

Direct Sellers Embrace Sustainability

Companies recognized for environmental initiatives, while regulators address green marketing claims

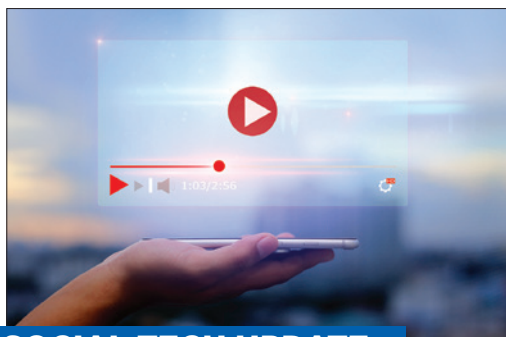


Amid an ongoing transition toward sustainability and concerns about environmental impact to the planet, the direct selling business channel is gearing up for a transformative year ahead. A multitude of companies are ramping up their eco-friendly practices, designing more environmentally safe products, and reevaluating their supply chains to reduce their carbon footprint as well as ensure compliance with U.S. environmental marketing guides and the evolving green laws in Europe.

This proactive approach aligns with the rising consumer demand for sustainable products and with other companies that have embraced environmental stewardship. With an increasing awareness of environmental issues, consumers are actively seeking products and services that leave a smaller ecological footprint. In response to this demand,

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— PUBLISHER'S NOTE ►►

Charting a Course for Success in 2024

Join us at the Direct Selling Leadership and Compliance Summit

Happy New Year, friends!

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday and are feeling refreshed and recharged to take on the New Year. 2023 presented this channel with many hurdles and challenges, and I believe that the accomplishments, victories, and lessons learned over the past year will be a wind at our backs in 2024.

What better place to discuss these challenges and accomplishments than the annual Direct Selling Leadership and Compliance Summit, taking place in Austin, Texas, on Feb. 28. *SSN* is once again proud to be the media sponsor for DSLC, and I am looking forward to seeing my friends and colleagues for three days

of insightful discussions and collaborative networking that will pave the way for a successful year ahead.

This year's summit promises to be a pivotal event, bringing together CEOs, top executives, legal experts, compliance professionals and visionary thought leaders from the direct selling industry. Attendees can look forward to intriguing keynotes, practical demonstrations, and engaging panels, all aimed at addressing the complex compliance, regulatory, and leadership challenges that direct sellers face.

I wholeheartedly encourage each member of your executive, compliance and legal teams to give serious consideration to attending this

summit. Please visit www.dslcsummit.org before Feb. 9 to secure your tickets.

As we embark on this new year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your continued readership and support of *Social Selling News*. We are eager to deliver the latest news stories impacting our industry in the coming year, accompanied by the shared wisdom of leaders guiding their companies to success.

Warmly,



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COVER STORY ▶▶

DIRECT SELLERS EMBRACE SUSTAINABILITY, CONTINUED FROM 1

direct sellers are placing sustainability at the forefront of their business models, driving innovation and promoting eco-conscious consumer choices.

Mary Kay Honored by Texas Conservation Group

In November 2023, Texas-based **Mary Kay Inc.** was nominated as one of 20 honorees of the fifth annual Texan by Nature 20 (TxN 20). The TxN 20 program, founded by former First Lady Laura Bush, acknowledges outstanding achievements in conservation by businesses located or active in Texas. TxN 20 recognizes companies from a diverse range of 12 industries in the Lone Star State.

According to Mary Kay's 2023 "Special Report on Sustainability," the company is now utilizing 100% biodegradable packing materials as well as powering its global headquarters and manufacturing facility with 100% renewable energy.

For over 30 years, Mary Kay has partnered with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to promote ocean health, coral reef awareness, and gender equality in conservation efforts. This collaboration aligns with Mary Kay's core values of empowering women and entrepreneurship.

Mary Kay's commitment to the UN Global Compact's Sustainable Ocean Principles and private-sector collaboration has underscored its dedication to preserving healthy oceans and supporting female environmental leaders worldwide.

Amway's Green Revolution: From Farmland to Global Partnerships

Amway's sustainability practices encompass various initiatives across its own farmland and with botanical suppliers. The Michigan-based direct selling giant is creating a seed bank and nursery garden to conserve biodiversity, reducing topsoil erosion through cover crops and minimal soil tilling, and optimizing water use with sensors and data.

In its "2023 U.S. Impact Report," Amway has outlined its focus on sustainable agricultural practices, including soil management and the promotion of native plant cover for pollinators. The company also utilizes trained falcons for crop protection. In collaboration with botanical suppliers, Amway emphasizes traceability, encourages responsible land and water management, prioritizes safety

and equitable compensation, and engages in efforts related to soil health, biodiversity, and climate change mitigation.

Rodan + Fields Focuses on Reducing Packaging Waste

In 2019, **Rodan + Fields** made a commitment to make 75% of its packaging recyclable or refillable by 2025 as part of its broader Environmental, Social, and Governance strategy. To achieve this goal and address packaging waste in the U.S., the company has introduced packaging with features such as at least 50% post-consumer recycled plastic, alternatives like aluminum and glass, refillable bottles, and sustainably sourced paperboard.

Additionally, Rodan + Fields, in collaboration with its Independent Consultants and employees, has partnered with The Arbor Day Foundation to plant 16,000 trees and supports the Prescription for Change project, which funds nonprofits focused on environmental education and protection.

Young Living Receives 2023 Green Business Award

Young Living Essential Oils has been recognized as an honoree for the 2023 Green Business Award by *Utah Business* magazine and *Rocky Mountain Power*. The award acknowledges Young Living's environmental initiatives, wildlife protection, and steadfast commitment to conservation, sustainability, and ecological equilibrium.

Some of the company's noteworthy environmental and sustainability endeavors encompass the establishment of monarch butterfly waystations at the Young Living Farm in Mona, Utah, scientific research projects focused on pollinators, the maintenance of a seed bank for rare plant species, and the establishment of Utah's first desert bighorn sheep nursery at Young Living's Sky rider Wilderness Ranch.

US Regulators Address Sustainability Marketing

While the increased demand for environmentally sustainable products and manufacturing is evident across multiple business sectors, companies still have to work within government guidelines to market their products in a non-deceptive manner. In December 2022, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chair Lina Khan released a statement regarding the regulatory review of the Commission's "Guides for the

Use of Environmental Marketing Claims." In it, Khan recognized that consumers are increasingly considering environmental impact when making purchasing decisions, leading businesses to highlight their products' sustainability claims.

Khan notes the FTC's "strong track record" of suing companies for deceptive environmental claims and urges companies to refer to the Commission's Green Guides to stay updated on developments in science and consumer perception.

"That's why it's so important for companies making these claims to tell the truth," Khan writes. "If they don't, it distorts the market for environmentally friendly products. It puts honest companies, who bear the costs of green business practices, at a competitive disadvantage. And it harms consumers who want to make conscientious decisions about what products to buy and what businesses to support."

International Direct Sellers Keep an Eye on EU Green Initiatives

For many U.S. companies in the channel that sell in European markets, the EU's new green initiatives and laws make the prioritization of product and manufacturing sustainability even more paramount. With the goal of becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050, European regulators are focused on decoupling economic growth from resource use, transitioning to clean energy, using sustainable farming practices, and modernizing private and public investments to support green projects and sustainable development.

Going Green, a Win-Win for the Channel

By proactively addressing sustainability concerns, companies can not only comply with regulations but also tap into a growing market of environmentally-conscious consumers. Embracing sustainable product design and manufacturing not only reduces a company's ecological footprint but also bolsters brand reputation, fosters innovation, and ensures long-term viability in a rapidly changing global landscape committed to environmental protection and conservation.

SSN

How Brands Are Using Shoppable Video to Drive Sales

Interactive videos boost engagement and sales in e-commerce

By John Lietsch, Guest Contributor

In today's digital age, video has become one of the most powerful tools for marketing and advertising. With the rise of e-commerce, brands are looking for new ways to make their videos more engaging and interactive, and shoppable videos have emerged as a popular, effective, and profitable solution. But what exactly are shoppable videos, and how can they help brands and retailers drive sales?

