



Mixed Q3 Results for Direct Sellers; Digital Transformation in Focus

Primerica, Nature's Sunshine grow with digital efforts; Herbalife, Nu Skin hit by market challenges

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Major Direct Sellers Adopt Affiliate Strategies in 2024



Rodan + Fields, Seint, BODi, and Tastefully Simple transition to an affiliate-based structure

In a year marked by companies adapting to shifting consumer behaviors and evolving market dynamics, several prominent direct selling organizations have redefined their business models to better align with contemporary trends. Over the past year, **Rodan + Fields**, **Seint**, **BODi**, and **Tastefully Simple** have transitioned from traditional network marketing structures to affiliate-based systems, reflecting a significant evolution within the channel. While these changes are not indicative of the entire sector, they underscore a strategic response to evolving trends.

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2024: A Year of Bold Steps Forward for Direct Sellers

Hello friends!

As we close out another year that has tested and strengthened our channel, I am excited to bring you this special year-in-review edition of *Social Selling News*. Throughout 2024, we've seen our industry do what it does best—adapt and innovate.

The past 12 months saw our channel further embrace and accelerate innovation in how we do business. More companies than ever adopted retail partnerships, affiliate programs and strategic brand alliances, moving these strategies from experimental initiatives to proven approaches. These trends show our channel's growing confidence in blending traditional direct selling strengths with contemporary market opportunities.

I've been particularly encouraged by how many companies have strengthened their compliance practices while pursuing these new opportunities. They understand that a strong commitment to FTC guidelines isn't a limitation—it's the bedrock of sustainable growth and customer trust. What stands out

is how companies are proactively integrating compliance into their business strategies, making it part of their DNA rather than treating it as a box to check. This approach has not only strengthened customer relationships but has also created more sustainable business models that can weather regulatory scrutiny while driving innovation forward.

Looking through this edition, you'll find stories of companies that are charting new paths forward. These aren't just success stories—they're practical examples of how innovation and tradition can work together in today's market. Whether you're considering new marketing channels or strengthening your current approach, you'll find insights you can put to work.

The stories in these pages reveal a channel that's not just adapting but actively shaping its future. While challenges remain, I've never been more confident about where direct selling is headed. Our industry continues to create meaningful opportunities for entrepreneurs who are ready to embrace both proven principles and fresh approaches.

As we look toward 2025, I'm particularly excited about the upcoming **Channel Summit**, set to be the largest and most crucial direct selling conference of the year. This isn't just another industry event—it's a gathering of the brightest minds in direct selling who will tackle our challenges head-on and map out the opportunities ahead. Don't miss your chance to be part of this conversation. Secure your registration today at www.thechannelsummit.org.

I want to thank you for making *SSN* your trusted source for industry insights and analysis. Your feedback and engagement help us deliver the information you need to succeed in this evolving landscape.

Here's to your success and the exciting opportunities awaiting us in 2025!

With appreciation,




DAVID BLAND

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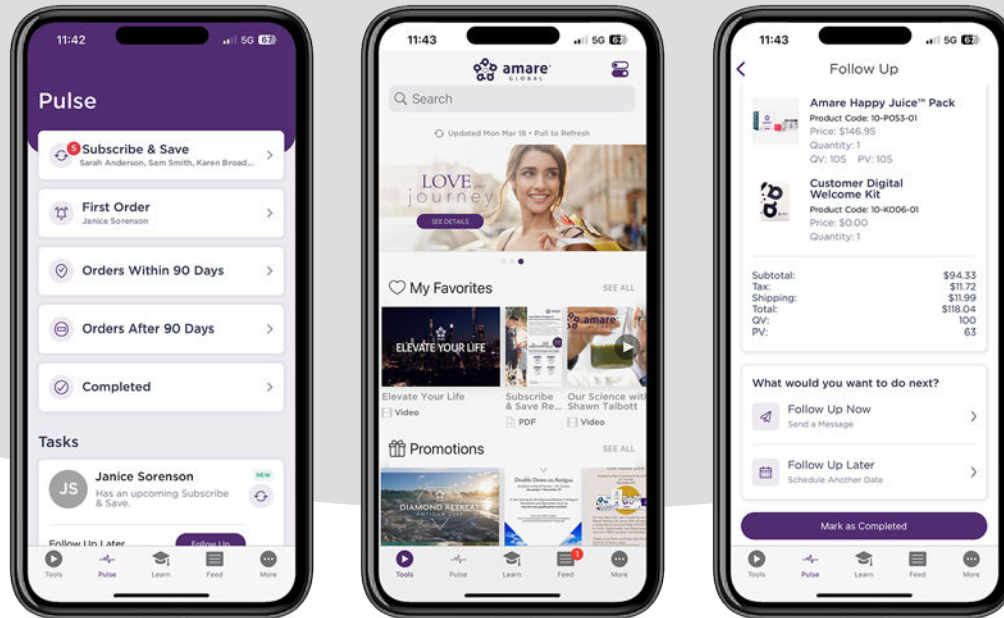
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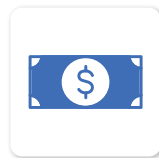
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MAJOR DIRECT SELLERS ADOPT AFFILIATE STRATEGIES, CONTINUED FROM 1

Rodan + Fields: Streamlining Operations

In July 2024, skincare and haircare leader **Rodan + Fields** announced a pivotal move from its established direct selling model to an affiliate-based structure, effective Sept. 1, 2024. Founded in 2000 by dermatologists Dr. Katie Rodan and Dr. Kathy Fields, the company built its reputation through a vast network of independent consultants. However, evolving consumer expectations and market challenges necessitated a strategic transformation.

Under the new affiliate program, existing consultants are compensated solely for direct sales, eliminating recruitment-based earnings. This approach offers increased commissions on customer sales and product discounts, with over 90% of current consultants projected to achieve higher earning potential based on their existing sales performance.

