INDUSTRY| GETTING STARTED

You Can Do It

The next time you think you can't do it, think again! Make sure, however, that you have access to one of the following tools: a bathtub, a garage, a back bedroom or a dream.

by **Jeffrey Babener**

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Humble Beginnings - Don't Sell Yourself Short

Don't sell yourself short just because you're starting small.

History tells us that, in America, many billion-dollar businesses have been started on a shoestring in garages and in back bedrooms.

Cases in point: Bill Gates of Microsoft, Phil Knight of Nike shoes and Steve Jobs of Apple computer. There are also many inspiring network marketing success stories about individuals whose companies or distributorships had very humble beginnings.

Take, for example, the co-founders of Amway - network marketing's largest multi-billion dollar company. Rich DeVos and Jay VanAndel mixed their first product, LOC Cleanser, in their bathtubs to start their business. Starting out as distributors for a vitamin company, Nutrilite, their Amway Corporation later bought Nutrilite, which today is their division for nutritional supplements.

The founder of Avon, David McConnel, wasn't even in the cosmetics business in 1886. He was selling bibles door-to-door, and giving away free perfume samples as a way to get into the homes of prospective customers.

Today, Amway and Avon post sales of several billion dollars each year and operate throughout the world. Amway has gone on to become the largest seller of dietary supplements in the world, and Avon is among the world's largest cosmetic companies. (Forbes magazine survey of the 400 richest Americans routinely placed DeVos and VanAndel among the top 400, each with a net worth in excess of $1 billion.)

Perhaps the most famous lady in network marketing is Mary Kay Ash. She started Mary Kay in 1963, utilizing products a hide tanner used to cure animal hides. And consider the origins of Watkins products back in 1868. Today, Watkins sells a full line of products, from spices to cosmetics to health items. In 1868, however, the founder of the company, Joseph R. Watkins, was selling only one product: liniment.

Modern-day network marketing successes - whether they are companies or individual distributors all have their "on a shoestring" stories. Just take a look at Discovery Toys, Longaberger Baskets, NuSkin, etc. This business was meant to grow from the humble beginnings of one person's dream.

And the successes of those that have started billion dollar companies is paralleled over and over among the millions of network marketing distributors. Look around at the top distributors for major companies today and you will find individuals, who in their prior lives, were teachers, plumbers, lighting salesmen - all with modest employment incomes and equally modest prospects in life.

A Positive Mindset

This is a mindset business. Your attitude is often a self- fulfilling prophecy. There is some real truth to the veteran's advice which notes,

> ***"If you think you can you're right; If you think you can't, you're right!"***

So the next time you think you can't do it, think again! Make sure, however, that you have access to one of the following tools: a bathtub, a garage, a back bedroom or a dream.

Jeffery Babener

On any given day you can catch Jeffrey Babener, Babener & Associates, lecturing on Network Marketing at the University of Texas or the University of Illinois, addressing thousands of distributors in Los Angeles, Bangkok, Tokyo and Russia, or writing a new book on Network Marketing, an article for *Entrepreneur Magazine* or a chapter for a University textbook.

Over two decades he has served as marketing and legal advisor to some of the world's largest direct selling companies. An active spokesperson for the industry, he has assisted in new legislation and served on the Lawyer's Council and Government Relations Committee of the Direct Selling Association (DSA) as well as serving as General Counsel for the Multilevel Marketing International Association.

He is an MLM attorney supplier member of the DSA and has served as legal counsel and MLM consultant on MLM law issues for many DSA companies. He has chaired more than 50 national conferences on the subject of “Starting and Running the Successful MLM Company”. He is editor of one of the most informative and popular websites on Network Marketing, Direct Selling and MLM, www.mlmlegal.com.