposure to the rapidly growing emerging markets; relatively high gross margins to buffer against the recent dramatic rise in commodity cost inflation; and ownership of the distribution channel and the tendency towards premium priced products that enable the direct sellers' pricing power over traditional retail." Lane goes on to explain that direct selling companies often have under-leveraged balance sheets and large free cash flows, which "tend to put the direct selling business model on particularly strong financial footing."

Jim Cramer, host of investment show "Mad Money," has caught on as well. "The direct selling model is going great guns," he said, noting it could be the best way to sell goods in the Third World.

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Prime Time for Direct Selling

Attracting Attention and Investors

Within the DSN Global 100 list, the top 10 companies contributed \$39 billion to the global economy in 2010. The company at the top of this list—Avon, the 125-year old brand known in virtually every household, which generated \$10.9 billion of that number—is publicly held, as are five additional companies on the top 10 list. Amway, privately held and another household name, secured the No. 2 spot on the list at \$9.2 billion in sales. Other familiar names on the top 10 list include Herbalife (public), Mary Kay (private) and Tupperware (public). Vorwerk (private) is a household name in Europe and is the parent company of United States company JAFRA. The list rounds out with additional companies Natura (public), Oriflame (public), Forever Living Products (private) and Nu Skin (public).

Clearly, the economic impact of direct selling companies for the United States and for the

world simply cannot be overlooked or swept under the rug. Scott Van Winkle, CFA, is a Research Analyst at Canaccord Genuity, known for serving institutional and corporate clients through investment banking, research, sales and trading services. Van Winkle covers direct sellers Herbalife, Nu Skin Enterprises, USANA Health Sciences and Medifast. He says, "I think there is finally broad confidence in the direct selling model in the private equity community."

Interest overall does appear to be growing. Financial advisors and investors both are seeing direct selling companies with new eyes, focusing on the efficient business model, rapid growth, and generally low on-going capital investment after the initial surge. Van Winkle says, "I don't go a week now without getting a phone call from a private equity firm looking at a direct selling asset, and that was just nonexistent 5 years ago."

It appears that wise investors are getting in *now*. Sequoia Capital investors bought into jewelry and accessories direct seller

Public Companies: The Big 7

The direct selling industry's top seven public companies, based on *Direct Selling News'* Global 100 ranking, accounted for \$23.9 billion in revenue for 2010.

AVON
the company for women

Avon Products Inc.
Country: USA
2010 Rank: 1
2010 Revenue: \$10.9 billion

Avon is the founder of modern direct selling and the acknowledged world leader in cosmetics, fragrances and toiletries. Avon's well-known product lines include Avon Color, Anew, Skin So Soft™, Advance Techniques Hair Care, Avon Naturals and mark™.

Markets: 100+
Distributors: 6.5 million
Employees: 42,000
Headquarters: New York, N.Y.
CEO: Andrea Jung
Year Founded: 1886
Stock Symbol: AVP—NYSE


bem estar bem

Natura Cosmeticos SA
Country: Brazil
2010 Rank: 3
2010 Revenue: \$3 billion

Natura is a cosmetics giant with more than 900 products. The company operates in Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico, France, Venezuela and Colombia. Corporate social responsibility is one of its core emphases.

Markets: 7
Distributors: 1 million
Employees: 5,000+
Headquarters: São Paulo, Brazil
CEO: Alessandro G. Carlucci
Year Founded: 1969
Stock Symbol: NATU3.SA—São Paulo

 **HERBALIFE.**

Herbalife Ltd.
Country: USA
2010 Rank: 5
2010 Revenue: \$2.7 billion

Herbalife sells nutritional supplements and weight-management and personal-care products. Its products have been developed by scientists, physicians and nutrition experts, including Nobel laureate in medicine Louis Ignarro, Ph.D.

Markets: 75
Distributors: 2.1 million
Employees: 4,300
Headquarters: Los Angeles, Calif.
CEO: Michael O. Johnson
Year Founded: 1980
Stock Symbol: HLF—NYSE

Stella & Dot for \$37 million (10 percent of ownership) last January, certain that it had pursued a winner. Sequoia Capital is a Silicon Valley venture capitalization firm that is estimated to control as much as 14 percent of the value on NASDAQ. "Sequoia rarely sees a business built so strong, with such little capital," says Sequoia partner Alfred Lin, who more recently added: "We wanted to become business partners with Stella & Dot because it was a great business run by a very special founder and entrepreneur, Jessica Herrin."

Blyth, Inc. also found value in direct sellers PartyLite and ViSalus. "PartyLite was doing \$7 million in sales when Blyth acquired it

in 1990, and it's over \$500 million in annual revenue today," recounts Robert B. Goergen Jr., President of Blyth. "ViSalus, a relatively young company, is currently experiencing rapid sales growth. We embrace a portfolio approach, with non-competitive products and companies in different stages of development across multiple geographies." Indeed, PartyLite sells premium candles and home fragrance products, and ViSalus sells weight management and health products. Blyth's strategy for investing in various direct selling companies has proven very successful for them.

Traditionally, private equity firms make a material investment into a business and

within 5 years either take it public or sell it. Investment in direct selling companies has brought about a new exit strategy for some private equity firms, according to Van Winkle. He says, "We've seen direct selling companies turn around and take out their private equity investors with cash flow. That's a whole new model for private equity—that the asset they've acquired could ultimately buy itself out."

Van Winkle and others know the time is right. Many of the innovative investors are reaping rewards for acting upon their confidence in the direct selling industry. Others are just now seeing the value, but the opportunity is still available to be part of this successful sales model. ■

From March 2009 to May 2011, the top 7 publicly traded direct selling companies averaged a 268 percent increase in stock price. —DSN



Tupperware Brands Corp.