CEO Dimitri Haloulos expressed confidence in the transition, stating, “We are confident these changes will enable us to meaningfully expand the lives we can impact and—importantly—allow us to continue to provide our passionate consultants with a modern and meaningful earning opportunity.”

To enhance customer engagement, Rodan + Fields is investing in traditional marketing channels and social media, aiming to simplify product discovery and purchasing processes.

Seint: Simplifying Compensation

Beauty brand **Seint** transitioned to an affiliate commission structure on Oct. 1, 2024. Originally launched in 2013 as **Maskcara Beauty**, the company rebranded as Seint in 2020 and has continually adapted to meet market demands.

The new model compensates Seint’s independent contractors, known as Artists, exclusively based on personal sales, with commissions ranging from 25% to 45% and additional bonuses for achieving sales milestones.

This shift eliminates recruitment-based compensation, aiming to simplify earnings and provide greater transparency. In its official announcement, the company stated, “This transition signifies a pivotal shift that aligns perfectly with our vision and values.”

By focusing on direct customer engagement and removing complexities associated with traditional network marketing practices, Seint

aspires to create a sustainable business model that empowers its Artists and resonates with modern consumers.

BODi: Innovating Fitness Distribution Channels

Formerly known as **Beachbody**, fitness and nutrition company **BODi** began its transition to a single-level affiliate program on Nov. 1, 2024, with plans to fully phase out its network marketing structure by Jan. 1, 2025. This decision is part of a comprehensive strategy to modernize operations and diversify revenue streams.

Executive Chairman Mark Goldston highlighted the rationale behind the shift, stating, “We recognize that in light of today’s current market dynamics, as well as consumer preferences, the multi-level marketing distribution model is outdated and unsustainable.”

The new affiliate program focuses on rewarding participants for direct sales efforts, streamlining earnings and removing the complexities of team management.

Concurrently, BODi is implementing a broader restructuring initiative, including a 33% workforce reduction and centralization of operations around a unified e-commerce platform. These measures are projected to yield annualized savings of \$54 million and significantly lower the company’s revenue break-even point.

BODi CEO and Co-founder Carl Daikeler emphasized the importance of this evolution, stating, “We believe that transitioning to the affiliate model will energize our network of partners and new participants.”

Tastefully Simple: A Hybrid Approach for Modern Sellers

Tastefully Simple, a longstanding leader in meal and entertaining solutions, is set to launch a reimagined business model on Jan. 1, 2025. The company, which has thrived for 30 years, is moving away from its traditional network marketing structure to a hybrid approach designed to meet the needs of today’s sellers and clients.

Under this new structure, Tastefully Simple sellers, now known as TS Ambassadors, will no longer sponsor or build teams. Instead, they will focus on sharing products via easy-to-use shopping links, social media and in-person

gatherings, which maintain the interactive experiences the company is known for. Hosts will continue to earn rewards, preserving a key element of the Tastefully Simple experience.

“We chose the term Ambassador because it perfectly reflects what our sellers do,” Jill Blashack Strahan, Tastefully Simple’s founder and CEO, said. “They love our products so much that they instinctively want to share them with family and friends.”

While new Ambassadors will not sponsor others, the company is introducing a hybrid model that retains a small group of heritage leaders called Diamond and Gold Ambassadors. These leaders will have the opportunity to build first-line teams, offering flexibility for longtime sellers to grow their communities while catering to younger sellers seeking a less demanding, flexible side gig.

Tastefully Simple is also investing in intuitive technology to streamline business operations and enhance connectivity for Ambassadors. “After 30 years, we are stepping into 2025 with a reimagined Tastefully Simple business model. Our goal is to be a testament of creativity, faith, and gritty determination,” Strahan added.

Implications for the Direct Selling Channel

The transitions undertaken by these companies reflect a strategic response to changing consumer preferences and market conditions. By moving away from traditional network marketing models and embracing affiliate-based structures, these network marketing firms aim to enhance transparency, simplify compensation, and strengthen direct customer relationships.

While these shifts are significant, they represent individual company strategies rather than a wholesale transformation of the direct selling industry. However, they may signal a broader trend toward modernization and adaptation within the sector, as companies seek to remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

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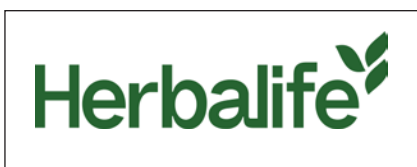


David Bland is the publisher of *Social Selling News*.

Direct Sellers Show Mixed Results in Q3; Digital Transformation a Key Focus

Digital initiatives drive growth at Primerica and Nature's Sunshine while Herbalife and Nu Skin face market headwinds

By SSN Staff



Herbalife

Herbalife demonstrated signs of stabilization in the third quarter of 2024, as improving distributor metrics helped offset ongoing market challenges. The direct selling giant's third-quarter sales remained flat on a constant currency basis at \$1.2 billion, though foreign exchange impacts led to a 3.2% decline in reported revenue.

After 12 consecutive quarters of decline, distributor recruitment showed renewed momentum, growing 14% year over year for the second straight quarter. This improvement in recruitment, combined with strong cash flows and EBITDA performance, points to strengthening fundamentals, according to CEO Michael O. Johnson during an earnings call.

Adjusted EBITDA reached \$167 million, exceeding guidance and achieving a 70-basis-point margin improvement to 13.4%, compared to the previous year. Strong operating cash flow of \$100 million enabled Herbalife to reduce debt by \$85 million, bringing its leverage ratio down to 3.3x. The company aims to reduce total debt by \$1 billion by 2028.

Regional performance varied significantly across markets. Latin America grew 9% in local currency despite a 2% decline in reported sales, while EMEA increased 2% in local currency. North America faced continued pressure with a 6% decline, and China's sales fell 16% year over year, though preferred customer metrics

showed improvement. Overall sales volume declined 5.4%, but pricing benefits of \$62 million helped mitigate the impact.