What Are Shoppable Videos?

Shoppable videos are a type of video content that allows viewers to shop directly from the video quickly, easily, and conveniently. By integrating shoppable videos directly onto a retailer's existing e-commerce site, retailers are providing a personalized, interactive way for shoppers to obtain invaluable information, increasing engagement and conversion.

Shoppable videos can be used for a wide range of products, from fashion and beauty to home goods and electronics. They also can be easily incorporated into tutorial, training, demo, product, and upsell/cross-sell videos.

Most importantly, shoppable videos empower retailers and brands to leverage the age of content-driven commerce by creating content that educates, informs, and entertains customers instead of forcing them to read pages and pages of text. Shoppable video is a form of "shoppertainment" and has been proven to boost engagement, conversion, loyalty, and sales.

How Do Shoppable Videos Work?

There are a few different ways to create shoppable video content, but the basic idea is to expand the reach and impact of your videos by making them shoppable. Some retailers and brands choose to convert their existing library of videos thus reducing the cost of creating a shoppable video

and maximizing return on investment. Others choose to create shoppable videos from scratch, focusing more on content specifically created to entertain and facilitate shopping.

Retailers and brands can use specialized video platforms or tools to create shoppable videos. Some platforms run as an extension of the underlying e-commerce platform, which means the shoppable video doesn't need to be "preloaded" with products or modified with hyperlinks, and viewers can add products to their carts directly from the video without ever stopping or leaving the video.

Other platforms enable retailers to add product information, links, and calls to action within the video. When a viewer clicks on a rendered product, a link or a hotspot, they will be taken to a specific page, such as a product page, on the retailer's or brand's website.

Benefits of Shoppable Videos

Shoppable videos offer a range of benefits for brands, including:

- **Increased Engagement:** Shoppable videos can be more engaging than traditional videos, as they allow viewers to interact with the products they see on screen. This can increase the amount of time viewers spend watching the video, as well as their level of engagement with the brand. Research has shown that video increases engagement, so it's no surprise to learn that viewers spend 47% more time watching interactive videos and around 40% of viewers add products to their carts because of a shoppable video, according to a Lemonlight Inc. report.

In fact, in January 2023 the same report shared that video accounted for 65% of all internet traffic, and recent reports claim

that figure might be as high as 85% once 2023 numbers come in. Regardless of the statistic, next time you're around other people, note how many are "watching versus reading" online content.

- **Improved Conversion Rates:** By enabling viewers to purchase products directly from the video, brands can reduce the number of steps in the purchasing process, which can lead to higher conversion rates. Additionally, shoppable videos can help to reduce shopping cart abandonment, as viewers can complete the purchase without having to leave the video player. Plus, nearly 80% of people surveyed by Wyzowl stated that videos give them more confidence when purchasing, while DemandSage reports that 88% of respondents claim that seeing a video influenced them to purchase a product or service.
- **Better Analytics:** Shoppable videos can provide brands with more detailed analytics on viewer behavior, such as showing which products are the most popular and how long viewers spend time interacting with the video. This can help brands optimize their video content and marketing strategies for better results. It also can provide information about which items were added to the cart during a shoppable video and data on the effect of upsell/cross-sell, shoppable videos on product landing pages.
- **Enhanced Customer Experience:** Shoppable videos can offer a seamless and intuitive shopping experience for viewers, which can enhance the overall customer experience. By providing a more convenient and engaging shopping experience, brands can build stronger relationships with their customers and increase brand loyalty. In fact, Wyzowl reports that 69% of consumers

believe product demos best assist them when making a purchase decision. They further report that the best videos are product, testimonial, and explainer offerings, with product videos being the overwhelming favorite.

Shoppable Video Examples

There are many examples of brands successfully using shoppable videos to drive sales. However, most recently, Walmart took shoppable video to a new level of "shoppertainment" with "Add To Heart," a holiday, multi-episode, shoppable video that has been aptly described as "romcommerce." Viewers are treated to a holiday-themed rom-com that allows viewers to purchase many of the products they see on the screen.

However, you don't have to be Walmart or employ a professional studio capable of producing rom-coms to leverage the benefits of shoppable video. In fact, you don't have to produce new video content or use professional actors; sometimes it's best to leverage your existing library of videos or to call on your loyal legions of video-savvy distributors. The idea is to create engaging, informative, entertaining content in a format that your customers are increasingly favoring—video!

Shoppable Videos – Best Practices

Here are some best practices to keep in mind when leveraging shoppable video:

- **Seamless Integration:** Whenever possible, make sure you seamlessly integrate your shoppable videos with your existing e-commerce platform and do not force your guests to leave or stop the video to add items to their carts.
- **Quality and Creativity:** Use engaging and fun videos that resonate with your target audience. The video is a substitute for an IRL (in real life) experience so voiceovers, narration or presenters really resonate with audiences. Generally, try to engage your audience from the start with a strong hook.
- **Quantity of Products:** The optimal quantity of products is somewhere between two and five products to share in a shoppable video, but those with two to three products tend to engage audiences more (and not overwhelm them). Of course, you can probably get away with more products



in a "romcommerce" or a tutorial video that naturally keeps audiences engaged longer.

One of the most beneficial uses for shoppable videos can be in PDPs (product detail pages) where a shoppable video of the particular product and its complementary products can result in higher average order value (AOV). Think of it as a video-based "you may also like" prompt. And, whatever you do, make your time to first product (TTFP) short. Don't keep your audience waiting.

- **Video Length:** Generally, shorter is better, and short form video has become more popular. But don't think that shorter is the rule. Tutorial videos or themed videos often get away with being longer without losing engagement. A suggestion is to make shoppable videos one to three minutes long, but the sweet spot is often in the 30-to-60-second range. However, there have been phenomenally successful tutorial videos that lasted over 10 minutes with high retention rates, so don't dismiss the opportunity to sell with your longer content.

The Products

Don't forget, avoid keeping your audience waiting and keep your TTFP short. Make sure you highlight the products you're wishing to sell, and let your shots run longer on the shoppable product. If you have more than one product, don't blast through every product. Give each product their proper "seconds of fame."

And finally, try to use full-frame shots not shots that are abstract or too close up. In other words, let them see and fall in love with what you want them to buy!

The Takeaway

Shoppable videos are an exciting new tool for brands looking to engage with their customers and drive sales. By enabling viewers to shop directly from the video, brands can provide a more engaging and convenient shopping experience, while also gathering valuable analytics and insights.

As the e-commerce industry continues to grow, expect to see more brands experimenting with shoppable videos to take advantage of this innovative new format. And yes, "continues to grow" is an accurate statement about e-commerce.

Surprising as it may seem, e-commerce accounts for less than 20% of total global retail sales, but its share has been increasing as retailers and brands leverage different technologies to make the online experience more interactive and more human.



John Lietsch is Chief Operating Officer of Bloo Kanoo.

Taking Inspiration and Legacy to the Next Level

Company founders are reaching an even wider audience through authorship

By Jenna Lang Warford

Impact, inspiration, and legacy are driving forces in the direct selling channel—not just for field members but often for company founders, executives, and employees. In fact, what leaders do can be measured in thousands and even tens of thousands of people impacted.

However, there is a “next level,” and noted leadership expert and author John Maxwell pointed it out in a conversation with IDLife’s founder and chairman, Logan Stout. “Your wisdom and experience are only viable for the audience that gets to come hear you. But if you put it in writing, you can add value to the lives of people who will never meet you.”

Stout says, “For my first book, I was flying back to New York, and we had some pretty good turbulence so I started thinking about, OK, what if something happens to me? So *Stout Advice* is really my heart on paper, to mentor my kids when they’re older. But for *Grit Factor*, I’m not a writer; I’d been there and done that. It was that personal encouragement from John Maxwell of ‘You’ve got to write another book, and here’s why.’ That really put it into perspective for me.”