Country: USA
2010 Rank: 7
2010 Revenue: \$2.3 billion

Tupperware is a global direct seller of innovative premium products, including design-centric preparation, storage and serving solutions for the kitchen and home through the Tupperware brand, and beauty and personal-care products through Armand Dupree, Avroy Shlain, BeautiControl, Fuller, NaturCare, Nutrimetics and Nuvo.

Markets: Nearly 100
Distributors: 2.6 million
Employees: 13,500
Headquarters: Orlando, Fla.
CEO: Rick Goings
Year Founded: 1946
Stock Symbol: TUP—NYSE



Oriflame Cosmetics S.A.

Country: Sweden
2010 Rank: 8
2010 Revenue: \$2.2 billion

Oriflame is a beauty company offering cosmetics, fragrances and personal-care, skin-care, hair-care and wellness products. The company operates in 62 countries and is the market leader in more than half. Oriflame has a presence in Mexico, Central America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Markets: 62
Distributors: 3.5 million
Employees: 8,000
Headquarters: Luxembourg, Luxembourg
CEO: Magnus Brännström
Year Founded: 1967
Stock Symbol: ORI-SDB—Stockholm



Nu Skin Enterprises Inc.

Country: USA
2010 Rank: 10
2010 Revenue: \$1.5 billion

Nu Skin Enterprises Inc. is a global direct selling company operating in 48 international markets throughout the Americas, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Going far beyond cosmetics, toiletries and fragrances, Nu Skin sells more than 200 products through three distinct brands: Nu Skin, Pharmanex and Big Planet.

Markets: 51
Distributors: 800,000
Employees: 1,200
Headquarters: Provo, Utah
CEO: Truman Hunt
Year Founded: 1984
Stock Symbol: NUS—NYSE



Primerica Inc.

Country: USA
2010 Rank: 11
2010 Revenue: \$1.3 billion

Primerica provides financial products and services, including term life insurance, mutual funds, variable annuities, loans, long-term care insurance and legal services to 6 million clients, primarily middle-class individuals and families.

Markets: 5
Distributors: 100,000
Employees: 2,000
Headquarters: Duluth, Ga.
CEOs: John Addison and Rick Williams
Year Founded: 1977
Stock Symbol: PRI—NYSE

Making Dollars and Sense

by Emma Johnson

“Mad Money” market guru Jim Cramer recently told his CNBC viewers: “Direct selling has never gotten its due from Wall Street. It’s time we recognize that the direct sales model works, and it works well.” There is little question why financial notables like Cramer, Warren Buffett, Ray Chambers and Suze Orman have touted businesses based on direct selling.

Jefferies analyst Doug Lane has long been a champion of the sector, which relies on its salespeople to market the product, mostly to their local community. Lane has told investors that the model—also referred to as network marketing—continued to thrive throughout the recession in part because it offers the unemployed an easy, low-risk way to be in business for themselves, and that it also capitalizes on the fact that consumers prefer to buy products from people they know and like.

The direct selling business model is also proving to be a bonanza in developing countries. Growth potential is huge because as these economies expand, their appetites for consumer goods grow and previously underemployed women—who have historically been the foundation of many direct sales organizations—are prospering, thanks to newfound economic opportunities. The most recent figures show that within the \$125 billion global direct sales industry, a mere \$28.3 billion came from the United States, while \$49 billion came from the Asia-Pacific region, and Latin American sales reached \$18 billion. The sector’s growth leaders were also in the developing world; India joined the list of billion-dollar nations, generating \$1.06 billion in revenue for 2009. China saw 2009 sales increase nearly \$3 billion, and Russia, though it experienced a somewhat modest gain of \$200 million, still moved up to No. 9 in the DSN ranking of the top billion-dollar markets in the world, with \$3.06 billion in 2009 sales.

One reason investors love these companies is that they have low overhead. There are few retail expenses, since the products are sold out

of salespeople’s homes, and marketing and advertising expenditures are minimal. “It turns out [direct selling] may be the best way to sell goods in the developing world, where people listen to testimonials—not advertisements and retail salespeople,” Jim Cramer told his audience.

Other leading investors are nabbing opportunities to profit from network marketing. Warren Buffett has been a proponent of the model since scooping up The Pampered Chef in 2002, calling it one of the best investments he’d ever made; he subsequently invested in seven more direct sales companies. Even British mogul Richard Branson launched a direct sales cosmetics firm—now called Vie at Home—which he sold to direct sales investor Helmut Spikker last year.

In 2002, private equity firm Whitney & Co. invested \$700 million in supplement giant Herbalife. The investment made by Sequoia Capital into Stella & Dot in January of this year is certainly an example of how investors are looking differently at direct selling companies and their leadership. Also earlier this year, Pre-Paid Legal Services agreed to sell to private equity firm MidOcean Partners for \$650 million in cash; the deal is expected to close by the time we go to press.



“After years of skepticism, the investment community is finally waking up to the viability of direct selling as a good investment opportunity.”

—Doug Lane

One of the most eye-opening events for investors was last year’s IPO of direct sales financial services company Primerica. Its impressive opening-day performance on April 1, 2010, left investors—who were oversubscribed by 21 times—confident about Primerica’s competitive advantage in the insurance and asset-management industry. Primerica closed at \$19.65 the first day—30 percent more than its initial public offering price of \$15—after its market debut. Its strong performance made it one of the top-performing IPOs for the year.

