INFORM INVOLVE INSPIRE!

Melodee Rosen

For her first nine months in AmeriPlan (eight years ago), Melodee tried almost everything she could to find a better wealth-building opportunity. She couldn't. She didn't. And now she's a National Sales Director and $100,000 Founder's Ring Club Member and… she leads with the business.

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Melodee, what did you do before network marketing?

I was in communications and cultural anthropology and I was in commercial real estate for a time and in 'high end' real estate in Washington, D.C. as the manager of a community— I did community building basically. I've also been a producer, director, and writer for public television back when there was a lot of money for educational programs.

What an eclectic background!

Yes! I love communications and film-making and television. I was on air in television for a time, too.

How long have you been in network marketing?

Just eight years. Actually nine years if I'm telling the truth, but I tried not to get into it for the first nine months.

What was it about network marketing that got your attention?

Residual Income! Repeat monthly income; an income producing asset like a book or film, which has royalties is always attractive. I'd worked very hard for other people building their businesses and a very, very wealthy friend of mine one day said, "Melodee, you're only going to build wealth if you own your own business." So for me, the residual income and feeling like I would want retirement were the first attractors.

So, how did you go about your 'looking'?

I fell into it. An old friend from college told me about this and asked me to do him a favor and sign up, because he needed to meet a quota to reach a new pin level. He bugged me about it and the more I looked at it the more I thought, "I can *do* this!" I was thinking about getting into insurance, but insurance wasn't something I gravitated toward because I felt that it preyed upon people's fears.

I looked at the income structure and actually tried not to do this, because this was just a 'little dental plan'. How could I tell my friends I was marketing a dental membership? I'd have had to move out of town!

So, you signed up as a favor. Then what happened?

I kept looking at this. I would go out on job interviews or for special projects and the thing about special projects is you do them and they're wonderful; You know, American Film Institute, the Kennedy Center, I had wonderful special projects that I would do, but at the end you would be looking for another special project— and you would use up all your money between projects supporting yourself. So, I kept looking at this and thinking I could do this and seeing the reality that it provided repeat income?

Oh my heaven, this is too simple! I was used to something so much more complicated. I wanted to

downplay it. I thought maybe I could do it part time and not tell anyone.

And that's essentially what I did!

I decided to open a brand new market, so I picked up and moved to Atlanta, Georgia. I learned just how difficult that was to do— especially with a new product, a new brand, a new market niche. It was actually something that no one had experienced before, so people were skeptical. The company was only in four states at the time and they weren't quite opening yet in Georgia— and then south Florida caught on. Miami was going gangbusters and they needed leaders to open Ft. Lauderdale, so I went down. Frank Jarvis and my sponsor David Gwinn were there, so I went down to help open Ft. Lauderdale.

You just up and left everything and went into Ft. Lauderdale?

I did, but I really did it cautiously because I was doing it as a business decision. I'd lived in Washington, D.C. for many years and I'd kept my condo in D.C., which was lucky, because I invested into this business using credit cards and I ended up selling my condo to pay my credit cards debts! I thank God I had the condo to sell, because I put everything into my business in order to build it.

What kinds of things did you put into it?

Well, you know, time, long hours, ads in the newspaper, learning about cold call responses, and an education about why this business was better than any other business.

I had to explore whether or not this business would be supporting me 10, 20, 30 years down the road, because I was reaching that 'magic age' where I

needed to consider being able to support myself through my retirement years.

I also read a lot of books and that was a time of getting a lot of phone calls and invitations from other businesses inviting me to take a look at them. I wanted to be sure that whatever I was putting my time into was worth it— I even went to Bali, Indonesia, to find out about a travel business, because I still believe that concept that if you do what you love, with passion, you'll do well.

So, you were in the company, you had moved to Ft. Lauderdale to build your business, but you were still looking around?

Yes, because I was still new to network marketing. I had never done this before, I had no warm market to go to and there were so many scams and there was so much hype out there eight years ago. I didn't want to succumb to a 'get rich quick' scam. Though I thought I would like to get rich faster and I learned there really isn't any 'get rich quick'. I learned what really does have value in business and what defines, for me, a really good business. I ran across Michael Gerber and the *E-Myth*, working on your business not in your business, and I had an *E-Myth* coach and that was very expensive. I quickly saw that in my business, AmeriPlan had all of the back office systems in place and I really didn't need *E-Myth* or a whole lot more.

From Good to Great, the Jim Collins book and the whole idea of getting the right people on the bus had a big impact on me.

When I did my quick visit to Atlanta thinking about opening that market, I had a case of Mother Teresa syndrome and I was taking a homeless guy to lunch. That was great and I was giving him a lunch that he needed, but... he had responded to one of my ads and he really didn't have a vision that matched mine at that point. He might have had it in a couple of years, but the whole idea of getting the right people on the bus really spoke to me because I want to enjoy what I'm doing. I was getting a lot of the 'wrong' people, and I'm not implying I was wasting my time, certainly I learned a lot, but even think of *their* time.