To support future growth, Herbalife launched new initiatives including the Diamond Development Mastermind Program for distributor training. The company also marked a significant milestone as its first group of distributor leaders became certified lifestyle coaches for its type 2 diabetes prevention program.

Looking ahead, Herbalife adjusted its outlook, forecasting full-year 2024 net sales to decline 1% to 2% while raising adjusted EBITDA guidance to \$590 million to \$620 million. Fourth-quarter sales are expected to range between a 1% increase and 3% decrease year over year.

Q3 Numbers

- **Net Sales:** \$1.2 billion, down 3.2%
- **Foreign Currency Impact:** -2.9%
- **Adjusted EBITDA:** \$167 million
- **Adjusted EBITDA Margin:** 13.4%, up 70 basis points
- **Volume Points:** Down 5.4%
- **Operating Cash Flow:** \$100 million
- **New Distributors:** Up 14% globally
- **Debt Reduction:** \$85 million

Future Growth Plans

Looking to drive sustainable growth, Herbalife plans a significant expansion of its global training initiatives in 2025, beginning with the rollout of its Diamond Development Mastermind Program to Asia-Pacific markets in January.

The recently launched diabetes prevention program opens new channels for distributors



We listen in on the public company earnings calls and read the transcripts so you don't have to. Check back each quarter for our review with insights and takeaways for your own business.

to engage with healthcare professionals, while product innovation continues with new launches like Herbalife gels in EMEA markets.

Sustainability remains a key focus, with transitions to eco-friendly packaging underway across product lines. These strategic initiatives, supported by strong cash flow and ongoing debt reduction efforts, align with CEO Michael Johnson's vision of establishing Herbalife as "the world's premier health and wellness company, community and platform."



Nu Skin

Strong performance in Nu Skin’s Rhyz segment partially offset persistent challenges in its core direct selling business during the third quarter. Revenue declined to \$430.1 million from \$498.8 million a year ago, with foreign currency fluctuations accounting for a 3.4% negative impact of \$16.7 million.

Amid market uncertainties, Nu Skin has intensified its focus on operational efficiency, implementing aggressive cost-cutting measures and portfolio optimization. Following this year’s 20% reduction in product SKUs, the company plans an additional 30% cut in 2025, aiming to improve gross margins by 150-200 basis points.

“Despite the challenging operating environment, we are making progress in several areas of our vision,” CEO Ryan Napierski told analysts on an earnings call, emphasizing increased focus on operational efficiencies.

Major markets continue to face headwinds, particularly in South Korea and China, where macroeconomic pressures have impacted consumer spending. China’s contribution to Nu Skin’s business has notably declined, dropping from 40% to 12% over the past two years.

To address these challenges, Nu Skin is rolling out a new hybrid sales model that combines affiliate marketing with traditional direct selling, launching first in North America and South Korea before expanding to other markets in 2025.

Despite the challenges, several bright spots emerged. The Latin America and Southeast Asia markets showed growth, while the Rhyz segment, encompassing manufacturing and the Mavely affiliate marketing platform, grew more than 20%. Mavely’s network now connects 1,200 brands and retailers with over 100,000 social media influencers.

For the full year, Nu Skin projects revenue between \$1.70 billion and \$1.73 billion, with earnings per share ranging from -\$2.32 to -\$2.22, or adjusted earnings of 65 cents to

75 cents. A cash restructuring charge of \$15 million to \$20 million is planned for the fourth quarter to better align operating costs with current revenue levels.

Q3 Numbers

- **Revenue:** \$430.1 million, down 13.8%
- **Foreign Currency Impact:** -3.4% (-\$16.7 million)
- **Earnings Per Share:** 17 cents
- **Gross Margin:** 70.1%
- **Operating Margin:** 4.2%
- **China Sales:** Down to 12% of business from 40% over two years
- **Rhyz Segment:** Up over 20%

Future Growth Plans

Nu Skin is pursuing several strategic initiatives to drive future growth. The company plans to enter India’s market in late 2025, targeting a beauty-and-wellness-conscious population of 1.3 billion. It’s launching Mind 360 cognitive health products into a \$9 billion global market growing at 13% annually.

The company is also developing new nutritional supplement innovations and expanding its integration with the Mavely affiliate marketing platform. Combined with operational efficiency measures, these initiatives are expected to help improve profitability and cash flow while supporting Nu Skin’s vision of becoming what Napierski calls “the world’s leading integrated beauty, wellness and lifestyle ecosystem.”



Primerica

Primerica delivered robust third-quarter performance, fueled by expanding distribution networks and favorable equity markets.

The financial services provider, which sells term life insurance and investment products through licensed representatives, reported a 21% increase in adjusted operating earnings, with net operating income reaching \$193 million and diluted adjusted earnings per share climbing 28% to \$5.68.

A successful July convention catalyzed significant growth in Primerica’s distribution

network. The company recruited 142,000 individuals and licensed 14,349 new representatives during the quarter, marking a 17% increase. These additions helped push the life licensed sales force to 148,890, up 7% from the previous year, before surpassing 150,000 representatives in October—a first in company history.

In an earning’s call, CEO Glenn Williams attributed the growth to the continuing appeal of Primerica’s business model among middle-income entrepreneurs. This expanded distribution network drove increases across all major product lines, with term life insurance policies growing 5% to 93,377, providing \$31 billion in new coverage.

Investment and savings products performed exceptionally well, with sales surging 34% to \$2.9 billion, bolstered by strong equity markets and enhanced product offerings. Variable annuity sales jumped 42%, while combined U.S. and Canadian mutual fund sales rose 23%.

