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Connie Kittson

A million-dollar income earner, Connie is a national Sales Director for industry icon Mary Kay Cosmetics. There are 1.5 million consultants around the world, and she ranks in the top .02 of one percent! A single mom who started when her kids were five and two, Connie has been with Mary Kay for 19 years and has been driving pink cars for most of that time.

plus AUDIO and ATTACHMENT

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Connie, what did you do before your career in Mary Kay Cosmetics?

I managed a lighting and appliance and floor covering show room and I worked primarily with men in construction.

How did you first get involved?

I worked the day my daughter was born, and then they replaced me with two men. I stayed home for five years, had a son during that time, and then decided I really needed to go back to work.

I looked at a lot of different direct selling companies. I didn't want to just jump in and then think I should have gone with something else. Actually, I looked at a lot of different career opportunities that I could do from home, because I wanted to be home with my kids.

When I evaluated direct sales companies, Mary Kay really stood out for me for a variety of different reasons.

> ***First and foremost, was the philosophy of the company: Faith, family and career, in that order. That seemed to work well with my values, so right then I knew this was a good match.***

Also, the compensation plan, at 50 percent, was very good. I really liked that you could earn 50 percent right from the beginning, you didn't have to work your way up there, because we all buy and sell at the same price. That was important to me. I didn't want to wait while working my way up the ladder; I wanted to be able to make money right away. I had been in business before, so I understood that was a good markup.

And I like the consumable product, every night when the woman washes her face it goes down the drain, and in the morning she uses more.

I also like relationships and I knew I could develop good relationships with my customers. That's important to me, I love people and the idea of helping people look and feel better, build their self-confidence and self-esteem was, and is, really attractive to me.

The company has a good reorder policy, 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed, and I knew that was important, as well. I started my business living in a really small town, it only had one flashing yellow light, and I was going to see those people all the time, so I wanted to make sure they were happy and satisfied and that I could afford to take care of them. I

knew if the company would stand behind the guarantee and stand behind me, then that was good for everybody.

So, it all had to do with what Mary Kay was all about, empowering women and helping people feel better about who they are, that appealed to me and has been a good match. I've never regretted it for even one day.

How was it different, right away, from your other working experience?

I had control of my time! With other work I had to be there at a certain time and I couldn't leave until a certain time. This could be worked around my kid's activities.

> ***My daughter was in kindergarten and my son was in preschool and I was able to work while they were in school each day and then be done when they came home.***

It was nice to be able to work it around my children. I've been single the majority of the time I've been with Mary Kay and I was always able to work it around their schedules. I've been the sole provider and supporter with children that were very, very active in many things.

On our refrigerator we had a weekly plan sheet and we would enter *everything* on that sheet. As soon as they got involved in a new sport or activity the first thing we would do is put it on the schedule so I could set my schedule up around them.

How did you start out, Connie?

Basically, I just read the manual. Now, that's not really my best learning style, but I lived in this small town and the person who recruited me into the company lived three hours away.

When my kit came, it came with something called the Consultant's Guide and I sat down and read it. My son was two years old at the time and he liked to sit on my lap and be read to, so I just let him sit on my lap and I

read the guide to him. In fact, I read and re-read the book cover to cover until the pages fell out because that was my training guide.

> ***And I did what the guide said! I know that's not very glamorous, but I simply made appointments and saw the people.***

I booked the appointment, coached the appointment, held the appointment, and sold product.

Tell me what you mean by 'held the appointment'.

Well, in Mary Kay we teach skin care and color cosmetics, so you sit around a table with one to six women, generally, and teach them how to care for their skin and how to correctly wear color cosmetics, based on the shape of their eye, the shape of their face, their skin tones and then teach them how to do it.

Women will relate to this, it's like when you go get your hair done and then you get home and think you can never get it to look like that again. But what I want them to do is leave our appointment thinking, "I know how to do this!"

How did you find people to talk to?

Pretty much everywhere, John. I would look at people everywhere and smile, if she smiled back I'd talk to her. My kids were involved at their schools and so, of course, the other preschool and kindergarten moms were some of my first people.

I taught Sunday school and some of my Sunday school moms were in my first skin care classes.

My daughter was in kindergarten and I helped with her classroom, so some of the other moms that also helped as well as some of the teachers were another place where I started talking to women.

I contacted family members and had them hold a class for me and they introduced me to people.

I just started with family and friends and people that I saw everyday.