For Jeff Olson, who is the author of *The Slight Edge* as well as Neora’s founder and CEO, he wasn’t aiming for greater impact, he was simply trying to get key information into a shareable format so field members could use the important information

they were learning through their personal development efforts.

“I saw people with good intentions, who had that day of decision when they determined, ‘I want to change my relationships, my finances, my business,’ whatever it might be,” Olson says. “And they would go to a seminar, or they would read a book, and the information was great. But in 90 to 150 days, they really didn’t see change. So they would quit believing in the information.”

He continues, “And there was nothing wrong with the information. The problem was the philosophy within which the information was given to them was wrong, the idea of the quantum



leap versus the slight edge. This is really what got me motivated to write the book. When they didn’t get the results they expected, they quit. They quit believing in the information. But the worst thing is they quit believing themselves. They would actually go back to a place worse than they were before they started. Because they now are thinking, ‘The information’s wrong, but maybe also *I’m* just not right.’”

The content of *The Slight Edge* and the philosophy it shares gives a framework for making the information in other books effective.

For Kristina Kajic, founder and CEO of **Bella Grace Global**, inspiration came from growing

up as an immigrant after leaving Croatia during the war in which her father stayed to serve as a general.

“My inspiration for *War to Wealth* is my younger self,” Kajic says. “First the little child that was forced to leave her home country, and then the young girl who looked for endless opportunities for work to prove my worth. I was in a country where connections and relationships are the only option to get a reasonable job regardless of your degree or your talent.

“So founding Bella Grace achieved my goal of an outlet to create change, hope, and opportunity for everyone, regardless of where they come from, who they know or the circumstances they have

been dealt,” Kajic says. “But the book is about sharing the dozen or so factors that are crucial to achieving success, no matter what your goal is.”

Inspiring Outside of the Direct Selling Channel

For executives like Olson, Stout and Kajic, impact on a large scale is part of the role. But broadening the scope of impact through books available on high-profile platforms offers impact outside the channel, especially when a book is focused on personal development principles and philosophies rather than simply telling a rags-to-riches story.

Olson’s first version of *The Slight Edge* wasn’t distributed on an e-commerce platform. He says, “I

“A friend once said, ‘Kristina, don’t write a book, finish a book.’ And that stuck with me.”

— Kristina Kajic, Founder and CEO, Bella Grace Global

wrote it, and I sent it to about 200 friends. Writing it was just getting it out of my way so I could talk about other things.”

However, interest in the philosophy didn’t wane. It grew, both within and outside of the direct selling

channel. Cumulatively, the first and revised editions, audio version, and e-book versions have sold millions of copies.

Interestingly, in the 19 years since it was first published by Momentum Media/SUCCESS, Olson hasn’t

spent any money on advertising for the book. It has been purchased in bulk by direct selling companies he hasn’t served in and within the personal development community not associated with the channel.

Kajic also envisioned her book to be distributed outside the direct selling channel. “Current situations in Russia, Ukraine, Hamas and Israel really hit home for me. It’s not only war that’s hard, painful and traumatic; it’s the life after it. When you are stripped of all your possessions, everything you have ever known, and forced into a foreign world, you’re willing to do anything just to get by. That was my family’s reality, and fortunately my family made it through that.

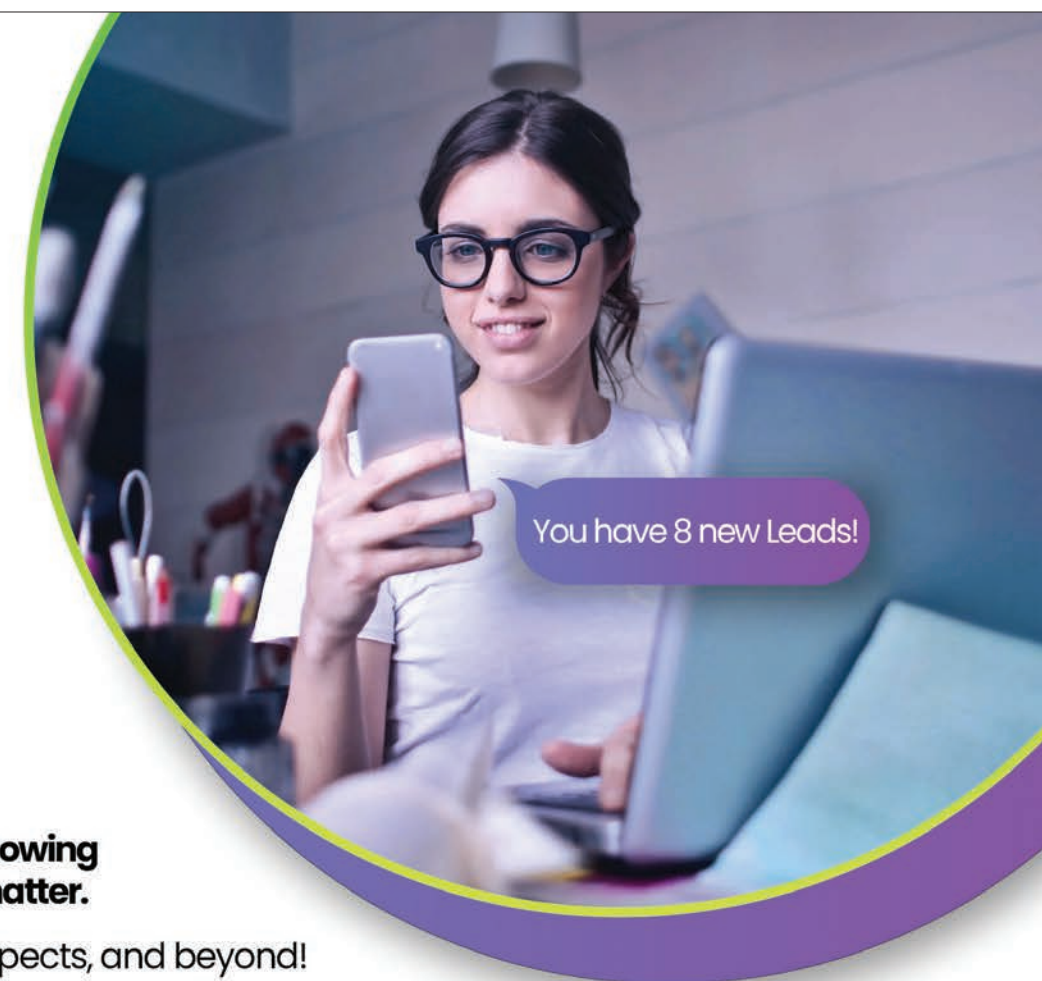
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TAKING INSPIRATION AND LEGACY TO THE NEXT LEVEL, CONTINUED FROM 11

“Unfortunately, many families did not, and many people won’t,” she says. “The aftermath of war is another layer of war no one ever talks about. We’ve heard of the term PTSD and how it affects soldiers, but in reality, it is a ripple effect that impacts the entire family, and everyone involved. It is trauma that is passed on from generation to generation. *War to Wealth* is a glimpse of hope, an inspirational, motivational narrative solely focused on positioning yourself for success. My hope through my book is to give people worldwide a vision of a brighter, better future.”

“John Maxwell told me, ‘Your wisdom and experience are only viable for the audience that gets to come hear you. But if you put it in writing, you can add value to the lives of people who will never meet you.’”

— Logan Stout, Founder and Chairman, IDLife

Stout is looking to inspire people as well to dig deeper in order to succeed in life. “The purpose of my second book is to inspire people to see clearly and stop making excuses about why they’re not succeeding,” he says.

“It’s not genetics, it’s not parents, it’s not upbringing. Many who succeed share similar factors, so it’s none of that. The reality is that it’s crucial to instill the right uphill habits to accomplish uphill dreams. That was my passion behind the book.

“It’s easy and common to think, ‘Some people just are good at X; some people are just gifted,’ but it’s simply not true; that’s not the reason people succeed,” he says. “What is true is that Grit is required, and also that every expert was at one point in time a beginner. Helping the reader get clarity on those realities and be inspired to pursue those uphill dreams is what *Grit Factor* is about.”