“After years of skepticism, the investment community is finally waking up to the viability of direct selling as a good investment opportunity,” says Lane. “They’ve become true believers.” ■

Top Publicly Held Direct Sellers Achieve Record Sales and Profitability

by Tim Blackwell

The two-year rebound in the stock market has many investors smiling again, especially those who have put their money in direct selling companies. Many of the top 12 public companies that sell direct have outperformed the average stock return by impressive margins since the market dipped to its low in early 2009.

Since the market crash on March 9, 2009, the major indices have steadily rebounded with 95 percent growth, but some direct selling companies are experiencing enviable price increases on American and foreign exchanges. Many of the top direct selling companies have achieved record sales and profitability and most appear to have lasting fiscal momentum in an improving economy. Stock percentage growth for Herbalife Ltd. (HLF—NYSE), Tupperware Brands Corp. (TUP—NYSE), Nu Skin Enterprises (NUS—NYSE) and Medifast Inc. (MED—NYSE) soared as high as three to seven times the average gain of the S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average by early May 2011.

Herbalife shares climbed 764 percent from \$12.28 to \$106.15 before the company's board of directors approved a two-for-one split in May. Furthermore, the company raised its dividend by 60 percent, representing a 20-cents-per-share post-split quarterly dividend. The global nutritional company's sales increased 17.3 percent from \$2.3 billion in 2009 to \$2.7 billion in 2010, with net income of \$297 million. Herbalife topped that with a record first quarter 2011, which includes a 28.5 percent increase in sales and \$26.8 million improvement on adjusted net income.

At the company's first-quarter conference call, Chairman and CEO Michael O. Johnson attributed the company's growth to an improved distributor retention rate of 48.9 percent, up 20.7 percent from 2002. In an effort to broaden future earnings, he announced the release of the company's new

Herbalife 24 sports product line, which is designed to meet high-end nutritional needs for athletes.

Two years ago Tupperware's stock hovered around \$11.00 per share, but an 8 percent increase in annual sales to \$2.3 billion in 2010, plus a 15 percent improvement to the bottom line helped lift the share price above \$64—a 457 percent gain.



The global direct seller of storage and serving solutions as well as beauty and personal-care products experienced double-digit sales increases in the first quarter 2011 from its emerging markets in Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia/Singapore, the Philippines, Turkey and Venezuela. Tupperware's adjusted diluted share earnings for the first quarter of this year were 14 cents better than for the same period in 2010, including a positive foreign currency impact of 4 cents.

Nu Skin's stock has shot up 364 percent from \$8.04 per share to more than \$37 after record sales and profits in 2010. The company increased revenue 15 percent over 2009 to \$1.5 billion, culminating three consecutive years of record-breaking revenue. The fourth quarter was the company's first ever \$400 million revenue quarter, marking early achievement of a five-year plan that began in 2007 to double Nu Skin's earnings to \$2 per share of stock. The company is now planning to double its earnings to \$4 per share by 2015.

Medifast's stock has been on its own fast-track to the top, soaring from \$4.42 a share two years ago to \$20.39 in early May. A streak of 45 consecutive profitable quarters has strengthened the seller of weight and health management consumables; the company had record revenues of \$257.6 million and improved profits by 73 percent last year. Medifast, the parent company of Take Shape for Life, was named No. 1 on America's 100 Best Small Companies list by *Forbes* magazine for 2010.

The stock performances of Blyth Inc., Natura/Brazil, USANA Health Sciences, Avon and Nature's Sunshine all exceeded S&P 500 and Dow Jones averages for the past two years.

Sales increases, net income improvements and gains for the top publicly held direct selling companies may be an indication of promising growth for an entire industry, especially for those who include emerging markets in their strategic plan. ■

Jefferies Report

Direct Selling Well Positioned

by Douglas M. Lane

The key attributes that we believe uniquely benefit direct sellers in the current investment environment are:

Strong top-line growth driven by outsized exposure to the rapidly growing emerging markets

Avon Products, Herbalife, Nu Skin Enterprises and Tupperware Brands all derive more than 75 percent of their revenues from outside the United States, with particularly strong presences in the emerging markets of Latin America, Eastern Europe and Asia. We think Avon is strategically well positioned with its iconic global brand and by having approximately 70 percent of its profits come from the attractive emerging markets of Latin America and Eastern Europe, where the Cosmetics, Fragrances and Toiletries (CFT) industry is growing at above-average rates and direct selling has been gaining market share. Organic sales growth, stripping away the impact of foreign currency translation and acquisition, has been especially strong for Herbalife, USANA and Nu Skin. In the first quarter 2011, Herbalife was up nearly 25 percent. USANA has grown local currency sales on average in the low teens dating back to the first quarter 2010, and Nu Skin also grew double digits throughout 2010. Conversely, our larger traditional packaged goods companies have struggled to generate more than low single-digit organic growth of late.

Relatively high gross margins to buffer against the recent dramatic rise in commodity cost inflation

While input cost inflation has been front of mind for many investors of late, our direct selling companies have actually been delivering gross margin expansion. In fact, USANA has had flat or higher gross margins seven quarters in a row, while Nu Skin has six in a row and Herbalife four. Conversely, our traditional packaged goods coverage has averaged gross margin contraction the past three quarters.

Ownership of the distribution channel and the tendency toward premium-priced products

This gives the direct sellers pricing power that tends to be more of a struggle for most traditional package-goods companies that have to sell through big-box retailers.