Client asset values appreciated 26% to \$111 billion, supported by positive net flows of \$444 million. The company’s mortgage business gained momentum, with year-to-date volume increasing 25% to nearly \$300 million.

During the quarter, Primerica strategically exited its senior health business by abandoning e-TeleQuote Inc., resulting in a \$98 million tax benefit. Strong cash flows enabled significant shareholder returns, including \$129 million in stock repurchases and \$31 million in dividends, bringing total shareholder returns to \$463 million year to date.

Looking forward, Primerica raised its growth projections, targeting a 5% increase in licensed representatives and 22%-25% growth in investment product sales for 2024.

Q3 Numbers

- **Adjusted Operating Income:** \$193 million, up 21%
- **Adjusted EPS:** \$5.68, up 28%
- **Life Licensed Sales Force:** 148,890, up 7%
- **New Term Life Policies:** 93,377, up 5%
- **Investment Product Sales:** \$2.9 billion, up 34%
- **Client Asset Values:** \$111 billion, up 26%
- **Share Repurchases:** \$129 million
- **Regular Dividends:** \$31 million

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DIRECT SELLERS SHOW MIXED RESULTS IN Q3, CONTINUED FROM 9

Future Growth Plans

Primerica remains focused on expanding its distribution network and product offerings to serve middle-income families. A new distribution agreement with Canada Life will offer segregated funds to Canadian clients beginning next year. The mortgage business continues to expand, now licensed in 33 states through more than 3,000 licensed representatives.

These initiatives, combined with continued strength in recruiting and investment product sales, position Primerica for sustained growth in serving middle-income families' financial needs.



Nature's Sunshine

Nature's Sunshine reported strong third-quarter results driven by its global growth strategies and digital transformation initiatives. The company develops, manufactures, and sells herbal supplements, vitamins, and other natural health and wellness products through its direct selling network and digital channels.

The company reported third-quarter sales of \$114.6 million, up 3% from the prior year, or 4% in local currency, representing its highest sales volume this year.

"Our plans are clearly benefiting the business as the investments we've made to expand our digital capabilities, improve our consumer proposition, strengthen our brand presence and drive out costs have all combined to help drive performance," CEO Terrence Moorehead told analysts during an earnings call.

The company's digital transformation in North America showed positive results, with digital sales growing 17%. The upgraded platform improved site load speeds, conversion rates, and stability.

While overall North American sales declined 3%, management expects positive momentum as the company's omnichannel approach builds and it invests in more tools for nutritional health practitioners and specialty retailers.

The Asia Pacific region grew 9% in local currency, driven by strong performance in Taiwan and Japan, up 20% and 34% respectively. The growth came from introducing more consumer-friendly product packs and increased field activation efforts.

South Korea also showed improvement with 3% growth, driven by higher customer counts and average order values. However, China's sales decreased 23% in local currency due to challenging macroeconomic conditions affecting consumer spending.

The company plans to strengthen its product line, upgrade branding and packaging, and introduce a localized version of its Subscribe & Thrive auto-ship program in the market. Europe showed resilience with 5% growth (3% in local currency), with Central Europe growing 23% driven by a positive response to newly launched Power Line products and expansion in the Baltic region.

The company has maintained stable operations in Eastern Europe despite the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The company's cost-savings initiatives, targeting \$5 million in annualized savings, contributed to adjusted EBITDA of \$10.7 million, up 5% versus prior year.

Gross margin decreased to 71.3% from 73.1%, primarily due to inflation and unfavorable foreign currency exchange, though management expects sequential improvement in Q4.

Looking ahead, Nature's Sunshine raised its full-year 2024 guidance, now expecting net sales between \$443 million and \$448 million and adjusted EBITDA of \$40 million to \$42 million.

Q3 Numbers

- **Net Sales:** \$114.6 million, up 3%
- **Digital Sales Growth:** 17% in North America
- **Adjusted EBITDA:** \$10.7 million, up 5%
- **Gross Margin:** 71.3%, down from 73.1%
- **Asia Pacific Sales:** Up 9% in local currency
- **European Sales:** Up 5% (3% in local currency)
- **Cash and Cash Equivalents:** \$78.7 million
- **Inventory:** \$62.3 million, down \$4.6 million from year-end 2023

Future Growth Plans

Nature's Sunshine continues to focus on its omnichannel strategy and digital transformation. The company is strengthening its digital capabilities with improved mobile-first performance and enhanced tools for nutritional health practitioners and specialty retailers.

In Asia, the company is expanding its digital live-streaming platform in China and introducing more consumer-friendly product packs in key markets.

The company's Power Line products continue to gain traction, particularly in Europe, and management plans to more aggressively market these products as a system starting in late 2025.

These initiatives, combined with cost-efficiency measures and inventory optimization, aim to improve profitability and drive sustainable growth in 2025 and beyond.

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2024 – A Year in *Social Selling News*

Regulatory shifts, Supreme Court challenges and industry restructuring reshape the direct selling landscape

By SSN Staff

January Headlines

Direct Sellers Embrace Sustainability

Direct selling companies are intensifying their sustainability efforts amid rising consumer demand and regulatory scrutiny of environmental marketing claims. Mary Kay Inc. earned recognition as one of 20 honorees in the 2023 Texan by Nature 20 program for its conservation achievements, including using 100% biodegradable packaging and powering operations with renewable energy. Amway expanded its sustainable agricultural practices, implementing seed banks, soil management techniques, and water optimization across its farmlands. Rodan + Fields progressed toward making 75% of its packaging recyclable or refillable by 2025, while Young Living received Utah's 2023 Green Business Award for environmental initiatives including monarch butterfly conservation and wildlife protection. The Federal Trade Commission continues monitoring environmental marketing claims, with Chair Lina Khan emphasizing truthful advertising. Companies operating in European markets face additional pressure to align with the EU's goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

February Headlines

US Supreme Court Weighs Overturning the Chevron Doctrine

The Supreme Court is reviewing two cases that could overturn the 1984 Chevron doctrine, a legal principle requiring courts to defer to federal agencies' interpretations of ambiguous laws. The cases, *Relentless Inc. v. U.S. Department of Commerce* and *Loper Bright Enterprises Inc. v. Gina Raimondo*, have drawn intense interest from businesses and regulators. Biden administration Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar warns that overturning Chevron would create chaos and displace thousands of decisions, while conservative justices and business groups argue the doctrine gives excessive power to unelected bureaucrats. For the direct selling industry, attorneys say eliminating Chevron could limit the FTC's regulatory authority and require stronger judicial oversight of agency actions. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce argues the doctrine encourages Congress to abdicate its lawmaking role. The Court's decision is expected by July 2024.

