STORIES

Margie Aliprandi

With one and only one company, Neways, for 17 years, single mom Margie has a networking organization of "a few hundred thousand" around the world. Her story is one of walk-away income with no intention of walking away. She's too in love with her products and people for that.

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"Network marketing, I love it at the core of my being, it's like I was born for this. I use it as a platform to teach the things that I think really matter and bring people back to their abundance."

Margie, you've been in the business of network marketing for how long?

Seventeen years.

All those years with one company and you have an international organization but you don't really know how many people...?

Yes, all those years with NEWAYS. And you're right, I don't know how many people are in my organization— a few hundred thousand. I'm bad at the numbers part of things.

Margie, what did you do in your former life… before network marketing?

I was a Junior High School Music Teacher and did some acting, some industrial work, some television commercial work, voice-over work, a lot of musical theater, several US touring companies, those kinds of things. I went on a USO Tour. So, in my life I've done a lot of things around music and performing and commercial work.

How did you very first learn about network marketing?

Well, I live in Utah, so that almost answers it. At a very young age people started talking to me about various companies, because so many of them originate here. They would tell me that I would be so good in this type of business. And, I always had tremendous resistance to it.

What was your resistance about?

I just didn't like... I don't like, the whole posture of 'selling' and going to your friends with the idea, or I should say, the assumption, that you have something that somebody can't live without, that whole thing. But the selling to friends thing is where I think I had the most aversion.

So how did you first get interested in it despite that resistance?

Interestingly, my father, who is probably one of the most capable businessmen and well-connected individuals I know, got involved in Amway. He was just consistently coming to me and suggesting that I join him. I was ardently opposed to it. At one point I remember saying,

> ***'Dad, just leave me alone! I would rather wash toilets for the rest of my life than do Amway. I will not do it!'***

A few months later, he and his 'then' wife got divorced and he hired me hourly to fulfill the role that she had been filling in his Amway business. Taking the orders, sending product out to people, all of that kind of stuff.

I went with him to a 'Dream Night' and I remember thinking how inspired I was by it all. I also remember thinking that for me there was still that threshold issue. I still could not get around the marketing model. But it did sort of open my mind to it where I thought, 'Well, you know, if done right and approached from the product standpoint there is something really special here.' So, I think it was, ultimately, when I came across NEWAYS, I saw a product that absolutely compelled me to share it with people.

Because of the acting I was doing at the time, I auditioned for the role of spokesperson for a company called LUME, which was a network marketing company that was just growing leaps and bounds. They had a 'home nail gel system'. Now, understand, I had just been Mrs. Utah, and I had been using gels instead of acrylics on my nails for a couple of years because I liked them so much better. So, I auditioned for this with 70 other women and I got the job. I think part of the reason I got it was that I was so passionate about the product that they hired me on the spot.

We put together all of these materials where I did training and I just remember thinking how much I liked playing with that product and that if there was ever a thing I could sell this would be it.

A few months later I got a phone message from someone I didn't even know saying, "I know that you're something of a marketer and your boyfriend is very successful in network marketing, you've got to take a look at this." I called him back and he was telling me about this do-it-yourself at-home nail gel system. I was just thrilled! Then he said he wanted me to help him begin looking for a network marketing company to take on this product.

He started interviewing companies and I started interviewing companies. He called me a couple of weeks later and said, "I found the perfect company here in Salem, Utah— a tiny little company, they're doing about $28,000 a month worldwide, they've got about 10 products in their line and the owner of the company 'gets' it. This product can create a billion dollar company for him and he gets it!" We went down and met the owner. He took on the product and me with it.

Within about 14 months we were doing about $1.2 million in wholesale volume in my group by leading with that flagship product.

Just prior to that I had signed a teaching contract because I wanted to save my new, nice home. Here I was, a single mom, had lived there three months when I got a divorce, so I had signed the teaching contract in August, 1989. I ended up canceling the contract and started doing network marketing full time, with no previous experience, three small children and no capital... but I'd found a product that compelled me. I could talk to anybody about that product!