Under-leveraged balance sheets and large free cash flows

Both tend to put the direct selling business model on particularly strong financial footing. Notably, Herbalife, Nu Skin, Tupperware and USANA have adopted a more aggressive approach to dividend increases and/or share repurchases, such that their cash returned to shareholders is on par with or better than most of their peers in the traditional packaged goods universe. ■

Douglas M. Lane is Managing Director of Equity Research for Jefferies & Company, Inc.

"The direct selling business model is one that can level the playing field and close the gap between the haves and have-nots."

—RAY CHAMBERS, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist and Humanitarian

"The partnership with Avon is a logical and natural extension of everything I believe in. I am confident we can make a huge difference toward the goal of empowering women and helping them achieve their financial hopes and dreams."

—SUZE ORMAN, Internationally Acclaimed Personal Finance Expert

"Direct selling is actually one of the oldest, most respected business models in the world and has stood the test of time."

—DONALD TRUMP, Billionaire Businessman

"One reason I have such strong respect for network marketing is that it is a genuine equal-opportunity business. Network marketing casts a very wide net. When you look closely at the more than 60 million people worldwide who are engaged in the business, you'll find people of every color and creed, every age group, and every level of background, experience and skill."

—ROBERT T. KIYOSAKI, author of *Rich Dad Poor Dad* and *The Business of the 21st Century*

"What is the one bright spot on the entire horizon that would give someone an opportunity to be retrained to learn new skills? Direct selling."

—PAUL ZANE PILZER, World-Renowned Economist and Best-Selling Author of *The Next Millionaires*

"The rapid growth dynamics both in terms of consumers purchasing products and associates participating as direct sellers is driving strong interest from private equity groups and strategic acquirers in direct selling companies."

—LORIN DEMORDAUNT, Managing Director, McColl Partners

"Network marketing has come of age. It's undeniable that it has become a way to entrepreneurship and independence for millions of people."

—STEPHEN COVEY, Author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

"This country was founded on entrepreneurialism and we are returning to it. The future of employment is self-employment. Direct selling is one of the few business opportunities that offers average people, with above average ambition to achieve an above average lifestyle, peace of mind and financial security."

—DARREN HARDY, Publisher of *SUCCESS Magazine*

A Truly Global Channel

by Katherine Ponder



The following is a special report from *Direct Selling News*. The article, which is based on statistics reported by the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA), interviews with local Direct Selling Associations (DSAs) and third-party reporting, tells the story of the cumulative impact of the direct selling way of doing business in key markets around the world.

Figures are year-end results for 2009; 2010 full data not yet available.

1. United States—\$28.3 billion

With \$28.3 billion in sales for 2009, U.S. direct selling was down almost 4.4 percent from 2008. U.S. direct sales declined, but retailing as a whole declined 7.3 percent over the same period. Looking forward to 2011, analysts expect that those who entered the direct selling arena as a way to make up for lost income will remain active even as the economy recovers. That trend will likely lead to higher sales for the year.

2. Japan—\$22.4 billion

Direct selling in Japan has literally had its ups and downs in recent years. Between 2006 (the previous reported timeframe from WFDSA) and 2009, it lost approximately \$400 million in sales. When you're the No. 2 nation in the industry, this looks relatively small. But Japan's economic recession has been every bit as bad as that in the United States, and economic problems began long before 2007.

3. Brazil—\$13.5 billion

The national DSA, Associacao Brasileira de Empresas de Vendas Diretas (ABEVD), remains bullish on its members' performance. The ABEVD, which has 48 direct selling members, reported a sales increase of 18.4 percent from 2008 to 2009. In a year of adversity for most sectors of the economy, the direct sales opportunity generated income for 2.3 million people.

4. China—\$10.9 billion

China continues to be a tantalizing yet elusive market for direct selling companies. Its sales in the industry grew by almost \$3 billion between 2008 and 2009, proving that companies *are* operating successfully within its borders. Many are founded in China; yet for multinational companies, the market remains a challenge. All eyes are on the explosive growth in China, with analysts taking bets on when it will surpass the United States and Japan.

Direct Selling's Billion-Dollar Markets

Market	Estimated 2009 Sales (US\$ in billions)	2008 Sales (US\$ in billions)	No. Salespeople (2009)	No. Salespeople (2008)
1. United States	28.3	29.6	16,100,000	15,100,000
2. Japan	22.4	22.8†	2,700,000	2,700,000
3. Brazil	13.5	10.0	2,377,336	2,028,098
4. China	10.9	8.00	not available	not available
5. South Korea	7.84	7.00	3,987,933	3,089,158
6. Mexico	4.83	4.40	2,000,000	1,900,000
7. Germany	3.76	9.00*	not available	not available
8. Italy	3.36	3.36	390,955	366,000
9. Russia	3.06	2.87	4,995,508	4,413,918
10. France	2.41	2.40†	265,000	242,000
11. United Kingdom	2.1	3.56†	400,000	419,500†
12. Taiwan	1.7	1.64	4,442,000	4,111,000
13. Thailand	1.56	1.59	10,000,000	5,400,000
14. Canada	1.3	1.18	644,455	608,000
15. Colombia	1.26	1.50	900,000	867,000
16. Australia	1.25	.844	500,000	*
17. Argentina	1.15	1.17	731,122	714,000
18. Malaysia	1.13	1.03†	4,000,000	4,000,000
19. Venezuela	1.12	.887†	565,000	*
20. India	1.06	.586	2,012,940	*

NOTE: All figures obtained by the WFDSA.