Seeing the Impact

Twenty years ago, in the bustle of training sales organizations as well as leading companies within the channel and within the personal development space, Olson wasn’t dreaming of writing a bestseller that would be read outside the

direct selling channel, even after he officially published *The Slight Edge* with Momentum Media.

“The love that has been shown for it has been crazy,” Olson says. “Sports teams have used it, universities have used it, sales organizations outside of direct selling use it. And that growth was completely organic. I wasn’t trying to write a bestseller; it had a life of its own, and it just continues. But love for it within the channel is overwhelming, too. I just went to a conference where I spoke regarding my fight with the FTC.

“Afterwards, there was a reception of about 400 field leaders across the direct sales industry, and of course, they thanked me for the win; but there was an equal number who talked to me about *The Slight Edge*. And I’m thinking, it’s so incredible that leaders in this industry will promote a book that’s written by a competitor and actually give it to their field. Normally, that doesn’t happen.”

Kajic says she is surprised and touched by the response she has had for her book as well. She says, “Seeing and hearing the impact of *War to Wealth* has been tremendous. Having people reach out to me, telling me how this book has ‘saved their life’ or inspired and motivated them to do and to

be more, is immensely gratifying to me and to that young girl I once was. Knowing that the book has been a beacon of hope for people is incredibly humbling.”

Stout agrees. “I love hearing the testimonials. When people tag me on social media or on a story of it, that’s so cool. But it’s also nothing short of humbling. And it makes me think of what John Maxwell said, that most of these people would’ve never had the opportunity to hear the message if it wasn’t written in a book.”

Getting Words on the Page

A founder/executive’s schedule is already packed—how did these leaders find the time to write a book?

Olson says, “In college, I was straight A’s in accounting, finance, statistics, but I struggled in grammar and English. I’m not a writer. I don’t want to be known as a writer. This book was simply trying to get something out of me onto the page. So I partnered with John David Mann in the least ghost-like ghostwriter situation, in that I acknowledged him front and center for his efforts.

“I sent him the original, type-written 120 pages, sent him videos of me training on the topic, shared

books that inspired the *Slight Edge* philosophy—like Jim Rohn’s writing—and then spent hours with him on the phone. Mann fell in love with the philosophy, and that helped make the book brilliant.

Kajic’s experience in writing her book was more of a rare opportunity. “A friend of mine once said to me ‘Kristina, don’t write a book, finish a book!’ and that stuck with me because I have always wanted a written version of my story although, as you can imagine, sitting down and writing a book is something that many busy people start and probably never finish.”

She continues, “But I was bedridden with my second pregnancy, and that was my one and only opportunity to take my iPad, and get to it. I had nothing else—and I emphasize nothing—I could possibly do but write. Writing was my outlet until delivery. Simultaneously, writing and hoping to inspire others, I was motivating myself to get through what, to me, was one of the hardest periods of my life.”

Using a ghostwriter never occurred to Kajic then, but she adds that it

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TAKING INSPIRATION AND LEGACY TO THE NEXT LEVEL, CONTINUED FROM 12

would probably be the best option for any other books she writes. That's the plan for the workbook that will be a companion piece to *War to Wealth*.

For Logan, the writing process for his books are similar to writing his keynote speeches.

"It's looking at the problem and writing down the solution in a systematic way. I went back to in-depth conversations with successful people whom I'd been privileged to speak with—from Carrie Underwood to Troy Aikman, to Shaquille O'Neal to billionaires. And I said, 'OK, if there was a recipe for success, then all of these people would have it; so what is it?'"

He continues, "I began writing down attributes of success, and if the attribute wasn't possessed by each of these people, then I took it off the list. It was finally whittled down into 15 irrefutable attributes. I systematically wrote the outline on a notepad, then added in content with entertaining anecdotes these people shared with me—all on a notepad. I'm literally a notepad guy."

Publishing Options

Traditional publishing, where an author receives an advance on a portion of the retail cover price, is often the longest route with the least recompense, as the publishing house assumes the most risk. However, self-publishing no longer has the stigma of unprofessional-appearing books coming from "vanity presses" and allows the author to retain control of the final product and its sales. This was important to both Kajic and Stout, who use profits from their books to fund charitable initiatives.

"Recently I have partnered with some incredible charities overseas, helping victims of war," Kajic says. "Providing food, shelter, clothing,

“Everybody wanted to talk to me about *The Slight Edge*. Everybody wanted me to teach it. So I wrote the book and thought, ‘OK, I’m done. I don’t want to talk about this anymore.’ But it took on a life of its own.”

— Jeff Olson, Founder and CEO, Neora

medical assistance, and any of their current needs. *War to Wealth* is available on Amazon, and 100% of proceeds go directly to these incredible charities."

Stout's book revenue goes to under-privileged children when purchased on his website loganstout.com.

For other executives looking to publish, a hybrid of traditional and self-publishing is a preferred option.

"Hybrid publishing or using a publishing consultant is a great option because whether the executive writes it or hires a ghostwriter, writing a quality book has a road map that involves numerous experts," says Erin Casey, formerly an editor for SUCCESS Books and now a publishing consultant.

"Either option puts them in contact with the people they'll need—from working with a developmental or content editor, to having a copy editor who's going to look at grammar and spelling, to the book layout and cover artist. After that there's proofreading before going to print—and there happens to be a great print-on-demand option available today, too, for those who don't want to have stacks of books

in their garage. Books can be listed on Amazon, and there are also ways to contract with a distributor that will allow them to go into physical bookstores."

Even before the book is on shelves, virtual or physical, working with a publicist is the best way to help a book make an impact, according to Paige Duncan, founder and principal of The Front Porch Collective, a book publicity firm.

"Having a landing page, building a book funnel, being a guest on podcasts or in the media, are ways to build an audience, and ideally that process starts before the book is published," she says.

"For most books, the majority of first year sales come during pre-selling. For books that have languished, quite possibly because the author's full-time career interrupted the promotion of the book, relaunching with a publicist doing all or some of the work can be what reinvigorates impact."

When 2024 Is Your Year to Get Your Book Done

For executives who are considering writing a book, Olson has two pieces of advice. "First, give credit where credit is due. If you're standing on the shoulders of an

author who influenced you, like Jim Rohn did for me, then say that in your book. Next, remember to be real, be authentic."

Stout is enthusiastic about encouraging authors to appreciate what they bring to the table as well. "I believe that every one of you has a book inside of you. But don't write that book to try to make money. Don't write that book for yourself. Write that book to make a difference. Each of us has unique abilities, talents, giftings, experiences and wisdom to help the world be a better place. So look at yourself in the mirror and realize that you've got a book inside of you, and it's going to be awesome when you finish it."

SSN



Jenna Lang Warford is a Social Selling News Contributor.

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Your Message & The Path to Publishing

Sharing Your Expertise, Creating a Legacy or Transitioning to Fractional Channel Expert

Authoring a book can be part of your solution whether you want to share what you've learned about leadership, help others create a legacy or simply want to transition your career focus. Here's how to get there.



Getting Words on a Page

Decide WHO

Who is your audience or the primary recipient of your message?

PRO TIP: Some Authors say "Everyone should read this book!" Perhaps, but to write to everyone, you'll likely engage no one. Clearly define WHO your ideal reader is. It's OK to write with a secondary audience in mind, but the goal is to engage the primary reader.

Decide WHAT

What are the four or five key points you want the reader to know when they finish your book?

Decide WHERE

When looking for your content, use what you may have already created – from presentations, speeches, podcasts or interviews.

Decide WHETHER to

- a. Write it yourself
- b. Use a ghost writer
- c. Write part, use a ghost writer for part

PRO TIP: Editors and ghost writers are professionals with years of experience in engaging readers; this isn't a skill developed overnight and is a different skill than writing proposals, briefs or presentations. When you partner with them, you're still the author, because the concepts, content and thoughts are yours; these are simply refined by experts at engaging people through writing.