US Department of Labor Finalizes Independent Contractor Rule

The U.S. Department of Labor finalized its new independent contractor classification rule in January 2024, set to take effect March 11, 2024. The rule replaces the 2021 "core factors" test with a "totality of circumstances" analysis, weighing six equal factors to determine worker status: profit opportunity, investments, work relationship permanence, employer control, work integration with business, and skill requirements. The Direct Selling Association strongly opposes the change, warning it could create uncertainty for direct sellers and undermine entrepreneurial opportunities. The DSA supports H.R. 5419, which would clearly define direct sellers as independent contractors.

March Headlines

TINA.org Investigation Targets Earnings Claims in the Direct Selling Channel

Consumer advocacy group TruthInAdvertising.org (TINA.org) released findings from a new investigation claiming 98% of examined direct selling companies misrepresent earnings potential. The study analyzed 100 multilevel-marketing firms, including major DSA members like Mary Kay, Herbalife, and Amway. TINA.org challenges all income references, including terms like "extra income" or "supplemental income," arguing they mislead potential distributors. The report criticizes companies for selectively reporting earnings data, citing one example where including inactive distributors dropped average annual earnings from \$1,333 to \$776. Young Living's chief legal officer, Kevin McMurray, disputes TINA.org's stance, defending the use of income-related terms in compensation discussions. The investigation comes as the FTC considers new rules for earnings claims and possible expansion of its Business Opportunity Rule to include direct selling.

CONTINUED ON 14

Neora Fights the FTC & Wins ... with the help of *FieldWatch*

The Compliance Department uses a program named FieldWatch, an Internet-wide monitoring service that constantly searches the Internet, including social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, for terms relating to Neora's products and brand.⁷¹ FieldWatch will identify potential violations for the Compliance Department to review; if a violation is discovered, FieldWatch will send at least two notices to the BP, including by text message, requesting that the violation be removed.⁷² If the BP fails to remove the violative claim after the second notice, the violation is escalated and flagged "Neora Review," which will result in the Compliance Department personally reaching out to the BP and the BP's upline to resolve the violation, and delete the improper claim.⁷³ In addition to FieldWatch, the Compliance Department will do manual Internet searches to try to find and resolve violations.⁷⁴ The record contains numerous examples of the Compliance Department communicating with BPs to address noncompliant posts and representations since at least 2013.⁷⁵ Neora also tracks repeat offenders; although Neora typically gives a BP an opportunity to correct noncompliant behavior, a BP is eligible for suspension or termination for repeated violations of the P&Ps.⁷⁶



NEORA

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION,
Plaintiff,
v.
NEORA LLC, et al.,
Defendants.

Civil Action No. 3:20-cv-01979-M



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NEWS REVIEW, CONTINUED FROM 12

March Headlines

SSN's Q&A with TINA.org's Bonnie Patten

In a Q&A with *Social Selling News*, TruthInAdvertising.org Executive Director Bonnie Patten discusses her organization's new investigation of earnings claims in direct selling. Since TINA's 2017 investigation, which found 97% of companies making inappropriate claims, the industry has seen increased oversight through the creation of the Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council - BBB National Programs (DSSRC) as well as FTC notices. Patten advocates calculating "typical" rather than average income and including all participants in disclosures. She identifies Tristar Enterprises and World Book as fully compliant companies, while praising USANA's inclusion of distributor expenses in calculations. Despite the FTC's Neora case defeat, Patten says she expects stronger pyramid scheme cases moving forward. She criticizes DSSRC's lack of transparency, noting 73% of investigations end in administrative closures without naming companies or specific violations.

April Headlines

FTC Staff Challenges Status Quo on Pyramid Scheme, Income Disclosure Guidelines

The Federal Trade Commission staff issued two significant letters on March 15, 2024, signaling a shift in its approach to regulating direct selling companies. In a letter to the Direct Selling Association, the FTC rescinded its 2004 advisory opinion and rejected the "primary source" test for identifying pyramid schemes. Instead of focusing on whether sales to end-users exceed recruitment-related income, the agency will evaluate compensation structures and emphasis on recruitment. A second letter to the Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council criticized its income disclosure statement guidance, particularly regarding the use of limited data for earnings projections. The positions mirror those rejected in the recent Neora court case, suggesting the FTC intends to maintain its regulatory stance despite the judicial setback. The letters indicate the agency's commitment to reshaping industry standards, even as questions persist about its authority to enforce these interpretations following the Neora decision.

FTC Regains Bipartisanship with New Additions

The U.S. Senate confirmed Andrew N. Ferguson and Melissa Holyoak as Federal Trade Commission commissioners, restoring bipartisan leadership to the agency for the first time since October 2022. Ferguson, former Virginia Solicitor General, and Holyoak, former Utah Solicitor General, both Republicans, join the Democratic majority led by Chair Lina Khan. While the appointments won't change the commission's Democratic control, they're expected to bring new perspectives to FTC policy and enforcement. The Senate also reconfirmed Commissioner Rebecca Kelly Slaughter. Both new commissioners' terms expire in September 2025.