When I went to the grocery store I always made sure I got in a line with a women and I would talk to her. I was just friendly. I think when you're just friendly and sincerely care about people amazing things happen. It isn't anything complicated; it's just a matter of taking the time to ask someone how their day has been going and then really listening.

I would also carry samples of product in my purse, so I could offer them to people when it seemed appropriate, If I asked the cashier how her day has been going and she tells me she's really tired, I would sympathize and express my appreciation for her being there and offer her some hand cream I had in my purse, so she could pamper herself a bit on her break. It often leads to her asking me questions about it and then I would give her my card and ask for her name and number.

I'm not suggesting being friendly just to get something. I think if you're a caring, friendly person, because you genuinely like a person, that makes you very relatable.

People can read you. If you have an appointment and the only thing you have in your eyes is dollar signs, people will know that.

I get so into my people that they know I'm not kidding! I just had a client stop by a few minutes ago; just to show me how great her skin is looking, because she was having problems with her skin and I gave her some skin care to sample for a week. She just stopped by and said, "Look how good my skin looks! I feel so good about myself." That, to me, is *so* rewarding!

And even at this level, I still have the basic customers, because I like people, so I still have about 400 customers. Now, I don't necessarily service them all as much as my office assistant does, but if I'm here I certainly get on the phone and talk to them.

Mostly what I do now, John, is I train the leaders who train the people that work directly with the customers. The majority of my time is spent working with the leaders. They are the ones called Sales Directors, who currently have units of women who are selling the product. So, I train the leaders and they train the consultants.

It sounds like your initial thrust was in getting retail customers and working with them. How did you move into building an organization?

I actually did it from the get go. And, again, I guess it was because the book I read said, "To build your team…"

I always look at my business like a scale, you know, if you hold two hands out to your side with palms up, it was about selling and team building both, that's how you keep the scale balanced. I really feel I've done a good job with that all along.

I guess because I had that thought process in my mind, it just seemed natural. Plus I loved the changes that were happening in me!

When you see yourself getting more confident and looking better then amazing things start to happen.

Remember, I went from construction, to staying home for five years, to going into the glamour industry… it's a lot of difference.

In fact, people who knew me thought it was pretty funny that I chose this. They would say,

> ***"Hey, you can drive a forklift. What are you doing in the beauty industry?"***

Well, I loved that work when I did it but Mary Kay is a much better fit for me! I love encouraging people and drawing on their strengths. I love training and I love making a difference in someone's life.

What things did you focus on with your team members in the beginning?

The thing I focused on was that they have the skills. Honestly, the thing I think I was good at, because people would always think it was funny that I was doing this, was deciding to be the very *best* consultant in my community.

So, I learned my scripts. I learned to do a *good* skin care class. I created *great* customer service. I put systems in place so that my business could grow, because I knew what it was like when a business starts rolling. I had been in business before and when it starts rolling and you don't have systems in place, you easily lose control.

What kinds of systems are you speaking of, Connie?

I made sure that for every single person I met on the street, I created a profile card on them and that I had these in an organized fashion. This was before computers, John. I mean, now we have wonderful systems on the computer, but when I started, in the dark ages, there were no computers.

So I alphabetized my profiles into three-ring binders, so they wouldn't get out of order and so that I could easily follow up with my customer. As time went on the company started doing wonderful things for us, because they listened to our suggestions about the systems we needed.

Today it is so much easier to come in and move to the top quicker, because of the computer and the technology and the support that we have available.

> ***When I started all of our orders were hand written and you mailed them in to the company. Today, in our company, 90 percent of the***

sales force does their ordering online.

We are one of the top companies in the world for online ordering and our website has been honored multiple times for what is available for consultants. We just grasped it and ran with it. It's made a huge difference and I'm appreciative of the fact that the company really stepped up to the plate for us.

Today, the company even sends out quarterly 'Look Books', with samples inside for our customers, so our name is in front of them and offering gifts with purchase. There are so many wonderful things today.

I don't regret doing it the old way, because I really realize and appreciate what the company does today. But I became organized and team building focused right at the beginning. I guess because I did that I never had the fear factor.

I knew that if I carried that new recruit in my hip pocket, I could earn while they learn.

You know, so many people want to teach them across the table. Well, starting out, I needed to make this thing work with Mary Kay, because soon after I started I found myself unexpectedly a single parent. I was the sole supporter of my children, so I *had* to earn money. As a result, I would take a new recruit with me to my appointments, so they would learn and I thought, "What better way?"