Working with a Ghost writer

Ghost writers can interview you to begin fleshing out the content, use recordings/transcripts of you speaking on the topic, or a combination of both.

Decide HOW

How you'll navigate the steps to publishing – traditional, self-publishing or hybrid

How you'll navigate the marketing process – DIY, a publicist or hybrid

Getting Your Book Published

The Author's Journey

- ↳ Content development
- ↳ Writing
- ↳ Beta readers
- ↳ Editing
- ↳ Writing/rewriting
- ↳ Editing
- ↳ Polishing manuscript
- ↳ Copy editing/proofreading
- ↳ Beta readers
- ↳ Choosing a publisher/publishing method/distributor
- ↳ Book design/layout
- ↳ Final review
- ↳ Publishing & printing—which format(s), how many copies
- ↳ Publicity

Steps that can be done simultaneously with above steps

- Acquiring an ISBN
- Cover art
- Building a platform
- Pre-sell

Printing

- Print large quantity
- Print small quantity
- Print on demand

Publishing Options

Traditional publishing usually includes the process of receiving submissions from literary agents, offering the authors an "advance" on the sale of the book, distributing the book to retailers, and then paying the author royalties from book sales after the advance has been met. Earnings are 5% – 15% of the cover price after the advance is repaid.

Self-publishing allows authors to manage their own process, control the final product and earn a much higher percentage of the cover price.

Hybrid publishing is offered by some traditional publishing houses, which gives authors access to professional publishing services while still retaining more control of their books' production.

Getting Your Book Read

PRO TIP: "It's not best-writing author, it's best-selling author."
– Robert Kiyosaki



If a book publicist promises a book will be on *The New York Times* (or *USA TODAY*, or *Amazon*) Best Seller list, then be wary.



If a publicist guarantees a spot on a national media outlet, such as "Good Morning America," then be wary.



The key to a successful publicity campaign is a publicist who is accessible. In the beginning, weekly conversations will suffice. Right before and during launch, conversations may be daily.

Engaging Your Audience

Before Your Book Goes to Press:

- Build a website or landing page for your book
- Create your book's online Funnel System for leads
- Begin consistent engagement with your target audience
- Build a media pitch list
- Build connections as an "expert" within local media
 - Follow and interact on sites like LinkedIn
 - Utilize sites such as *Help A Reporter Out (HARO)*
 - Establish expertise independent of the company you work for
- Enhance your social media presence on the book's topic
- Be a guest on relevant podcasts
- Craft 3 stories about the book
 - Story 1: any new data or information in your book
 - Story 2: the aspirational / inspiration aspect of your book
 - Story 3: trending news relevant to your book



Did You Know: Most of a book's first year's sales come from pre-sales?



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Getting Real with ANMP's Garrett McGrath

Elevating direct selling through leadership at the speed of trust



With a 30-year career, **Garrett McGrath** is a leader who has built field organizations of 200,000+ distributors and customers in 21 countries together with his wife, Sylvia, and served as master distributors and special advisors. In addition to being a keynote speaker, leadership coach and mentor, McGrath contributes to industry-wide conferences, publications, and boards. Recently he led the corporate team of The Happy Co., a publicly-traded network marketing company, helping it grow to \$130+ million in annual sales, and serving as its CEO/president. Since 2012, he has also served as president of the nonprofit Association of Network Marketing Professionals (ANMP).

SSN: Tell me about your work with the ANMP.

GM: The Association of Network Marketing Professionals (ANMP.com) is a grassroots 501(C)(6) organization, founded in 2004. As a nonprofit, the ANMP is the only professional association that includes all three stakeholder groups within direct selling together: the independent distributors in the field; the company CEOs, executives, and founders; and the suppliers, supporters, and advocates serving the channel.

The ANMP's goals are educating and elevating the profession. When someone is a professional, there is an expectation that a standard of education is initially required to generate income and become successful, and that there will be continuing education. This is why we bring the best in the profession together to collaborate, educate and share best practices. We learn from one another. Our board and various committees meet each month. What's working now, what's not, and what's next is shared by many diverse, relevant voices and perspectives at our annual international convention.

Our convention is a strong cross-section of the best of the best. We ensure there are top subject-matter experts, as well as insights from both today's rising stars and legacy leaders, whose success is current and validated. They each share the best of their hard-won knowledge and experience with our attendees and members. All areas of building and growing a business within the profession are covered. This year's conference ANMP 2024 is May 30 to June 2 in Dallas, Texas.

SSN: What do you believe are the keys to leading well in this time of change?

GM: Everything rises and falls with leadership, particularly during periods of change, and people are seeking clarity and certainty. They also yearn for a sense of belonging, mission and purpose beyond just the monetary rewards. In times of change, creating this can be challenging but it is critical. Communication—early and often—is vital. Sometimes the most important relationships, ones that are key to your business' success, are being influenced by what's not being said, rather than what is. Encouraging open, honest, yet respectful, empowering dialogue is crucial. It's important to listen to a wide range of voices within the organization, including both emerging and established leaders.

A thoughtfully planned and executed strategy for change management is also essential, because it could be impacting the lives or livelihoods of thousands of your network of field leaders and their families. Approaching something this important in an overly simplistic way, such as "let's just rip off the band-aid," without considering the full consequences to all stakeholders could be risky, even reckless.

In times of change, ideally you want to have already fostered a strong foundation of trust and real relationships. In communicating, explain the reason for the change. Listen and seek first to understand. Draft a clear plan for the change while seeking input and collaboration from your field leaders. Put yourself in the shoes of those who are affected by the change. How would you feel? Everyone on your team is



better equipped to navigate change once they understand why it's necessary and how it will ultimately be beneficial. This requires time, thoughtful coordination, and patience, but when executed well, it can lead to remarkable outcomes!

From my unique perspective, having almost 35 years' experience as a top field leader, then serving as CEO and president of a network marketing company—as well as serving the last 10 years as president of the Association of Network Marketing Professionals—I believe today's leaders need to develop depth and skill in both the logical/rational/systems side and emotional/passion/vision side when building a strong business.

SSN: What are some of the unique leadership challenges you face in the direct selling industry, and how do you address them?

GM: Network marketing is evolving at an increasingly rapid pace. This evolution is exciting for those eager to embrace change, lead and collaborate, because no one of us is smarter than all of us. We can all learn from others' experiences. However, most people are a little resistant to or fearful of change.

Take compensation plans, for example. In the past, many older plans focused heavily on the need for delayed gratification because there was less initial income at the beginning, for selling the products to retail customers. But in order to compete with the proliferation of gig economy opportunities, modern direct selling opportunities now demand that there is a significant immediate income for retailing.

Where a network marketing opportunity really shines is that, unlike driving an Uber, for example, our business model couples this with (a) the potential to earn again (and more) from repeat business; (b) to earn significantly more due to the leverage of growing a team and network with repeat business; and (c) the ease and fun of doing business within a strong community and ecosystem of training and supportive culture, whether you choose to grow your business online via social media or offline face-to-face, or through both. You also don't have to put wear and tear on your car! With network marketing, as a busy parent you can choose to work from home at the time that's right for you, or work from phone anywhere in the world. By comparison, when you look at going out in traffic and bad weather to pick up strangers and drive them around for a rideshare company, the value and distinct advantages of network marketing are immense!



SSN: What factors would you advise field leaders to look for in a company?

GM: I've got four factors that I would look for.