May-June Headlines

FTC Bans Noncompetes in Landmark Move

The Federal Trade Commission enacted a nationwide ban on noncompete agreements on April 23, 2024, in a contentious 3-2 party-line vote. The rule, championed by FTC Chair Lina Khan, aims to boost worker mobility and could increase average annual earnings by \$524. While existing agreements for senior executives earning over \$151,164 will remain valid, all other noncompetes become unenforceable when the rule takes effect. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce immediately filed a lawsuit challenging the FTC's authority to implement the ban. Direct selling industry leaders warn companies to review their noncompete and non-solicitation clauses for compliance.

June-July Headlines

US Supreme Court Overturns Chevron Doctrine, Ushering in New Era of Regulatory Interpretation

The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the 40-year-old Chevron Doctrine on June 28, 2024, in a 6-3 decision that fundamentally changes how courts interpret federal agency regulations. The ruling requires courts to exercise independent judgment rather than defer to agency interpretations of ambiguous laws. The decision particularly impacts the Federal Trade Commission, which must now defend its regulatory interpretations more rigorously in court. While federal agencies can still provide expert guidance, their interpretations no longer receive automatic judicial deference. Legal experts anticipate increased litigation challenging agency regulations and potential shifts toward more state-level enforcement.

August-September Headlines

Direct Selling Firm Settles with FTC, Resumes Operations

United Wealth Education (UWE), formerly Financial Education Services Inc., reached a settlement with the Federal Trade Commission in August 2024, resolving a May 2022 complaint alleging credit repair scams and pyramid scheme operations. The settlement allows UWE and its nonprofit affiliate, Youth Financial Literacy Foundation, to continue operations while adhering to consumer protection laws. CEO Parimal Naik emphasized that the company, which provides financial literacy services through its UCES Protection Plan, remained open throughout the legal process. The case began with an asset freeze in 2022, but a judge later denied the FTC's preliminary injunction, leading to monitored operations and eventual settlement.

New Rule Targets Fake Reviews and Deceptive Testimonials

In response to growing concerns about deceptive online endorsements, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has updated its Endorsement Guides and proposed a rule to ban fake reviews and testimonials. This follows the FTC's October 2022 Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking public input on new regulations. The proposed rule aims to deter fraudulent practices and provide monetary redress to affected consumers. It includes provisions to prohibit fake reviews, repurposing consumer reviews for different products, buying positive or negative reviews, and other deceptive practices. This initiative is part of the FTC's broader efforts to protect consumers from misleading marketing in the digital age.

October Headlines

SELDIA Unveils Manifesto, Outlines Vision for Direct Selling's Future in EU

The European Direct Selling Association (SELDIA) released a five-year manifesto outlining priorities for the EU's 2024-2029 legislative term. The organization, representing 5.3 million European entrepreneurs, focuses on three key areas: harmonizing consumer protection enforcement across EU member states, supporting microentrepreneurs through reduced regulatory burdens, and gaining formal recognition for direct selling business skills. Executive Director Imelda Vital says the manifesto's timing aligns with recent European Parliament elections and upcoming Commission appointments, noting that business competitiveness ranks high on the EU's agenda after security and defense.

BODi Shifts Gears: Fitness Giant Adopts Affiliate Marketing Model

The Beachbody Co. Inc., now called BODi, announced plans to abandon its direct selling model in favor of a single-level affiliate program starting Nov. 1, 2024. The company, which rebranded as BODi in 2023, expects the restructuring to lower its revenue break-even point from \$430 million to \$225 million annually. The transition includes a 33% workforce reduction, projecting \$54 million in yearly savings. BODi reported declining sales with first-half 2024 revenue at \$296.9 million, down from \$339.9 million in 2023. CEO Carl Daikeler says the change aims to simplify operations while maintaining the company's fitness-focused mission.

November Headlines

FTC Finalizes Comprehensive 'Click to Cancel' Rule

The Federal Trade Commission finalized new subscription and "negative option" rules on Oct. 16, 2024, requiring companies to simplify cancellation processes and enhance transparency in recurring billing practices. The "Click to Cancel" provision mandates that ending subscriptions must be as easy as signing up, while companies must secure explicit consent for recurring charges and clearly disclose all material terms. FTC Chair Lina Khan says the rule will end "tricks and traps" in subscription services. The measure passed in a 3-2 party-line vote, with Republican commissioners questioning the FTC's authority to implement such broad regulations. The rules affect various industries, including direct selling companies using auto-ship programs.

Tupperware's New Direction: Lender Agreement Sets Stage for Strategic Transformation

Tupperware Brands Corp. secured a debt restructuring agreement with lenders Stonehill Capital Management and Alden Global Capital, reducing obligations by \$55 million and cutting annual interest payments by \$150 million. The deal, approved by a Delaware bankruptcy court on Oct. 29, includes \$21 million in new financing and extends repayment terms on \$348 million in debt. CEO Laurie Ann Goldman is leading the company's transition to a digital-focused, asset-light model. The restructuring includes closing Tupperware's Orlando, Florida, headquarters, laying off 145 employees, and selling European intellectual property assets. The company aims to focus on core markets in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and select Asian regions.

The Tech Behind Social Selling – Year in Review

Highlights from the *Social Tech Update* columns of 2024

Over the past year, our contributors covered a number of social selling tech strategies making inroads in the channel. For our year-end roundup, we've selected their most important takeaways to help direct sellers have an even stronger 2025. Please visit SocialSellingNews.com for the complete articles.

How Brands Are Using Shoppable Video to Drive Sales

January 2024 Issue

By John Lietsch

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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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). Generally, shorter is better, and short form video has become more popular. 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.

Don't forget, avoid keeping your audience waiting and keep your TTFP (time to first purchase) 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."

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. 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.