*Not ranked in our 2010 list as having more than US\$1 billion in sales. †2006 figures ‡2007 figures

5. South Korea—\$7.84 billion

South Korea moved up one notch in our international rankings by gaining \$840 million in sales in 2009, according to WFDSA. The industry has approximately 4 million distributors and 64 members in the Korean DSA. Research shows that one-sixth of the population has been involved with direct selling at some point in their lives. Indications for 2010 final sales figures are that South Korea will hit \$9 billion. The 2011 forecast for the industry is to parallel the national economy by growing 4 to 5 percent.

6. Mexico—\$4.83 billion

Mexico rose one place in our annual list by gaining approximately \$430 million in sales from 2008 to 2009. It was an increase made even more remarkable because it came during troubled economic times. The Asociacion Mexicana de Ventas Directas estimates that the 39 member

companies account for 85 percent of the industry's sales in the country, with growth of almost 6 percent from 2008 to 2009.

7. Germany—\$3.76 billion

Germany is the largest direct selling market in Europe. It has an affluent and technologically advanced economy—a large proportion of which is over 50 with high-disposal income—and high unemployment. Direct sellers in Germany are 67 percent women, and 84 percent sell through a personal sales method. The Bundesverband Direktvertrieb Deutschland e.V., the oldest direct selling agency in Germany, estimated turnover of member companies fell slowly by 1.3 percent; however, in general the state of direct selling in Germany is good, and businesses are optimistic about the future. Germany is by far still No. 1 in Europe and in the top 10 world markets.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL ZANE PILZER

Solution to a Shrinking Job Market

by J.M. Emmert

Professor Paul Zane Pilzer has kept a watchful eye on the direct selling industry for more than 30 years. In the 1990s, the renowned economist who served in two White House administrations predicted that network marketers would help make the then-emerging \$200-billion health and wellness channel the next trillion-dollar industry. The success of companies such as Herbalife, Medifast, Monavie, Amway, Nu Skin, USANA and Blyth are helping to confirm Pilzer's theory.

As the current economic crisis continues to take a toll on people around the world and unemployment rates steadily rise, direct selling may be the answer to a shrinking job market. Pilzer warns that too many people today see unemployment as part of the economic cycle—that when the economy recovers, employment will naturally go up.

However, unemployment is not a macro-economic problem, he says. It is a micro-economic issue, typically related to a skill deficiency on an individual level. "The question lies not in *economic* recovery but *employment* recovery," says Pilzer, who has written nine bestsellers. "We have a massive social problem. What are we going to do with 30 million people who are now permanently unemployed? The No. 1 social need in the United States right now has nothing to do with the economy."

The real challenge is to replace lost jobs with new earnings opportunities and provide much-needed training. The jobs that baby boomers and Gen Xers trained for years ago have disappeared. Technology has replaced millions of workers and demanded new skills that too many older Americans just don't have.

"Instead of focusing on new methods of training, our politicians and news media are looking at unemployment and the economic recovery as linked—and *they are not* because most of the unemployed people today are skills-deficient. If they are over 50 years old, they probably don't touch-type or e-mail, and that doesn't work in today's economy."

So what happens to those displaced workers? Direct selling may have the answer. The direct selling business model has always had a competitive advantage in the training that it offers, both in business and personal skills. It allows people to be retrained *while* they pursue something new. It gives people an opportunity when no one else will.

The biggest need in every sector of the economy, says Pilzer, is intellectual distribution—the dissemination of information about products and services. "We have a huge backlog of better products and services that people aren't buying because they don't know about them. Direct selling is the most efficient method for the distribution of intellectual information that will improve your life. It is the ideal model that allows anyone to reach out."

Direct selling offers people the skills and tools to create new income opportunities—to venture out on their own as entrepreneurs and grow in confidence versus being consumed by the fear associated with a shrinking job market. "Technology is available to everyone at home and is even better than what you can get in a large company," says Pilzer. "When we examine the workplace, we often find outdated computers and data management systems. However, the best tools and support needed to run a home-based business are now available to individuals at an affordable cost. This makes a home-based business—and a direct selling opportunity, in particular—very appealing." ■



A Main Street Company for Main Street North America

Founded in 1977, Primerica is the largest independent financial services marketing organization in North America. The company, headquartered in Duluth, GA, is a public company listed on the New York Stock Exchange, trading under the symbol "PRI."

For more than 34 years, Primerica has helped families get properly protected, debt free and financially independent. The Primerica business opportunity gives people from all walks of life a chance to live their dreams.

Primerica at a glance:

- More than 4.3 million lives insured through our life companies
- More than 2 million clients maintain investment accounts with us
- Our clients have \$35 billion in assets under management through us
- An average of \$2.6 million in benefit claims paid every day
- Greater than \$656 billion life insurance in force



www.primerica.com

8. Italy—\$3.36 billion

Italy moved up in global rankings with an increase of \$3.36 billion in sales while many nations dropped. The salesforce also grew, adding more than 30,000 people to the rolls. Both increases are in stark contrast to the national economy, which had increasing unemployment and a 5 percent decrease in economic growth for 2009.

9. Russia—\$3.06 billion

Russia increased its sales by \$190 million, earning it an advancement of one spot in the rankings. The falling U.S. dollar against the Russian ruble made this change more pronounced, but the industry showed its muscle by increasing even as the national economy suffered through the economic crisis.

10. France—\$2.41 billion

France's international rankings brought it up one level as well, from No. 11 previously. French direct sales stayed in the same \$2.4 billion range from 2007 (the last period reported through WFDSA) to 2009, leaving it a winner for keeping up its pace year over year.