- 1. Leadership.** Leadership is character in action. Are the values, integrity and vision of the founder/CEO and top leadership in alignment with your values and what you want to create? Both corporately and in the field, can the leadership bring into being this vision? To me, this is paramount. You cannot do "too much" research here! How can you know that the people you're partnering with are trustworthy, competent? It was Warren Buffet who said, "You cannot make a good deal with a bad person." The character and experience of the leadership, both corporately and in the field, form a solid foundation for building a successful business—or not.
- 2. High customer reorder rate.** Not every company will give you access to this information (and not all companies actively track this data point), but as a potential field leader, you want to know, do these products stand up in their own right? Are they repeat-purchased by folks who were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Everything rises and falls with leadership, particularly during periods of change, and people are seeking clarity and certainty.
— Garrett McGrath

CONTINUED FROM 19

never in it for the business? Customers are simply looking for a result—do the products work? Can you feel the difference or benefit? Results lead to reorders, which lead to the ripple effect that you want to create. A high customer reorder rate not only validates the product but also increases the retention and excitement of the distributor who enrolled the customer. In addition, understanding the percentage revenue from customer orders (vs. distributor orders) is vital, particularly if you're looking at a U.S.-based company. Many believe an 80% ratio is now considered the "gold standard" in light of the recent Neora ruling.

3. Community. The community environment is the entire ecosystem that's designed to help you support your customers and teams and grow your business. Today a lot of this is experienced online, on social media platforms such as Facebook Groups and Messenger chats, etc. The other part is created with live, in-person experiences and events. The community should ideally be a collaboration between the company and the field, but led and implemented by the company. This ensures that leaders are invested in an active, highly-effective, supportive community without being burdened by having to create, update, monitor and maintain it.

4. Compensation. In recent years, compensation structures have evolved. To compete in today's gig economy, the ability to generate a strong immediate income is necessary. But the key to greater success is about keeping that customer as a repeat buyer and rewarding the distributor for this behavior. I believe that paying one-time, high customer-acquisition bonuses (without also paying similar customer-retention bonuses, too) can create unintended consequences. The emphasis needs to be on real, repeat business from customers reordering products they love.

Finally, distributors want to be paid ASAP, or at least weekly, the commissions they've earned on their direct sales. In the old days, it was normal to be paid once a month, but that was a different time. Today, to compete in the gig economy, companies are realizing that weekly pay is important.

In my opinion, a career-minded network marketing professional also wants to look at the compensation plan overall—and



know what the true payout percentage is on the dollar, not just on "volume" (CV, BV, etc.) because this varies. Review the company's recent Income Disclosure Statement as well, before making a decision.

SSN: What is the key to distributor retention in today's market?

GM: It's important not to take leaders for granted and to speak with them consistently and proactively, not just when there are challenges or changes. Business, especially in relationship marketing, operates at the speed of trust. That cannot be outsourced. The pandemic shifted many interactions online, but lately there's a move towards integrating the online and face-to-face ecosystems.

Some corporate executives may be reluctant to return to being on the road and doing in-person events, and question how that should look in 2024. How different is it from pre-pandemic times? As a former CEO/president of a public network marketing company that had \$100+ million in sales annually, I understand the challenges of balancing a demanding Monday-Friday corporate schedule with the need to travel to field events on the weekends too, but most businesses need that right now.

Another retention factor is having simple, unified systems for distributors to follow. It's not just about having a document or a plan; it's about ensuring everyone knows and follows the system, so it can be duplicated to effectively on-

board new distributors and help them quickly reach a sustainable income. Clarity, certainty—and especially, repetition—are key. Only when you're starting to feel like a "broken record" are you starting to break through! Your job is to get them going, keep them going and move them forward with increasing achievements in the compensation plan. Tracking these key metrics is crucial for sustained growth.

Consistent achievement of foundational first ranks, especially "core rank" (that first milestone whereby individuals are consistently earning \$300 to \$500 or more per month), requires a simple, strong path and a clear plan. This includes creating and maintaining robust systems to help the new distributor acquire, onboard, and retain customers, as well as enroll, onboard, train, and retain other distributors. Over time this will create a "leadership factory" for those who wish to grow toward the top ranks.

It's important to note, however, that not everyone wants to become a "top leader." Not everyone looks at this as a career; some are simply looking for a side income to help with extra expenses and stability. It's important to respect and appreciate everyone, while also providing real growth and mentorship opportunities for those who want more and have greater ambitions.

The next evolution of network marketing in some companies now includes a "middle-ground" opportunity, akin to affiliate

marketing, where individuals can participate at a different level, earning by simply sharing with customers, without having to build a team. Offering the affiliate option recognizes and supports those who simply wish to gather customers, and who may later evolve at their own pace toward team-building, if and when they're ready.

SSN: Speaking of affiliates, what is your take on affiliate and influencer marketing and its integration into direct selling business plans?

GM: It's important to understand that affiliate and influencer marketing can also present unique challenges and potentially unintended consequences. One of the key lessons learned is how to handle the social media environment, as most direct sellers are actively building via communications on these platforms.

And therein lies one of the primary challenges. By its very nature, affiliate marketing can be somewhat transactional vs. being loyal to one company or a specific line of products. Influencers often market various products to their audience, because many only get paid on the first sale (or earn substantially less on subsequent repeating sales), leading them to constantly seek new products or services to promote and sell.

In affiliate marketing, the focus is on trending products of the day, which may run counter to building a long-term, stable, residual-type business. Most of us building companies are aiming to build something that lasts over years, not just following short-term trends.

Another issue is the "distraction factor." Some influencers are promoting multiple affiliate opportunities, companies, digital, MRR programs and other products—sometimes simultaneously from the same social media page. At best, this can lead to confusion and drama; at worst, accusations

of soliciting, cross-recruiting and violation of policies and procedures. The complexity is due to the interconnected nature of social media.

Distributors in a specific network marketing company are likely to be connected with many others in their same company, who, in turn, would get exposed to the "feed" of the products/opportunities the influencer's been posting about. This may draw inquiries about that other product/program/opportunity. It may also contravene the distributor agreement or policies and procedures of their network marketing company, with the potential for legal challenges.

The evolution of company policies and procedures to address these new challenges is another layer of complexity that companies are facing today.

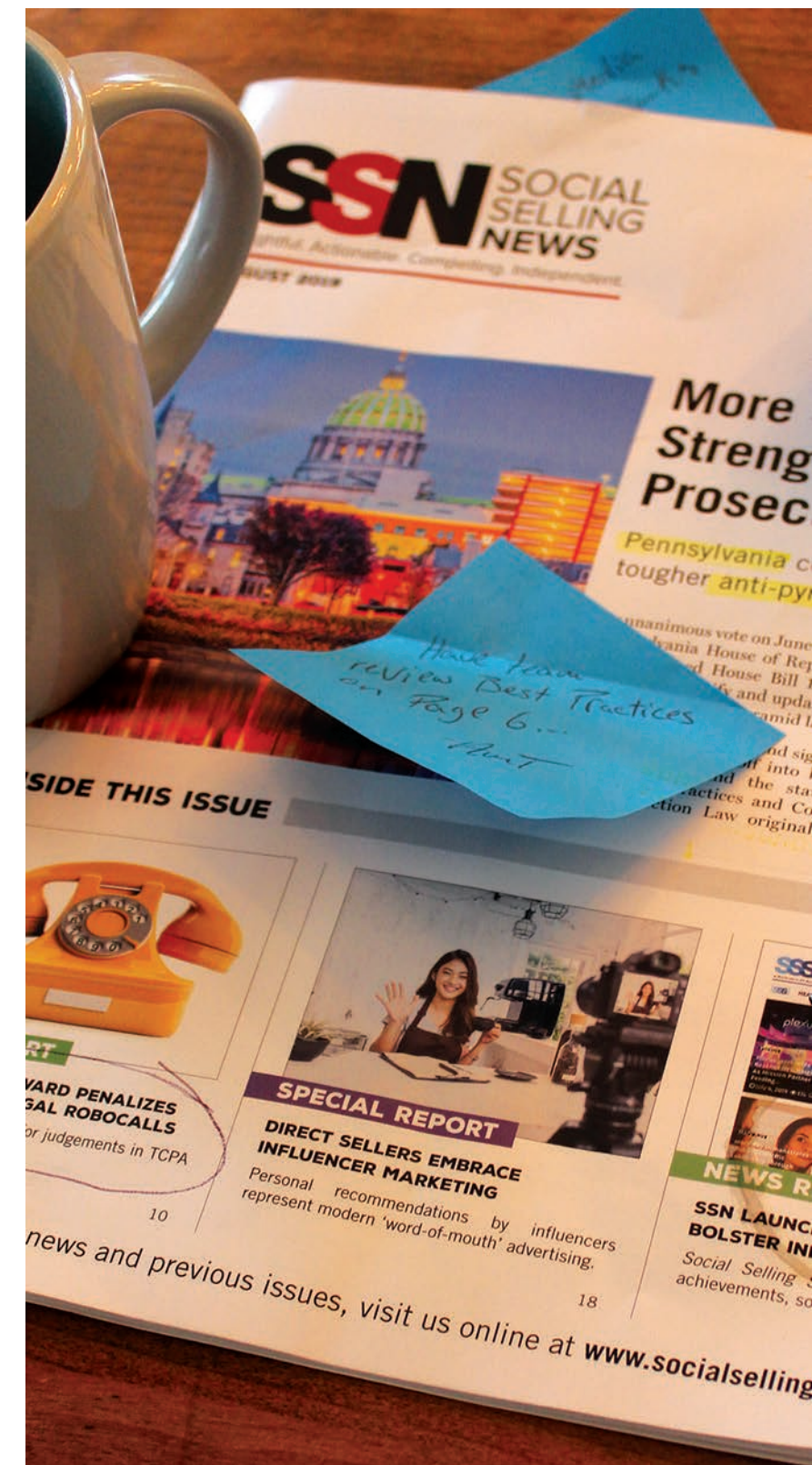
At the upcoming ANMP 2024 Convention, we plan to delve deeper into these timely topics and many others, share what field leaders and companies alike should know about it, and offer ideas for navigating it.