How AI Can Change Your Social Selling Strategy for the Better

April 2024 Issue

By Crystal Holtzendorff

Throughout its history, the direct sales industry has gone through a series of changes akin to a roller coaster with many ups and downs. Now, the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation is throwing the industry through yet another loop. Advanced technologies are changing the strategy and methodology of direct sales—and it is helping fuel sales growth. In 2022, the industry grew 8%, accounting for \$40 billion in retail sales, and for the next three years, the industry is expected to grow at a compound growth rate of nearly 6%. Technology is playing a significant role in driving this activity.

AI isn't a new concept, but integrating the technology into existing processes certainly is. Large powerhouse direct sellers are finding challenges pivoting their processes to incorporate AI tools, while smaller companies are struggling to capitalize on technology efforts at scale. Before committing to specific AI tools, it is equally as important to first establish a strategy and set of best practices. Companies of all sizes and market share are investing in AI, and it is important that companies remain flexible and open to innovation.

AI technologies not only open a door for direct sales platforms to better engage with customers and improve customer service but also help to create back-of-house efficiencies that improve productivity and streamline operations, ultimately supporting field leaders and their downlines.

Chat GPT and similar AI-powered chatbots are able to write a variety of content for affiliates, including blog posts and sales scripts. With some experience, affiliates will be able to train the bot to speak in their own voice or the brand's voice to create personalized and targeted messages that resonate with prospective customers.

When adopting new technologies, many direct sales companies believe that they should develop proprietary in-house solutions, but that is generally the wrong approach. An in-house program is expensive and requires a large experienced staff to maintain. It is also difficult to upgrade and maintain as technology advances. Rather, companies should partner with a full-service third-party technology



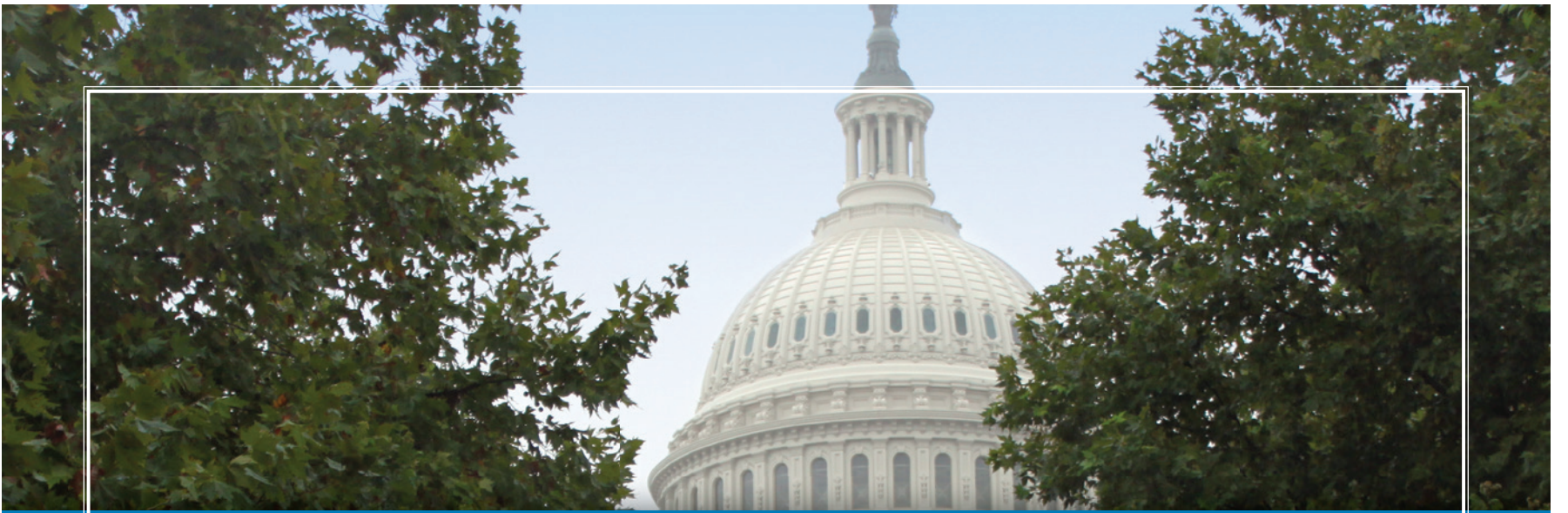
provider that can provide scaled solutions and experienced support staff from Day One. Outsourcing to third-party technology companies also helps direct sales companies avoid the pitfalls of tech debt, or outdated technologies that require a significant investment to either maintain or upgrade. In fact, some chief technology officers have reported that 40% of their IT balance sheet is dedicated to tech debt. Outsourcing to a third-party provider that uses cloud-based tools avoids this problem in the future, creating a technology program that can grow and adapt with the company.

Predictive analytics help affiliates make strategic and targeted decisions that drive more sales activity. Using historical data and machine learning, predictive analytics tools can model future behaviors and predict outcomes. In direct sales, the tool can target users that would best align—or shop with—a brand, and it can even pinpoint the products that will best perform with a specific customer.

Compliance software and digital risk management software are possibly the most important tools for a direct sales company when adopting AI tools. Affiliates are representing the brand when they are selling in public and social spaces, but the corporate office often has limited control to review posts in advance, and the manual monitoring of posts is time-consuming and daunting. When adopting new technologies, many direct sales companies believe that they should develop proprietary in-house solutions, but that is generally the wrong approach. An in-house program is expensive and requires a large experienced staff to maintain. It is also difficult to upgrade and maintain as technology advances. Outsourcing to a third party is a wise choice in this case as well.

By creating a system of best practices, adopting the right tools for both the business and its affiliates, and forming the right technology partnerships, companies are able to gain the biggest benefits from AI today and into the future.