11. United Kingdom—\$2.1 billion

Our annual rankings saw the United Kingdom fall from the No. 8 spot last year. WFDSA sales statistics for the country show a decrease of more than half, from \$3.6 billion in 2007 (rankings last year were based on 2007 data, as it was the last information reported to the WFDSA) to \$1.4 billion in 2009. However, there seems to be a renewed optimism in the United Kingdom, with people and businesses stepping up to seize the opportunities that everyone feels sure are coming.

12. Taiwan—\$1.7 billion

Taiwan moved up one spot by gaining \$60 million in sales over the course of 2009. This was great news for the country, marking a 9.2 percent increase and the end of a three-year slide in sales. The Taiwan ROC Direct Selling Association notes that distributor numbers were also up, increasing 8 percent to 4.4 million.

13. Thailand—\$1.56 billion

Despite having \$30 million less in sales, Thailand still moved up two spaces on our international list. These figures include sales of both Thai Direct Selling Association members and non-members as well. There are 10 million people selling through 590 companies, of which 29 are TDSA members. The Thai DSA believes that the 2010 figures will show almost 12 million distributors and a strong increase of 15 to 20 percent in sales numbers.

14. Canada—\$1.3 billion

World economic troubles challenged Canada as well as much of the rest of the international community. Sales declined 3.5 percent during 2009 as the recession took its toll. Official numbers from the Direct Sellers Association of Canada put 2009 sales at \$1.3 billion, and estimates for 2010 numbers show that the direct selling industry in Canada will decrease 6.2 percent to \$1.23 billion in 2011.

15. Colombia—\$1.26 billion

Colombia's sales were down slightly from \$1.5 billion in 2008, but it kept its spot on our list. The beauty and personal-care segments have dominated this market. While the national economy grew only 0.8 percent in 2009, the beauty and personal-care market grew 6 percent. Skin care registered nearly double-digit growth, with anti-aging products leading the way.

16. Australia—\$1.25 billion

Australia is new to the list this year. The \$1.25 billion is a substantial increase over its \$844 million reported in 2008. Sales for 2010 are expected to be strong but not huge. However, direct selling is performing better than the rest of the retail world in Australia. Salesforce numbers are also expected to increase slightly, and leading categories continue to be health care and personal goods.

17. Argentina—\$1.15 billion

The industry in Argentina decreased enough to bring them down one notch in our annual rankings. Sales decreased nationally by \$20 million. This is hardly surprising, considering that Argentina had its own share of economic problems even before the worldwide recession.

18. Malaysia—\$1.13 billion

The direct selling industry in Malaysia is steadily growing, enjoying the benefits of more companies launching within its borders. The Direct Selling Association of Malaysia boasts 57 members and 4 million salesforce members.

19. Venezuela—\$1.12 billion

A newcomer to the \$1 billion list, Venezuela is counting its successes. From 2006 (the latest numbers for WFDSA last year) to 2009, its collective direct sales totals rose by more than \$200 million.

20. India—\$1.06 billion

New to the list this year, India's sales nearly doubled from 2008 to 2009. Figures for 2010 are expected to show a 20 to 30 percent growth, according to Chavi Hemanth, Secretary General of the Indian Direct Selling Association. Forecasts call for the industry to be at \$1.5 billion by 2012–2013. ■

Speed, Power, Reach

How Direct Sellers Are Leveraging New Technology

by Teresa Day



Direct sellers have historically held a competitive edge over traditional retailers of goods and services because of their skills in connecting with people, their personal ethics in business dealings and in the automatic trust and respect generated when dealing with word-of-mouth "advertising" through networking. After all, direct selling is the ultimate social business model, and technology is now redefining perceptions of what that's all about.

Smartphones, tablets, apps and social networking tools have no doubt changed the way the world connects. To direct sellers, who have always shared their goods and services with their social network and the new customers and friends they have met through existing ones, the rest of the world have finally caught up.

Radio reached an audience of 50 million in 38 years. Television reached the same number in only 13 years. The Internet reached 50 million in only four years, iPods had 50 million users in less than three years and Facebook had them in only two. MySpace has over 200 million registered users; Facebook added that many users last year alone. In 1992, there were an estimated 1 million Internet-capable devices in use, and today that number exceeds 1 billion. Simply put, current technological advances in mobile devices and apps, as well as in social media tools, serve to increase the speed, power and reach of what's already a competitive advantage in the direct selling model.

Prior to these tech advances in connecting people, direct sellers were limited to physical places—literally going door-to-door, the party at someone's home, the meeting room at the local hotel. Now, business can be conducted anywhere

and everywhere. Conversations about purchasing product can be turned into a buying experience at an accelerated level with a mobile device and an appropriate app.

IT vendors are making quantum leaps in the development of apps for the independent business



owner (IBOs) in direct selling for all aspects of the business. IBOs can access their team information and sign up new business owners on the spot, wherever they happen to meet. Short, interactive opportunity presentations, created specifically for smartphones and tablets, enable independent business owners to "hold a meeting" over coffee or anywhere people can engage in a 3-minute conversation.

Stuart Johnson, Founder and CEO of VideoPlus, which specializes in the refinement and transmission of direct selling companies' core messages, says, "The fundamentals of the direct selling model haven't really changed in decades, but the *delivery* of the message has changed dramatically. In today's technologically driven world, we can provide a focused, simple, authentic and transparent message in less than three minutes, and in some cases, in just 60 seconds."

All of the current technologies allow independent business owners to meet their customers wherever their habits take them and to integrate into that behavior. With individuals busier than ever and used to having access to information, as well as the ability to connect using their mobile devices, meeting people "where they are" is a critical component of any business transaction.

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Direct sellers won't be left behind in the technology race, and some companies are at the very forefront.