You want to get people in a business that is going to be productive for them, not one that's going to waste their time or money.

I had wasted a lot of my money on scams I learned later weren't real businesses. You know, just looking for a couple of concepts; looking to see if it was something that could really evolve or something that had a market potential. I loved the travel and seminar market for the brief trip that I took, but realized there was no ongoing product that was going to support me five years on down the road.

So, the more you began to experiment the more value you saw that network marketing presented to you?

Oh yes, you bet! And I never stopped working the business.

Was there a moment that you 'got it'? When you said, "Hey, *this* is what I'm going to do, *this* is what I'm going to focus on?"

Sure. And there were actually many moments like that. It goes back many years. I simply *love* to learn. You know Kurt Wright, he and Patricia are outstanding coaches, and in his great book he says if you're a learner in life, that's what motivates you, that's what you enjoy. Well, my love of learning, that's something that I can never shut off, but it doesn't mean I have to change in order to be a learner, I just incorporate that into what I'm doing and there was a lot of comfort in reading Kurt's *Breaking the Rules* book.

I was a “rule breaker” in finding my way in this business, but I have to say that Leaders like Mark and Tracy Jarvis have been a key to my joy in learning good leadership. They've used a disciplined, repetitious approach to build over a million dollars a year in income. I found that approach caused me to lose motivation, so I had to find my own way to build my business that had meaning for me— otherwise I could not have stayed with it.

Mark and Tracy's great gift to me was accepting me despite our differences— that's humble leadership and that is the best!

So, AmeriPlan just kept proving itself stronger and stronger.

> ***I think it was W. Clement Stone, who stated the five things that distinguish the 'perfect product'— high perceived value, low cost, needed by the masses, resells itself and does so on a monthly basis.***

When I heard *that* it never left me. When I saw that the company was willing to evolve and change and grow with the market niche that it was in, then I was thrilled. And it *has* grown! My belief is so strong in our product and the integrity and vision of the Bloom brothers and the leaders, I just love them! And AmeriPlan has evolved in the marketplace.

Understand, that I love learning things about science and biology and early on I thought, 'look at all these immune enhancing products'. I'd had some health challenges myself and so naturally I was interested in and gravitating toward a health enhancing product. I learned very quickly that *I* might enjoy learning about glutathione precursors, but good luck finding someone else to sell that— or even understand it and try to make that a business.

Melodee, when did you really become committed to this— how did you begin to apply yourself to this business?

I was already applying myself. I am very intense and I had been spending 12 hours a day at it from the beginning, so I would say that when the right people presented themselves— for instance an insurance professional, Carol Adamcik, who is a national trainer came onboard with me-- I was ready for her because she "got" what I was presenting. I had been in

marketing for 25 years, so when the right people presented themselves I really was ready for them.

I started earning $2-3000 a month fairly early on, when a woman came into my business and she became a National Sales Director on my second level, Yvette Rendon, and her growth stabilized my income. She's a top producer.

> ***So, it was growing, but I was always trying to perfect not only my understanding of myself, but of the market and what was out there.***

I have a high capacity for work for the simple enjoyment of learning something new. Then, through a $5 Internet lead that I bought when we were just opening on the Internet in the spring of 2001, I signed up a couple in California. I had been saying, "This is just a membership, why don't we just market this on the Internet? It's a slam-dunk, people either need it or they don't." and this couple knew how to do that kind of marketing, so within about 18 months my check went from $3000 a month to over $9000 a month just because of this one couple— Matt Kaluza and Sandra Cheng. Matt is really an Internet guru and knows systems and software and Sandra has an MBA from USC and when someone asked her what drew her to listening to my story about this little dental plan she said, "It was $11.95 a month for an individual" it was the numbers that spoke to her, it was a business!

From more effort I found Marty and Lee Bromberg, who owned a business in New York and are retired and came on down to Boca Raton to play golf and were tired of it. Now, he's got a whole new tenor in life. His kids are even commenting that it's like he's 20 years younger. He's having a ball helping people build a business and create a new life! He's a great mentor.

I look for business people that understand this is a business because that's exactly what this is.

Tell me more about looking for business people. There are many network marketers today who focus on retailing the product or service. They say if you go out looking for a 'business' person to build the business you'll find there just aren't that many of them around. You think the opposite.

I sure do! Now more than ever, with Katrina and Wilma— the hurricanes— more business people than ever are looking for something different. You just have to have the right vehicle to reach them and it's extremely valuable to find someone who already has a customer or client base; insurance professionals, people like that. But you have to be able to connect with them. Retailing product is great and the way to go early on for those learning how to connect—Kim Klaver teaches a lot of great stuff about “how to connect”.

The way I tested other businesses as I was moving along, I would call customer support to see if it even exists. I would call three times and ask for a supervisor. I found out very quickly whether or not I wanted to pay my $300 or whatever, to get involved in a business by checking on their customer support system.