You can talk all you want about the 'perfect' class but really, the class is what it is. And if you have a heckler at the class or you have more people show than expected or less people show than expected and people with many different skin types then the best thing to do is just get in there and see how you handle people. So, I just showed them and they would mimic me. Pretty soon they all sounded like me and I just sounded like the book that I read it from and it's all worked!

When I started this my kids were two and five and I was hosting a children's bible class in my home. I would watch these little kids learn to memorize bible verses and I thought if they could do that, then I could certainly memorize a script or two that I needed to have for this business. And I decided that if it doesn't sound like me at first, it will eventually… and it did!

You mentioned that now you spend 90 percent of your time working with your leaders. Tell me what that's like?

I do a conference call on Monday mornings with all of my leaders. It's pretty much a state of the union, what's happening, what's new, what they need to promote, what important task do they need to accomplish this week, what their office staff needs to get done this week, things like that.

We are currently going through a book, John Maxwell's *Winning With People*, and we do something like a book review on a chapter each week. It's all about developing people skills with them. I sometimes have different people train on things that are working well for them.

Now, I also do a Wednesday call for new directors, people that are just starting out on the business.

> ***I have 12 different trainings that I do, one each week, every Wednesday morning and they have the opportunity to go through it again and again if they choose.***

Many are just starting in a business, and have never been in business before where they learned about management or leadership, so I go through everything that I feel is important in their business, through this 12-week course.

Many people take them again and again, for multiple reasons. For one, some people need to hear things more than one time to really get it, and

for another, some of them just get energized by being in the energy. So, I do that for my directors as well.

I also do individual coaching calls with my directors, my leaders. I spread them out through the week and they take about half an hour per person, maybe a bit longer. Basically, they have a form that they fill out and it's all of the things I can coach them on.

It's been a very successful thing for me to do because I know exactly what each of them is working on, what's happening with them, what successes they had last week, what challenges are currently in front of them, so I'm in their face.

Here's something that one girl wrote me just this week in response to the question, "What I have accomplished or enjoyed since our last call…" She said, "Knowing that I'm accountable to you really keeps my fire lit!"

That's why I do the coaching calls. It's not that I'm telling anyone what to do, because most of the time I simply ask questions— the how and what questions, to help them figure out that they know what to do.

> ***I guide them, I coach them, so that they figure out their own solution so that they're not always calling me wanting the answer.***

It's an accountability and focus thing. I always ask them what they want to focus on and what they want to accomplish before the next weeks scheduled talk.

I take notes and keep them in a binder, so that when I follow up the next week I know exactly what she said she was going to focus on. And she sends me her coaching call preparation form and it makes us both accountable. Like this particular woman that I just mentioned wanted to know about a program to put her people through and what my thoughts were around that. Here it's my years of *experience* that she's consulting, but I'm not telling her, I'm asking her questions as we go there. Questions

like, "Will you tell me more about your people? How savvy are they on the computer?" She's telling me, I'm not telling her, because they are her people and nobody knows them better than her.

I also do directors meetings. I make a lot of guest appearances at their meetings. I do trainings, for instance, tomorrow I presenting a tax workshop. I do a variety of different things to get in front of their people and paint the picture for them of what it is to move up into a leadership position with our company.

What has it been about for you to move up?

Well, John, it's changed over the years. At one time it was so that I could provide enough income for my children. I wanted to be able to put them in vehicles when they were 16, and fund a college education and be able to support their interests in sports and camps and things like that. That was one part of it.

The other part of it was that I love influencing people's lives in positive ways. I love watching a woman grow from a shy, insecure woman to a dynamic, powerful, confident woman! That thrills my soul! That to me is just wonderful.

I wanted to be able to raise my kids in an environment that was positive. And I wanted them to be able to admire and respect their mom. So, I got my kids involved in the business at a very early age. In fact my daughter has a CD out called *Growing Up Pink*. It's absolutely delightful!

I have a Power Line that people can call into, it's called a power tree, and I have training on it for my national area. This includes a marketing plan, so if people don't know how to share the marketing plan with others they can listen to my marketing plan. Also, my daughter has her CD up there and there are lots of ideas about how to integrate your children into your business. I think it's really valuable for our children to feel a part of our business.