We'll have expert legal educators, CEOs, top executives, top field leaders, and other thought leaders with experience in the affiliate landscape joining us to shed more light and enrich this collaborative, evolving conversation toward best practices. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!



Garrett McGrath was interviewed by David Bland on behalf of *Social Selling News*.

Periodically *Social Selling News* interviews a person connected to the social selling phenomenon, asking them to share their experience and insight into the channel.

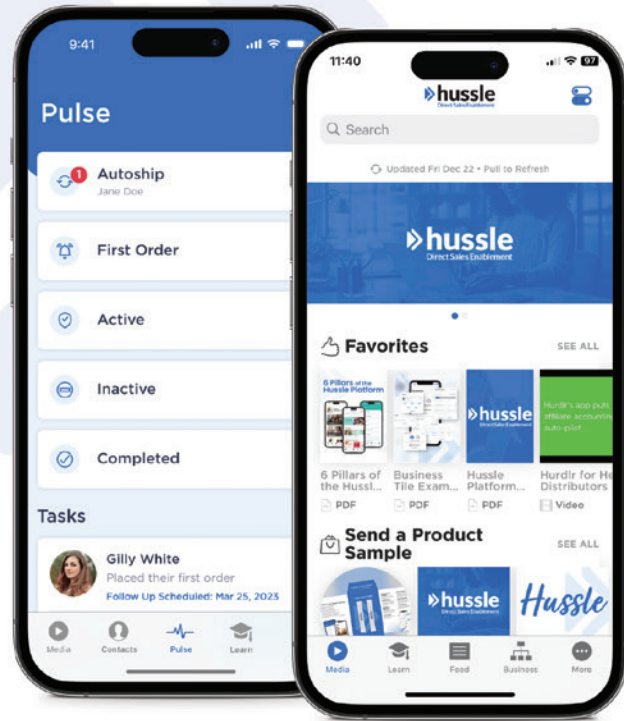


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THE RANKS

SOFTWARE PLATFORM COMPANIES

RANKED BY NUMBER OF DIRECT SELLING CLIENTS

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Each month, *The Ranks* spotlights companies, people or trends that are important to the direct selling channel. This month, *The Ranks* lists companies with software platforms for direct selling companies, ranked by number of direct selling clients. If client information was not provided, “did not provide” is used in the column and companies are listed in alphabetical order. *The Ranks* will vary monthly in type of information and in number of items included.

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<u>2</u>	Trinity Software Inc. Arlington, TX trinitysoft.net	130	Jerry Reynolds 817-394-5401	Firestorm	Did not provide
<u>3</u>	InfoTrax Orem, UT infotraxsys.com	49	Sean Smith sean@infotraxsys.com 801-431-4900	FlexCloud	doTerra LifeVantage MONAT Global
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<u>5</u>	Xirect American Fork, UT xirect.com	10	Verney Quiroz info@xirectss.com 385-448-1800	xSuite	Did not provide
*	ByDesign Technologies Tampa, FL bydesign.com	Did not provide	sales@bydesign.com	Did not provide	Did not provide
*	IDSTC Tampa, FL idstc.com	Did not provide	Rachel Lindstrom rlindstrom@idstc.com 813-277-0625	Did not provide	Did not provide
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SOFTWARE PLATFORM COMPANIES



Gregg Corella
Vice President of Sales, Exigo
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Sean Smith
Chief Executive Officer, InfoTrax
infotraxsys.com

“InfoTrax continues to set the standard in direct selling with its advanced FlexCloud commission platform. Our engine is specifically designed to streamline the management and deployment of global compensation strategies, providing real-time commission insights and robust tools for contest and reward administration.”

The FlexCloud commissions platform integrates with leading eCommerce solutions like BigCommerce, combining direct selling commissions with digital storefronts. This synergy boosts clients’ operational efficiency, enhancing success in the competitive direct selling arena.”



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— PEOPLE ON THE MOVE ▶▶

People on the Move



KRISTOF NEIRYNCK, AVON INTL.
Natura & Co, the parent company of **Avon International**, has named **Kristof Neiryndck** as CEO of Avon. Neiryndck was previously Avon's global chief marketing officer and managing director for Western Europe. Before joining Avon, he served as the chief marketing officer for global brands at Walgreens Boots Alliance.



MARK CONLIN, LEGALSHIELD
LegalShield has appointed **Mark Conlin** as chief technology officer. Conlin has more than 20 years' leadership experience in software engineering with a focus on scaling operations, modernizing legacy technology and developing software teams and products. His recent roles have been with Outdoorsy and BCD Travel.



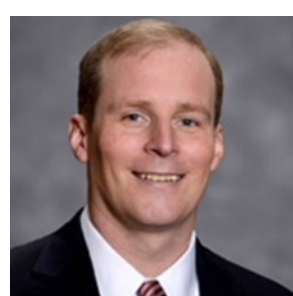
ALESSANDRO CARLUCCI, AVON INTL.
Alessandro Carlucci will return to **Natura & Co** as an advisor to **Avon**. Carlucci previously served as CEO of Natura from 2005 to 2014 and will now assist with Avon's turnaround and plans for future growth. He brings extensive experience serving as chairman for BSR and Arezzo&Co and was president of WFDSA 2012-2014.



EMILY ROSE, LEGALSHIELD
LegalShield has promoted **Emily Rose** to president of business solutions. Rose joined LegalShield in 2017. With over 20 years of experience with voluntary benefits, she specializes in group legal plans, identity theft protection, supplemental health coverage, and property and casualty solutions. She previously worked at MetLife.



BRADY JOHNSON, 4LIFE
4Life Research has hired **Brady Johnson** as senior vice president of finance. Johnson brings over 15 years' experience in developing financial forecasts, budgets, and management reporting, most recently with PCF Insurance Services. He also spent nine years at **Nu Skin**, leaving as director of corporate financial planning and analysis.



SEAN ROONEY, LEGALSHIELD
Sean Rooney has been promoted to senior vice president of broker sales and service at **LegalShield**. With the company since 2017, Rooney currently leads its efforts in expanding the broker channel. He has 25 years' experience in employee benefits and brings expertise in sales, account management, operations and underwriting.



BRIAN CARON, LEGALSHIELD
Brian Caron has joined **LegalShield** as vice president of lawyer services. He will oversee its nationwide network of law firms. Caron has spent over 20 years as an attorney and legal expert. He is also a former board member and president of the Group Legal Services Association of the American Bar Association.