Nu Skin, XANGO, Amway, Herbalife, Primerica, MonaVie, lia sophia and ACN are just a few of the direct selling companies to align the power of apps on smartphones and tablets with the company goals of recruitment, retention and sales. The investment is paying off in a big way.

"Anything that supports the story [of Nu Skin] is a strong ROI for us," says Nu Skin Vice President of Business Technology Andrea Hayhurst. "These kinds of tools enable this mass of communicators [independent business owners] to tell our story much more effectively."

Primerica, a financial services company, provides term life insurance as one of its products. In the past, enrollment for a new customer was a lengthy paper process with a waiting period for receiving acceptance or rejection, with additional waiting for the rep to get paid. Today, a Primerica representative with a tablet can present to a customer, apply for the policy, get it approved, bind it, deliver it and get paid the commission in minutes. Primerica's incorporation of hardware and software apps into the daily experience of the representative illustrates the boost of power that technology adds to personal relationships.

Technology is also expanding the *reach* of personal relationships. All people belong to social networks of some sort; most people are part of several social networks. People connect with others for many reasons, whether it is for friendship, shared activities or backgrounds, common causes or belief systems, just to name a few. Technology has not at all changed the fact that people

connect to one another. It has, however, dramatically changed the scope and reach of those connections, using the Internet to shrink vast distances and connect "friends" without geographic constraint.

Today, 50 percent of the world's population is under 30, and 96 percent of them are estimated to have joined a social media network. But this trend does not stop with the younger generation. The fastest-growing segment of Facebook users is females 55 to 65. Clearly, social media represents a permanent shift in the way people communicate and form relationships. It has also created a permanent shift in the way companies approach their customers. Johnson says, "Business is

Direct selling is the ultimate social business model, and technology is redefining perceptions of what that's all about.



happening on social networks. Social networking leads to social connecting, which leads to social sharing. Groupon, LivingSocial and others are not 'selling socially' they are 'sharing socially' and that leads to revenue generation."

ViSalus Sciences, a weight-management direct selling company, has incorporated social sharing as a strategic part of their marketing approach. The company created a laser-focused message with their Body by Vi Challenge and utilized social

networks to spread that message to reach new audiences. CEO Ryan Blair says, "We have a simple, focused, authentic story that our fans are excited about and because of that, we add over 1,000 new customers per day to our company."

Additional advancements over the coming year are sure to further contribute to the speed, power and reach of the direct seller, creating even more opportunity for connecting with new customers. This combination of the successful distribution model of direct selling with the explosive growth in communications technology can only continue to play to the strengths of the direct selling industry. ■

Of the People, by the People, for the People

by Teresa Day

More than 12 million jobs have been eliminated from the U.S. economy since December 2007, and according to the Brookings Institute, it could take 12 years to re-create what's been lost. Many individuals are looking to the direct selling model for a different answer.

Of the People

The Economic Policy Institute estimates 4.4 unemployed workers are available for every job opening. This number does not take into account the estimated 2.3 million "sidelined" workers—people who have lost jobs recently but are not yet trying to re-enter the workforce—making the ratio between job openings and available workers even higher.

In the midst of multiple opinions about causes and cures for our current economic state, the activity surrounding small-business ownership appears to be increasing. Direct selling companies such as Scentsy, Herbalife and ViSalus Sciences have processed more applications to start businesses than ever. In fact, just among the top 20 revenue-grossing companies—there are an estimated 2,000 U.S. companies using the direct selling business model—more than 500,000 new applications are processed in any given month.

Yet the numbers of individuals starting their own direct selling businesses are not counted in the Department of Labor's statistics, nor are they recognized by most economists as significant indicators for the economy. With collective gross revenues of U.S. direct selling companies topping \$28 billion annually, it might be a statistic worth considering.

By the People

In direct selling, individuals market and sell products and services *directly* to the consumer, either through individual contact or group selling, such as the in-home party. Individuals own their own businesses but still have the support of a parent company. The direct selling model has similarities to the franchising model, another type of popular business ownership. Unlike the franchisee, however, the direct seller is an independent contractor with complete control over building and conducting the business. Most direct selling companies advocate a robust ethical code and encourage adherence to ensure optimal relationships among fellow contractors (business owners) and consumers.

The direct selling industry is very democratic, inviting all segments of the population to participate in business ownership, regardless of income, education or assets. The age range of direct sellers

mirrors the age range of adults: 18 to 65+, with some surveys indicating up to 22 percent of direct sellers are over 55 years old. The product categories are just as diverse, including nearly every product or service imaginable, from energy to financial planning, from health and wellness to beauty, from home improvement to self-improvement.

For the People

Direct selling is also an extraordinarily philanthropic industry, with nearly every company, regardless of size, participating in some kind of charitable endeavor, whether it is setting up its own foundation, partnering with humanitarian organizations, or regularly supporting existing charities. Companies such as Amway, Nu Skin, Herbalife, Shaklee, The Pampered Chef, Tahitian Noni and XANGO also are among first responders to help when disaster strikes, here in the United States and across the world, offering millions of dollars in reconstruction efforts, products, and even basics such as food and blankets to affected people. Amway's generosity is rooted in the belief of its founders and owners that "we need to share our resources with the communities where we do business," says the company's president, Doug DeVos.

Participating in the generosity of the industry provides another compelling reason that people want to sign on with direct selling companies. According to USANA's Chief Marketing Officer Kevin Guest, the industry attracts people who want to make the world a better place. "Our entire business is about helping others," he says. "It seems only natural to me that altruism would spill over into other aspects of their lives as well." USANA partners with The Children's Fund, delivering food and vitamins to children across the globe, and even making it possible for employees and associates to volunteer in other countries.

