



Book Build It Big

101 Insider Secrets from Top Direct Selling Experts

Direct Selling Womens Alliance
Kaplan Publishing, 2005
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Recommendation

Those starting in direct sales do not need to stumble in the dark, because so many others have lit the way: This book of tips and techniques from the Direct Selling Women’s Alliance (DSWA) offers lessons from dozens of experts in the field to guide you through every aspect of the direct-selling business, from getting started and attracting clients to building your team and expanding your network. Even if you are a direct-sales veteran, you may find new approaches and insights to help you keep your momentum going or to bring your business to the next level. Because so many professionals contributed its pithy, easy-to-read essays, the book unavoidably carries some repetition along with its practical guidance. Still, *BooksInShort* recommends it as useful, even necessary, reading for salespeople in any field.

Take-Aways

- Direct selling professionals are commission-based independent marketing representatives offering a wide variety of products.
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- Direct selling is “a numbers game”; the more calls you make, the more you sell.
- Networking is essential to generating leads and gaining new clients.
- Rejection is part of the sales process; it’s not about you, so don’t take it personally.
- The customer always wants to know, “What’s in it for me?” Sell your product’s benefits.
- To succeed, identify your goals, create a plan and follow through.
- “Natural selling” is the holistic approach to sales; ask questions to let the customer arrive at your solution.
- To increase staff motivation, use acknowledgments that praise a team member’s specific talents.
- Aim for work-life balance by scheduling fun pastimes on your calendar along with work engagements.

Summary

Direct Selling

If you are one of the more than 44 million people who work as direct-selling professionals, you have chosen to become a commission-based, independent marketing representative for one of the hundreds of thousands of companies that sell their products or services through this process. You work part time or full time selling goods and building teams, boosted by the support, training and incentives of the company you represent.

“Connect with Your ‘Why’”

You embarked on your direct-selling journey filled with excitement and enthusiasm. However, to keep the positive energy flowing, you must get in touch with your purpose. Your “why” is the reason you’re spending your talent, time and dedication on your business. Define it in specific terms; for example, you want to earn the money to send your children to private school. Write these ideas down. Next, picture the ways your life will improve as your business grows. This “compelling vision” will inspire you through tough times when your zeal starts to fade.

“Start Your Business Off Right”

When you start in direct sales, don’t set up an office; all you really need is a phone and a calendar. Develop the professional habit of keeping an accurate, up-to-date calendar. Understand that, above all, direct selling is a “numbers game”: The more calls you make, the more business you’ll get. The acronym “FRANK” – “friends, relatives, acquaintances, neighbors and kids” – will remind you of the people you should approach in your new venture. Keep a list of contacts and their phone numbers with you so you can make calls whenever you have spare time. Invest in business cards and hand them out freely.

“Elevate Conversations to Connections”

Continually network to generate new leads that could turn into loyal customers. Conversation is the foundation of good networking, so work on becoming a good conversationalist. Each week, attend at least one event where you can meet new people. Let your personality shine; your energy and positive attitude will attract others. Begin conversations with comments like, “I notice from your name tag you’re with.... What do you like most about your job?” Listen for opportunities to build connections.

“Conquer Fear of Rejection and Move On to Greatness”

Worrying about what other people think of you is natural, but don’t “confuse rejection of the sale with people disliking” you. When prospects turn down your offer, it doesn’t mean that they don’t like you. They just don’t need – or can’t afford – your product. To overcome your fear of rejection, shift your focus from yourself to the customer; ask questions so you can discern what your buyer needs and then come up with a solution. If potential clients rebuff you – and they will – move on. Their refusal may have nothing to do with you or your product.

“Know Just Enough”

Resist the temptation to share everything you know about your product or service with your prospects. Instead, concentrate on the benefits your buyers seek. The truth is, customers only want to know “What is in it for me?” For instance, if you are selling cosmetics, note the fact that your product is made from natural ingredients. Follow that up with the benefit: No harsh chemicals can harm the customer’s sensitive skin. Next, explain the solution: Your product will reduce her wrinkles. Finally, add the “WOW! factor” – she’ll look younger and healthier.

“Focus on Execution”

Good intentions don’t make sales, but good execution does. To succeed, identify your goals, create a plan and follow through. Start by naming the “core activities” you must complete, and then focus your energies on them. Stick to the deadlines you set. Learn from experts and apply their strategies. Lastly, realize that everything you do – or don’t do – affects your business.

“Balance Six Areas Critical to Your Start-Up Success”

A party planner says her direct-selling success comes from mastering six business fields:

1. **“Bookings”** – A full calendar translates into a winning business.
2. **“Hostess coaching”** – Instruct your team in the essentials of a successful event.
3. **“Increasing attendance”** – The more people at a party, the greater the sales potential.
4. **“Increasing sales”** – Capitalize on every opportunity.
5. **“Customer service”** – It’s the key to retention and repeat business.
6. **“Recruiting or sponsoring”** – Build your team.

“Restore Your Business with Bookings”

You might experience a lull when your appointments slow to a trickle. How do you get back on track? Set aside at least two evenings per week, plus Saturday, to make phone calls, and don’t stop until you’ve made 100 calls to generate leads. Get in touch with people you’ve worked with before. Look into participating in a craft show or similar affair to advertise your business. Set a booking goal, establish a deadline and work diligently to reach your objective.