In Mary Kay, I am probably most well known for making the business work with your children. Because I was a single parent, I *had* to figure it out. I couldn't always have babysitters and I didn't want that. So, I had my kids helping me and working with me doing the business. My daughter outlines it in her CD, which is really designed to help women figure out how to involve their kids in their business. That's why, at age 24, Kristen

owns her own company and is sought after as a motivational speaker all over the United States.

I think that's one of those things that we, in the direct selling industry, do not do enough of.

> ***I just figured that if I have to work, then by gum I'm going to make sure that it is a good influence on my children's lives so that they can be the* very best *individuals that they possibly can be.***

My daughter says, "I shudder to think what would have happened if my mom weren't in Mary Kay" because, quite honestly, I was motherhood, smotherhood, when I was home with them for those five years. I was involved in every single moment of their lives, they never had a babysitter. I'm not saying that's healthy, that's just what it was. And it was just wonderful to discover how you can bring them onboard. My director's children are very involved in their businesses and I think that's part of the legacy I give that filters down.

In fact, when the Direct Selling Women's Alliance came out with their book, *Build It Big*, that's the chapter that my daughter and I were in. My daughter now is in the process of doing a CD on growing up in an entrepreneurial home and how it affected her life. So that's my passion, not only the affect the business had on me but the affect it had on my children as well.

Connie, what's the very best thing about network marketing/direct sales for you?

For me the best thing is that you can work it around your family. It has allowed me to raise two incredible kids that became a part of my business and allowed them to learn skills along the way that have equipped them to get along and be very successful as young adults.

I also really appreciate that I was able to grow me so that I'm able to help other people to grow. I love making a difference in other people's lives and empowering and impacting women to be all that God really created them to be.

Connie Kittson, currently lives in Kennewick, WA. Her children, Kristen Rogers, 24 and Scott Rogers, 21 have been an integral part of growing her business. Today Kristen lives in Atlanta, GA and Scott attends school at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, WA.

AUDIO

COACHING | PARTNERSHIP | WOMEN

Growing Up Pink

Gives you a new perspective on how to work your business while raising kids plus specific tips and ideas on how to involve your kids in your business. And, it's a great recruiting tool to reach potential new team members who have children of their own.

by **Kristen Rogers**

approximately 28 minutes downloadable MP3

The story of Growing Up Pink really begins with Kristin's mother, Connie Kittson. Connie became a single parent when Kristin and her brother Scott were very young, and she turned to Mary Kay to make ends meet. Being a resourceful woman, Connie found creative ways to involve her kids in her work. As Connie's children and her business grew together, Kristin and Scott began to learn and adopt the principles of work and life that their mother's Mary Kay career taught them. Connie is now a National Sales Director and Kristin and Scott are both very successful young adults, which they credit to their experience of "Growing Up Pink." Today, Kristin travels around the country teaching leadership based on two main principles: "Know Your WHY" and "Live Your DREAM". Her goal is to help every woman she meets achieve both with the help of her training and her testimony of how Mary Kay can be a true family business.

Kristin Rogers is the daughter of National Sales Director, Connie Kittson. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Eastern Washington University. In college, Kristin held several leadership positions in her sorority and was a member of student government. She was a National Teen Spokeswoman for Velocity, Mary Kay's cosmetic line for teens. Currently, she is a National Leadership Consultant and has teamed up with the speaker and author John C. Maxwell to bring leadership resources to the direct selling world. Kristin travels around the nation, sharing her story of Growing Up Pink and training others with the latest John C. Maxwell resources. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia and enjoys traveling, shopping, and spending time with family and friends.

To learn more about Kristen Rogers, get your own copy of Growing Up Pink and sign up for Kristen's free Monthly Mentoring Notes, visit her website here: GrowingUpPink.com

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ATTACHMENT

COACHING | PARTNERSHIP | WOMEN

Engage your kids in your business

My children learned work ethic, discipline, commitment, communication skills, and more from working with me in our direct selling business. The thing that I am the most proud of is not the business accomplishments and recognition that I have achieved, but of who my children have become while working with me to create a successful business together.

by **Connie Kittson**

a two-page excerpt from *Build It Big!* in downloadable PDF

"When I started my direct selling business, my children were two and five years old. They had never had a babysitter, so I definitely was Motherhood- Smotherhood. It was pretty traumatic for everyone when I began my business and started leaving them with a babysitter. I realized right away ***that I needed to get them to see the benefits of me working and what was in it for them****."*