We would do trade shows and people would come to us. They would just line up in droves to get a nail demonstration. Our product has so much charm and it's an immediate result product, so I would have people crowd into my home on a Tuesday night, sometimes 150 people, to learn about this product and the business.

> ***It's just really magical when you have a product that's compelling enough that everybody wants it… and people can just sense that there's money to be made here.***

What did you do about learning the business of the business, Margie?

It was trial and error. I think some things are instinctive to me and I think leading people is a natural thing for me. Very soon I started to figure some things out.

I had a lot of people coming in and I realized you have to encourage volume; you have to build the plan so that people get their ranks. So I became very business- minded just by observation and a little bit of trial and error. I started to notice the components that need to be there for somebody to be successful and how to teach them what they needed to do... from a business standpoint, from a product standpoint, from a persistence point, quality of character, leadership development, etc., it just didn't take very long to get it.

What were two or three things you found back then to be the most important to focus on, get good at and help people get good at as well?
Persistence, as much as anything.

Especially here in the United States, we have such an immediate gratification mindset, that to get people to have the long-term view is critical. It was important not to represent how rapidly someone could get significant money, and to be clear about that so people realize that this is a long-term commitment. Persistence was the key and certainly one of the core things.

I think at that point the biggest group that the founders and owners of our company had ever been in front of was about 20-30 people. I decided I was going to get together a training meeting and invited them to attend. I'd just been going around to all of these home meetings— I did two or three a night— and as we went to these meetings with 20-30 people all over Salt Lake, we would announce that we were having this training meeting. So I had them set up 50 chairs. As people started streaming in they kept bringing more and more chairs into the room. At one point I remember walking where the group couldn't see me and wanting to squeal while tears were streaming down my face. We probably had 250 people at that first meeting!

The company president stood up and was just flabbergasted because of the momentum we were creating here. I gave a talk called 'Persistence Pays', talking about the growth cycle that a business will go through and how you have to persist through challenging times and those kinds of things. They had me come down to the corporate offices and re-record it on video, because they felt it was the best talk they had ever heard. It's just funny to have been with them when *they* didn't know network marketing all that well and I was just trying to figure it out myself, but some things were very natural.

I knew there had to be a passion created around the product, number one, and belief, which stems from exposing yourself to

the product by using it and sharing it. That passion and belief was integral because it drew people like a magnet.

The other thing that I knew was important- you had to create urgency. If you had a feeling, or perpetuated a feeling that people have the rest of their lives to get this thing done, you lose something so quintessential those first few weeks. I mean…

... there has got to be an urgency created.

I also learned the 'hand-holding' piece. People really like to have a system spelled out for them. Tell them what to do, be there for them, help them with their calls. You can have credibility with their warm market that they don't have, so why wouldn't you reach deep into their warm market, their sphere of influence that you only have as a result of them? Why wouldn't you just do that as much as possible without thought of depth or level? Just reach into the depth of each leg until you lock it in by finding a star.

Most important is persistence. Really, you have to have the big perspective and long-term view in mind. Don't let the minutia bog you down.

Certainly, at that point, with Neways a growing company, it often felt like two steps forward, five steps back and almost nobody stayed because it was just so intolerable for most people— the sheer newness of the company. I really kept a long-term perspective, a long view.

I got that somewhere deep inside of me, so it didn't matter if the silk screening came off the bottles, or the orders weren't complete, or the checks were wrong or the product spilled onto the little foam wrapper pieces. I just said none of that matters to me, it just really didn't phase me. When some of the people I cared about the most wouldn't do this business anymore, I just got it and persisted anyway. This was a

company that was going to be a giant company; the minutia never bogged me down.

Margie, as you look back, what milestones moved you up to new plateaus?

When you consider that when I first started doing this I would travel to meetings by car— even if it was a meeting in California, or Kentucky (keeping in mind, I live in Utah) — I would drive and sleep in my car in the hotel parking lot, because I couldn't afford the room or airfare. My finances were a disaster. I was borrowing money from my parents to make house payments and that kind of thing.