KENT CHENG, EXP WORLD HOLDINGS
EXp World Holdings' chief accounting officer **Kent Cheng** has been appointed as interim principal financial officer, as CFO Jeff Whiteside announced his departure on Dec. 1, 2023. A search has been initiated to identify Whiteside's permanent successor. Cheng was previously corporate controller for Ocean Spray Cranberries.

— THE SUPPORTERS ▶▶

MEET OUR PARTNERS

Below is a listing of all of the suppliers who placed display advertising in this month's issue. We are grateful for their participation and support in bringing news and information to the social selling channel.

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— PEOPLE ON THE MOVE ▶▶

People on the Move

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RAYMOND GREER, LIFEVANTAGE
LifeVantage Corp. has appointed **Raymond Greer** to chairman of the board. Greer, who has been an independent director of LifeVantage since 2017, succeeds Garry Mauro. Mauro will continue to serve as an independent member. Greer has over 35 years of experience in global operations and technology, currently in private equity.



GARY FITZGERALD, EXIGO
Exigo has named **Gary Fitzgerald** as CEO. Fitzgerald has over 20 years of leadership experience at General Electric and at GPS Insight. His expertise includes navigating diverse business environments and fostering technological innovation. Fitzgerald will prioritize this innovation, as well as strategic growth, customers, and corporate culture.



MERCIA RIEGO, IMPACT GLOBAL
Impact Global has hired **Mercia Riego** as country manager for The Philippines. Riego entered the industry a decade ago when she joined **5LINX** as a customer service manager. She then served in roles of increasing responsibility, becoming an operations manager. Most recently she was a sales director for **Zija** and then **LifeVantage**.



JANUSZ POTOZNY, EXIGO
Janusz Potozny has joined **Exigo** as vice president of sales EMEA. Potozny has spent over 20 years in direct selling, with the majority at **Vorwerk**. Most recently, he served as executive director of the **Polish Direct Selling Association (PSSB)**. His appointment comes as Exigo expands its operations into Europe.



AYO OLASEINDE, DSA UK
The **DSA U.K.** has appointed **Ayo Olaseinde** to chairman of the board. Olaseinde, global president of **Saladmater**, previously served as a member of the board in 2023. Olaseinde has been with **Saladmater** since 2005, where he has expanded the U.K. business into other European markets, Africa, and the Middle East.

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Mary Kay Expands Business to Hungary

Mary Kay Inc. has moved into the next phase of its European expansion strategy with the launch of business in Hungary. Coming during the company's 60th anniversary, the expansion will have a celebration of its own with events in both Prague and Budapest. Having the new market's operations overseen by the Mary Kay Czech Republic's offices in Prague, Edita Szaboova will lead as general manager of Mary Kay Czech Republic and Slovakia. Known for its culture, heritage and growing economy, Hungary also respects entrepreneurship, according to Szaboova, and Mary Kay plans to introduce a range of initiatives to support women in the country seeking economic empowerment. These initiatives include educational programs, mentorship, and economic investments. Szaboova shared, "We are elated to empower aspiring women entrepreneurs in Hungary, aligning with our core mission of enriching women's lives."

Nu Skin Lays Off 5% of Its U.S. Workforce

Utah-based **Nu Skin** has laid off an estimated 5% of its U.S. workforce, according to The Salt Lake Tribune. The company's president and CEO, Ryan Napierski, had shared in its recent financial results that while its overseas business, particularly China, has grown, numbers overall were "softer than expected" for the third quarter of 2023. Revenue had dropped about 7% compared to the prior year, with this year's numbers coming in at \$498.8 million, compared to \$537.8 million in 2022. With about 3,800 employees worldwide, only its U.S. workforce will be impacted, a company spokesperson stated, but how many individuals lost their jobs is unknown. Per its November SEC filing, Nu Skin had planned the layoffs as it needed "to focus resources on the Company's global priorities and optimize future growth and profitability." The filing stated that "workforce reductions" were included in those plans.

Coway Listed on Dow Jones Sustainability Asia Pacific Index for ESG Efforts

Coway Co. Ltd. has joined 156 other companies on the 2023 Dow Jones Sustainability Asia Pacific Index (DJSI Asia Pacific) in recognition of its sustainability practices. Marking its 11th consecutive year being selected for the DJSI Asia Pacific and its sixth consecutive year on the DJSI Korea list, Coway is the only Korean company to be listed within the DHP Household Durables industry on the Asia Pacific list. The Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) considers sustainability operations as well as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) efforts of global companies to help investors make sustainable decisions. Those companies selected this year were the top 25.6% of the 609 companies evaluated. For 2023, Coway received "excellent evaluations" for Customer Relationship Management, Product Quality and Recall Management and Environmental Policy and Management Systems. The company works to minimize the impact of its business operations through environmentally friendly practices in product development and management. It also follows an ESG framework with a goal of being fully carbon neutral by 2050.

PM-International Gives \$3.4 Million to World Vision to Support Children

PM-International and its charity, PM We Care, donated \$3.4 million to World Vision to provide health, water, education and a safe environment for children. This year's gift is its highest donation to the organization, which is almost double the amount given in 2022. PM-International has had a long-term commitment to the charity for over 20 years, having provided support in regional projects that last 15 years on average, with funds going to countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Nicaragua. According to the company, it is the largest corporate sponsor of World Vision. As it continues to grow, PM-International is further able to provide funds to aid in programs that help children. The company currently sponsors 6,000 children throughout the world, with plans to increase that number to 10,000 children. Per its charity ambassador, Vicki Sorg, "This donation stands for commitment, leadership and our values."

Vida Divina Purchases Peru-Based MIALÉ

California-based **Vida Divina** has finalized the acquisition of **MIALÉ**, a multilevel-marketing company operating in Lima, Peru. MIALÉ has a portfolio of more than 25 products focused on wellbeing. Vida Divina, which has a presence in more than 50 countries as well as 10 distribution centers, is looking to expand its brand and products to reach a broader consumer base, per Armand Puyolt, Vida Divina Worldwide president and CEO. The companies both share a common commitment to sustainable growth as well, according to Puyolt. The acquisition will add MIALÉ's products to the 30 that Vida Divina already offers in Peru, and Vida Divina will look to open new markets in Chile and Bolivia as well. In the coming months, MIALÉ's products will be reformulated and/or enhanced for quality assurance with new branding expected by June 2024.

Medifast Transforms Its Business with Medically Supported Weight Loss Program

Medifast, the parent company of direct seller **OPTAVIA**, has taken the first steps to transform its business by entering the medically supported weight loss market. Made possible through a collaboration with LifeMD Inc., a provider of virtual primary care, Medifast will combine OPTAVIA's coach-guided approach with the expertise of board-certified LifeMD clinicians as well as access to weight loss medications. Joining forces, the two are focused on a comprehensive health solution for the growing obesity epidemic. Medifast will also make a \$20 million investment in LifeMD, which includes an anticipated \$10 million in contributions to support the partnership and fund enhancements to LifeMD's platform, operations, and infrastructure. The other \$10 million is to purchase shares of LifeMD's common stock. Medifast pursued this collaboration after its own commissioned research helped the company gain a deeper understanding of what many individuals are seeking when interested in weight loss medications.

LegalShield COO Receives "Woman of the Year" Award

Kathy Pinson, **LegalShield's** chief operating officer, was recognized as Woman of the Year during the Business Intelligence Group's 2023 BIG Awards for Business. Pinson was selected for the award based on her "role leading LegalShield's operations and her impact to the company's commitment in serving members through world-class technology and customer service." Pinson has spent over 40 years in legal services, and more specifically made a significant contribution to LegalShield's efforts establishing itself as a provider of accessible and affordable legal advice and services, per the company. Her leadership over operations and management of the company's lawyer network helped set the foundation for LegalShield's future expansion of membership and partners. According to LegalShield CEO Warren Schlichting, Pinson has "institutional knowledge" and a "deep understanding of members' needs," which further add value for LegalShield members.



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