I also looked at compensation plans to see if I could make as much or more than the person who might bring me into the business. I call our model an “insurance” model for compensation, even though we are not insurance. I've learned what to look for in a compensation plan. It has to be able to pay you consistently and well.

For example, in talking to business people: There are many career builder job listings sites, and I would call some of the individuals that were posting their resumes and I would ask, "If you could build an independent business from home that paid you a 30 percent level commission with a 80-90 percent retention rate monthly and it was willable... would that be of interest?" And man, they loved it!

Training systems are now in place. I'm a better trainer and have training systems online that the company has put together that I use and that's everything you need— especially if you're bringing someone in from the traditional market.

Where do your new people come from today?

My warm business market or business organizations and from high end Internet leads.

So you purchase a lead, a 'high end' lead. What makes it a high end lead?

Well, let's say a $5-10 lead. And let me say that was six months ago and I'll do that again when I determine which is the best lead source, because the quality of those sources change on a monthly basis. I'm making some connections now to make sure I make the best decision in that regard. Truthfully, my last two to three leaders came from my warm market and I made a conscious decision to do that.

For example, I was participating in a fairly expensive 12-week coaching intensive call and my *intention* was to meet some people on that call that could become business partners. I met a chiropractor and his wife from Portland, Oregon, and they're phenomenal! They are going about this so thoroughly and it's taking time.

> ***The whole idea of rushing people through a process doesn't serve, you can't do it, so I will match them effort for effort and support that, but the whole idea of a fast-track may not be the way some good people learn.***

Of course, you can find people that are a quick study and like doing it that way, but if you've got really valuable people that want to build a business for a lifetime you often find they want everything understood and in place

first. I'm often trying to pull them out of their learning curve and getting them ready to jump in.

My sponsor, David Gwinn, said something very valuable to me, he said,

> ***"Go out and make your first 15 sales and you're going to do everything wrong, you're going to say everything wrong, just get it over with."***

That was really excellent advice, because it just freed me up to make all those mistakes that I was terrified of making! I wanted to do it perfectly.

So, I don't rush people through a process and don't want to say, "Get out of your comfort zone"; I realize people are going to have to do that, but first, I want to help them *find* their comfort zone. These are smart people and I'm going to help them find their comfort zone and still get into action.

In regard to someone coming into the business with you— how do you begin with people? What are the first couple of steps?

I like to find out the way they learn right away, so I know whether to send them to a website, or a great national call that the leaders do every night. We have a system we call *A System for Success* and depending on how they like to learn I might take them to the national phone call, or my website, or a personal phone call with just me. Mostly, I want to match where they're coming from and speak to them as an individual respecting that we are all different.

Some people are dying to share what their needs are and what they're looking for and what their experience is, because they have been in situations where they didn't have that say. So, that's how I work with individuals, because that's how I want to be worked with.

Then I will help educate them and get a sense of their strengths and weaknesses. It's interesting, because we do impress and express that you want to get your four brokers and six members because then you

move up in pin level. That's the 'brick' of our duplication process, that's the foundation. There are people that come into any business and they may be able to sell memberships all day long, but to make that transition from being a 'salesperson' to being a trainer and a coach and a mentor may take them a year or two… or never! It just may not be their desire. I think it's important that we recognize that those people can make a good living if they sold 100 household memberships at $6 residual every month for each membership, that's $600 a month *residual* income and you know that *is* the difference that can save someone from bankruptcy. With our new medical benefits product, those 100 sales will now be $1200 a month— double!

> ***I like to see people be supported where they are, not put them into a cookie cutter deal, because those fast processes are rushing people and too often has them left behind.***

What does that do to your business?

I'm big on community building. That's one of my perks. That has meaning for me and has grown out of this; for example from your books encouraging relationship building, God, thank you! Giving me permission to build relationships? That was *huge!* When I read *The Greatest Networker in the World* it allowed me to do the business not in the way everyone else did, but do it in a way that had meaning for me. It kept me in the business!

So, Melodee, what are the other things about the business that have meaning for you?

The residual check is pretty wonderful.

And really one of the other things that has meaning for me is empowering others. The autonomy of creating your own business, meaning you can

go out there and really empower other people and see their lives change. You know you hear this all the time from the stage and it just becomes such a wonderful gift and the gift comes right back to you when you can see and be an agent of change.

Being able to travel is another wonderful result of this business. I love to travel.

The other thing about the business that especially has meaning is that it provides a great platform for me to evolve and learn. Plus the whole idea is that now, if I want to philanthropically participate in whatever area I choose I can.

It's so interesting to me that for nine months I tried not to market this little dental plan, because it was *just* a dental membership, but I wasn't looking at it like a business. It's great to get on the other side of that and enjoy it! I want to help other people do that too!

Melodee Rosen, a single woman and one of the top leaders in AmeriPlan USA, currently lives in West Palm Beach, FL