It grew gradually, and then it got really big and I was making $13-15,000 a month and my expenses were still so small because my lifestyle had not risen much. It was such a startling thing to have that kind of surplus income and I remember that did something inside of me. It really corroborated that this is real, residual works, that those giant incomes are truly possible.

> ***When I started getting to five figures, before my lifestyle rose, that made me confident so that I could say... it wasn't easy but it can be done, look at the results.***

That gave me a confidence that I could use to inspire others.

What were some of the first things you changed with this new lifestyle? No more sleeping in hotel parking lots?

You're right. I started putting money into my children. Put them in private schools, bought them nicer clothing, things like that.

The main thing I've put my extra income into, aside from home improvements, nicer cars, boat, jet skis, etc., is travel. I love traveling with my kids and they are very fortunate. Over the past 15 years we have absolutely been all over the world; to Asia, Eastern Europe, Europe and they love travel too. We go to Mexico, Palm Springs, and a mountain

resort every year. We go fishing in Alaska every couple of years. They've been swimming with dolphins. I've taken them on a fabulous around the world trip to Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand— where we rode elephants. We've had some real special moments together.

Did you take them with while you were building your business?

I did, I did. It was an agreement I made with them.

You know how in network marketing we say you better sit down with your significant other and make sure they're onboard with you because if not, they're going to fight you all the way? Well, I wasn't married and didn't have a significant other so...

> ***I sat down with my kids who were so tiny— five, four and two— and I said, 'I want you guys to support me', and they said, 'yeah, yeah, yeah, we will'***

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Here's a little story: One time, when I was pulling out of the driveway to go to my millionth meeting— not knowing if anyone would be there or if just a few people might show up — I was tired and I said goodbye to them and my son came running out of the house in his pajamas, with bare feet, crying. He said, "Don't go, don't go!" I went over and scooped him up and the part that he didn't see was that I was crying, too.

I was so tired and I wanted to stay home more than I wanted to go that night but I said, "Okay, sweetheart, bye, go back inside now. Someday I'm going to take you guys everywhere I go." As soon as I could, every time I would go out of town to a meeting I would take one child with me. And now, we continue to take these really fabulous vacations. In the last year and a- half, Shaun went with me to the Republic of Georgia, Todd to Prague, Ashley to Latvia, and Nicole to St. Petersburg, Russia. So they've each been with me to Eastern Europe, meeting some of the dearest friends and relationships that I have developed in my whole network marketing career. Travel has been big for me, always filled with those 'pinch yourself' moments.

Margie you've achieved the dream most people have when they join this business. You have the 'walk away' income. You don't *have* to do anything anymore, what keeps you around?

I love it *so* much. I believe it's the strongest business model one can get and I believe that the product, the mission of the company, makes such a difference in people's lives. I've learned so much about that. It's about health and having such reverence for the body by giving it what it needs. I've learned about it in a really holistic and comprehensive way. I love sharing this information because I know I can make a difference in people's lives on the physical level and then there's the economic opportunity.

To watch people get off the survival level and to know that it's a win for everybody is extremely powerful. That people are getting better, safer products out of a budget where they would be spending that anyway, and a fair compensation plan where nobody can get hurt makes it so worthwhile.

> ***And the whole component of personal growth and who you can become as you prepare to become the sort of person that can lead a giant organization, I mean, what is not to love about it?***

I love the people I work with; it's just joyous to me. I can't think of anything I would rather do.

When I started doing this business nobody I knew had money, now everyone I know has money and it's just so easy for them to scale out and open doors to me for really big projects. Projects where I'm not just dealing with a one on one thing, but dealing with nationwide campaigns, accessing high profile people that give credibility, where you're now talking about helping thousands of people in a single shot.

It's that on-going challenge of creating new business. I love it at the core of my being, it's like I was born for this. I use network marketing as a platform to teach the things that I think really matter and to bring people back to their abundance. That whole waking up to the possibilities process. I don't see myself ever walking away from that as long as I have a breath to breathe.

Margie Aliprandi lives in Salt Lake City as a single mom of four children.