Direct selling company CEOs are also known for their personal philanthropy in support of many causes around the world. A recent example of this giving spirit can be found in Andrea Jung, CEO of Avon, who gifted her entire long-term bonus of \$5,362,500 to the Avon Foundation for Women, which has raised more than \$800 million to support women's issues such as breast cancer awareness and ending domestic violence.

Direct selling: of the people, by the people, and most definitely, for the people. ■





The age range of direct sellers mirrors the age range of adults: 18 to 65+, with some surveys indicating up to 22 percent of direct sellers are over 55 years old.



The Heart of Direct Selling: The Home

by Barbara Seale
& John Fleming

What's the ideal home-based business? More than 16 million Americans think it's direct selling.

They represent one of the hundreds of U.S. direct selling businesses, and together they generated \$28.3 billion in annual sales last year. While a few direct sellers work at their businesses full time, about 90 percent work part time to supplement their income. Some 80 percent of direct sellers are women, and almost all say they appreciate the schedule flexibility and low cost of starting their business. Customized technology lets them make their business portable and convenient. They can show high-quality products or share their business opportunity at a home party, but it's just as easy to do at a coffee shop or restaurant.

Direct selling companies, sometimes referred to as network marketing companies, are gaining the attention of some of the world's foremost financial experts, including Suze Orman, noted author, television personality and consultant to Avon Products Inc.; Robert Kiyosaki, best-selling author of the *Rich Dad Poor Dad* series, who has sold more books on financial guidance than any author in history; and David Bach, *New York Times* best-selling author, to name just a few. All have responded positively to the significance of the direct selling business model.

"The beauty of the direct selling business opportunity is that it's all done for you," Bach says. "There isn't any real startup time. You don't have to create a business plan. You don't have to create a product. The only thing you need to do is find a reputable company—one that you can trust—that offers a product or service that you believe in and can get passionate about."

A Growing Trend

What is most appealing about becoming a direct seller is that anyone can do it. Today's technology offers many viable options for working from home, not to mention the comfort and enjoyment of not having to go to a place of employment at a certain time each day. The essential activities related to building the business are usually conducted in the home. The party plan approach to selling is found to be very easy to learn—and to enjoy. Meeting prospective customers and potential direct sellers at a coffee shop is far more relaxing than the traditional business conference room.



As the ultimate equal-opportunity solution, a direct selling home-based business may represent the purest form of equality through free enterprise. That's one of the most striking aspects of direct selling as a business model: It involves men and women from all walks of life, all ages, and all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. According to the Direct Selling Association, the industry's trade organization, 24 percent of direct sellers have a high school diploma or less education; however, 35 percent are college graduates and 1 in 12 has a postgraduate degree. These statistics are expected to possibly change dramatically as technology redefines the way direct sellers conduct their businesses and more and more Americans look for easier ways to attempt entrepreneurship by starting their own business.

The Primary Benefit: Work-Life Balance

A home-based business is a valuable asset when it is developed successfully. Since there is no commute to work, one's business can be managed to accommodate one's working hours, family life and personal interests. This is one of the

primary benefits that have historically attracted women to the business model. Today, there are millions of men and women who seek a business opportunity that offers the ultimate work-life balancing potential.

Around the world, millions of families use earnings from their direct selling businesses to make their monthly car or mortgage payments, take family vacations, send their children to private schools or purchase a few luxuries. For these individuals, the money earned each month, regardless of the amount, makes a big difference. And the big benefit? It's that they are doing it on their terms and in accordance to the time they are willing to invest.

The Benefit of Owning Your Own Business

Some direct sellers and network marketers (all are independent business owners) choose to view their business as an opportunity with unlimited earning potential. They realize they can increase their chances of achieving financial freedom by building a strong business. This requires time and energy to attract customers, sell their products and build a sales organization of others who

are recruited, coached and supported in their efforts to also build successful businesses. By treating the opportunity as a true business, these direct sellers have the potential to earn significant profits from their investment of time.

The Benefit of Personal Development

Personal development is a phrase often used when direct selling companies describe the benefits associated with the training they offer. Direct sellers tend to rave about the support they receive regardless of whether they are in the business for a new lifetime career or just a few months to earn some needed extra income. Some have been known to report that as a result of the training offered by the direct selling company they chose—usually offered free or at minimal cost—they were able to step out of their comfort zones, engage in conversations more effectively, speak in front of groups of people, manage time and money more effectively and, ultimately, enrich their lives through the experience.

The Ideal Business

While every company has its unique traits, the entire direct selling way of doing business shares common threads of empowering men and women to dream, to reach beyond what they thought to be possible, and to be supported in a very strong manner. Direct selling is a great example of how the free enterprise system can be engaged without the traditional risks associated with a brick-and-mortar business model. ■

Top 5 Reasons for Considering a Direct Selling Business

Be Your Own Boss—You are in complete control of how you invest your time and how you go about building your business.

Save Time and Money—As an independent business owner, you purchase the products you love at discounts and you operate all activities from your home.

Expand Your Circle of Friends—Direct selling business opportunities are based on building relationships. When building a direct selling business, customers and other team members appear to quickly become important and rewarding aspects to one's life.

Be Recognized and Rewarded for Achievement—It's not every day that an adult receives praise for an effort well done, but direct selling companies recognize and reward their independent business owners through bonuses, trips and prizes. This is an essential component to the business model.

Build Income—The direct selling compensation model offered by most companies allows the building of organizations that have the potential to create incomes beyond those earned from the personal selling/servicing efforts of the direct seller.