WOMEN | INDUSTRY | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What Women Want - 2009

Women are natural networkers, nurturers, and jugglers. They are driven by an "inclusive vision" that represents a better life

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Surely you've noticed... Go to any company recruiting or training event or attend any national convention and without a doubt, you will see that women are the driving force behind the direct selling profession.

Now before anyone gets uncomfortable or moves on to the next article, let us recognize that men, without question, have and will continue to play a significant role in the growth of the industry. Men bring a much-needed perspective to both the company and the field. And the reality is that if your organization mirrors the national statistics of more than 87% of your distributors being women then you are meeting the needs of females looking for a home in this profession.

> ***Women are natural networkers, nurturers, and jugglers. They are driven by an "inclusive vision" that represents a better life for themselves, their families, their companies and the people within their organizations.***

Studies conducted by the Direct Selling Women's Alliance (www.dswa.org) found that above all, women are drawn to direct selling because it enables them to wear the many hats of individual, mother, wife, leader, friend and successful business person without giving up their most prized possession – their freedom!

Notice that it is not the promise of "big money" or the hype of long-term residual income that brings them "in mass", rather it is because a direct

selling career meets their very real needs, right now, in a personally significant way.

> ***In short, direct selling offers a viable and lucrative alternative that enables women to fulfill their roles, grow as individuals and create financial stability for themselves and their families.***

Now, more than any time in history, women are putting their high-powered careers on the back burner and choosing to stay home with their children. Sadly, this loss of a second income creates a heavy financial burden on most households. In fact, it has been said that 80% of all home foreclosures could have been avoided with just $100 per month in additional income – a benefit easily enjoyed by even a part-time direct seller.

Fact About Women

- Forty years ago, one-third of all workers were women, now nearly half are and 76% of adults think this is a good thing for society (Time Magazine)

- 40% of women say they are the primary breadwinner for their household (Time Magazine)

- Women make 83% of all U.S. Purchases, paying attention to what they want – both as consultants and customers. Women have embraced direct selling both as a business opportunity and as a way to purchase products and services. The person-to-person approach is the cornerstone of what appeals to women and their desire for personal relationships (Direct Selling News)

- 8% -- Growth of women in the workforce over the next 10 years, compared with 5% growth for men (Time Magazine)

- 40% -- The segment of the U.S. Workforce predicted to be independent contractors by 2019, up from 26% today. (Time Magazine)

- Companies that employ and promote women outperform the competition by 46% (Womenomics by Shipman and Kay)

- 50% of women want fewer hours and would change our schedule to get it.

- More than half of the US women would trade money for time and 75% want a flexible work schedule.

Why is this important to you as a leader? We have not yet begun to scratch the surface of possibility!

> ***We need to pose a "collective question" and ask ourselves how we can engage more women in the magic of this profession!***

The DSWA is so intrigued by this vision that they have set as a primary objective to see that more women join the direct selling wave this year than in any year in its history! More women of color, women with disabilities, women under 30 and over 60. We are seeking more diversity across the board for this profession.

How can you play a part in bringing more women to this amazing world of entrepreneurship – and better yet, your organization? The answer is quite simple... *you absolutely must understand what women want.*

What do women want? It's a question that has puzzled men for years and is now being asked by every company offering a product or service since it has been discovered that women control the majority of the purchasing power.

Women are:

- juggling more now than in any other time in history and they are looking for a way to simplify their lives.

- Masters at multi-tasking, able to switch roles and responsibilities as quickly as they change their shoes.

- Looking for work alternatives that allow them to be home and maintain a connection to the world outside.

- Moving up in leadership positions and becoming top producers in companies around the world.

And the list goes on and on! Whether you are a distributor building a large organization or a corporate CEO steering your company into the future, we hope you will become a student of the want, needs and challenges of women today.

Here are some places you can start:

1. Study the www.DSWA.org website to learn more about how women think, communicate and create.
2. Ask more questions. It may be a mystery to you, but it is not a mystery to them. Women know what they want and they will tell you if they believe your interests are genuine and well intentioned.
3. Talk less, listen more. Ask for the thoughts, opinions and suggestions of the women on your team. You may be surprised that they already have the answer you've been looking for.
4. Walk a day in their shoes. High heels and stockings are totally optional! Recognize and appreciate the multiple roles and responsibilities they juggle every day and let this help you see them for the strong, capable women they truly are.
5. Build relationships, not hierarchies. Women want and expect their business relationships to be rewarding, enjoyable and enriching. Take the time necessary to know them for the dynamic individuals they are.

For those of you who took a moment to jot down these words of wisdom – congratulations, you are on your way to finding the answer to this important question! For those of you who did not, that's OK, you know where to find us. Because the truth of the matter is... patience happens to be one of women's strong suits.

The Founders of the Direct Selling Women's Alliance, **Nicki and Grace Keohohou**. The Association offers a community where direct sellers enjoy 24-hour access to industry specific information and resources designed to help them successfully manage their

home-based business. Discover this one-of-a-kind, all-inclusive business-building resource at www.dswa.org or contact them at info@mydswa.org