“Natural Selling – The Magic and Power of Dialogue”

“Conventional Selling” convinces someone to purchase your product or service. In contrast, “Natural Selling” is a holistic approach based on uncovering a need and then providing the solution. Use dialogue and pose questions to get your prospects to reveal their circumstances. Leave your personal agenda behind; listen with an open heart. Show that you understand by providing feedback. If your product is a good match, customers will come to that conclusion on their own, because “people make changes based on feelings, not on logic.”

“Become a Recruiting Powerhouse”

Eliciting the desires of potential recruits is just as important as identifying client needs. When you truly listen to what prospective team members want, you can offer

them the opportunity to achieve their dreams. Recruit everyone you think has potential, and then concentrate your efforts on those who show interest. Build trust by offering prospects information about your enterprise to review at home, and ask if you can follow up with them in a day or two. Let your recruits know that they can depend on you for training and support, and that their success is your success.

“Discovering Self to Find Esteem”

High self-esteem is necessary in direct selling, and low self-assurance could sabotage your best efforts. To boost your sense of confidence, try these measures:

- Continually remind yourself of your strengths rather than reciting your weaknesses.
- Envision a time when you felt powerful; use that feeling to spur you on to success.
- Make friends with a mirror, accept your looks and pay yourself four compliments a day.
- Make your “self-talk,” the running dialogue in your head, positive and reaffirming.
- Surround yourself with people and experiences that boost your confidence.

“Listen – and Give the Greatest Gift”

Direct selling is all about building relationships, and good listening skills are at the crux of this process. Practice “Heart-Centered Listening”: Quiet your own thoughts so that you can really hear what the other person is saying. Use body language, such as eye contact and a receptive stance, to show you are actively listening. Try to take in the message without judgment and with empathy. Summarize what you’ve heard so that the other person knows you’ve received the content. Effective Heart-Centered Listening will make your team members feel validated, supported and understood.

Use an “‘I See You’ Acknowledgment”

A compliment is nice, but a heartfelt acknowledgment is much better. It praises a person’s strengths and talents in a specific way. For instance, instead of saying, “You ran a good meeting yesterday, Laura,” you can recognize her capabilities with, “Laura, as I watched you run your team meeting, I saw your ability to listen deeply to your team. Your openness and patience allowed team members to speak honestly, which in turn helps them grow.” This type of genuine acknowledgment resonates, boosting the recipient’s self-esteem and self-image.

“Plan for Success”

If you want to thrive at direct selling, then plan for success and go forth as though you are on to a winner. Work with your sponsor or a trusted adviser to develop a specific strategy to move you up through each level of your compensation plan. Don’t regard your business as a hobby, even if you work only part time. Act as if you’ve already made it to the top, even if you are still on your way up the ladder. Dress and behave professionally, and expect that success will be yours.

“Build a Business, Not an Orphanage”

As much as you want your team to succeed, ultimately its results depend on the efforts of the individual team members, who shouldn’t expect you to build their businesses; your role is to supply them the tools with which to succeed. If you find yourself becoming a babysitter rather than a coach and leader, reduce your emotional investment in their outcomes: Disengage honestly and focus your efforts on those who are self-motivated and willing to work hard for their success.

“Attend to the Business Side of Business”

As in any commercial endeavor, direct selling requires attention to finances. So “get organized”: Write a straightforward plan, create a simple filing system, track your car costs, get to know your tax situation and hire a tax preparer who is savvy about home businesses, check your bank statements, put money away for retirement and complete a financial statement every month.

“Choose to Be Balanced”

One of the primary advantages of a direct-selling career is that it gives salespeople – who are mostly women – the flexibility to work from home. However, juggling the demands of business and family is a balancing act. If you find your life spiraling into chaos, consider keeping one day a week free from work. Put fun pastimes on your calendar along with work engagements; if you don’t schedule playtime, it might not happen. Eliminate energy- and time-wasting activities such as surfing the Internet, watching television or making long personal phone calls. And give yourself a vacation from guilt. Every woman feels as if she should be doing more for her family and her business. Understand that you are doing the best you can, and set guilt aside.

“Boost Your Online Image”

Email is an excellent tool for communicating with clients; however, your written messages must project the same level of professionalism you do in person or on the phone. Write in full, grammatically correct sentences, and always check your spelling. Keep communications concise and easy to understand. Use the subject line to summarize the content. Pick up the phone if emails fly back and forth without a resolution. Check your messages at least once a day, respond without delay and “be careful not to put anything in writing that you wouldn’t say in person.”

“Voice Your Power...in Public”

Becoming an “expert in your field” via media exposure broadens your opportunities, enhances your credibility and increases your business. When a topic arises in the media that relates to your area of expertise, consider ways that you can contribute. Write a column for a local publication or an e-zine in your field. Donate your services to a nonprofit organization and ask for their public endorsement. Organize your own event to bring attention to an issue you care about or to aid a charity.

About the Author

The Direct Selling Women’s Alliance (DSWA) is a trade association devoted to promoting direct sales, and to providing training and support to thousands of independent distributors.