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Leveraging Behavior Modeling and Data Platforms to Drive Business Growth

July – August 2024 Issue By Ben Dixon

What a year 2024 has shown to be. The social selling space and the markets around it have grown noisy with fierce competition for consumers' eyes and attention. Consumers today have more choices than ever, and your ability to remove friction from your sales process for social sellers is more crucial than ever. NaXum's last article in 2022 highlighted the power of deepening your sales pipeline data. Those findings, in summary, found that most companies fall short of their ability to compete in a meaningful way because the technology and systems they use to measure their social selling promoters' behaviors only track the transactional data like sales, enrollments, cancellations, and subscriptions.

However, they fail to measure accurate leading indicators (like webinars viewed, videos viewed, samples consumed, face-to-face meetings) and the predictive actions that created the leading indicators (phone calls made, text messages sent, and social media content shared).

The exciting finding was that if teams expanded their vision to measure their entire sales pipeline—using the newest third-generation



technology in the referral marketing space—from the first interaction with the social seller to the sale, they would see opportunities to remove waste and optimize. From industry benchmarks, even a 20% optimization across the sales process would double an organization's revenue per active social seller.

One of the simplest ways to measure member behavior is to provide technology, such as back office systems, marketing tools, or mobile apps. Regardless of which provider you choose to move forward with, the key is to structure

your systems and tools to “feel like” an experienced (and compliant) social seller sitting next to the newest person on the team, suggesting what to do next. Just as you would traditionally use training videos and compliance software to build relationships with your social sellers and give them a path to run on, the focus in deploying tools that model appropriate behavior is to take what your training programs would have suggested and build tools that “suggest” to social sellers how to post the way you desire.

Now that you've implemented platforms that give you data across your entire sales pipeline, you must create a cadence for taking action based on the data these platforms reveal. We've seen that the cadence with which a company reviews and adjusts its predictive data directly influences its ability to optimize and grow. In summary, each leader has the opportunity to be extraordinary. To win in today's market, the decision comes down to doing the actual work to provide platforms that add real value to social sellers' lives. Companies can then get accurate data on their behaviors and apply what is learned to continue to optimize and remove waste for each stakeholder involved.

Unlocking Algorithm Favorability on Social Media

October 2024 Issue By Scott Kramer

The way everyone interacts on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram is shifting rapidly. Once, social media was a space dominated by content from people we know—our friends, family and connections. Sponsored content also had a significant presence, as brands used paid promotions to reach specific audiences. More and more, social networks are delivering what's known as “suggested” content—posts from users we don't follow or personally know but that the algorithm deems relevant to us based on our preferences, interests, and behaviors.

Historically, social media platforms were about staying connected—hence the term “social network.” Facebook and Instagram prioritized showing you content from your friends, family, and the accounts you follow. However, over time, user behavior has evolved, and these platforms have begun to place more emphasis on showing you posts from accounts you may not know personally but might find interesting. “Algorithm favorability” is essentially about optimizing your content so that the platform's algorithm

considers it worthy of being pushed out—either to your existing followers or to new potential audiences through suggested content. As algorithms become more sophisticated, they rely on a complex set of factors to determine what gets shown, to whom, and how frequently.

To understand the kind of content the algorithm prefers, let's use an analogy from television. Think of a 30-minute TV show. Out of those 30 minutes, roughly 22 are dedicated to programming, while the remaining 8 minutes are reserved for commercials. People tune in for the entertainment, the storylines, and the drama—the 22 minutes of programming. This is the “22/8 Rule” of content creation. Aim for 22 parts of valuable, editorial content for every eight parts of promotional content. By focusing primarily on creating value for your audience, you're more likely to get your posts boosted as suggested content and stay in favor with the algorithm.

Social media platforms are ultimately driven by user engagement. The more

a user engages—by liking, commenting, sharing or simply spending more time on a piece of content—the more favorably the algorithm will treat that post. Editorial content that focuses on entertaining, educating or enlightening naturally invites this kind of engagement because it aligns with what people come to social media for in the first place. Algorithm favorability is not an impossible mystery to solve. It's about offering genuine value, being authentic, and understanding the balance between editorial content and commercial messaging. Embrace the power of editorial and let the algorithm work for you—not against you.



Risks to the Channel – Year in Review

Highlights from the *Risk Roundup* Columns of 2024

The dynamics of a direct selling business model present unique obstacles and a wide array of risks for company leaders to address and overcome. The Risk Roundup contributors of 2024 provided expert advice on overcoming these challenges. We have selected key insights from these thought leaders for this year in review. Please visit SocialSellingNews.com for the complete articles.

FTC Updates Mergers & Acquisitions Guidelines

February 2024 Issue

By Troy Keller, Michael Lindsay and Anthony Badaracco

Mergers and acquisitions is an important growth strategy in many industries, and the direct selling space is no different. Companies in this sector tend to embrace a variety of deal types. The higher-profile deals may involve a major player in the industry acquiring a peer company.

Perhaps the most common strategy is for a company to employ “bolt-on” programs through which it pursues targets that allow it to expand into new geographies or acquire new product lines and technologies. Joint venture structures are also used regularly, particularly for cross-border transactions.

Each of these strategies, however, will require more careful planning going forward as a result of new merger guidelines adopted jointly by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Department of Justice (DOJ) on Dec. 18, 2023. The new guidelines seem to reflect the agencies’ expanded views of merger-related injuries to competition and signal more aggressive merger-control enforcement going forward, with expectations being that many deals will receive a closer look than they might have in the past.

The 2023 Merger Guidelines mark a shift toward more aggressive enforcement through a number of “principles-based” factors. For example, mergers by “already dominant” firms; mergers related to industry “consolidation,” patterns, or strategies of “serial acquisitions”; and mergers that threaten to eliminate “nascent competitive threats” are all principles that the new guidelines espouse. Historically, the agencies looked more closely at horizontal mergers, i.e., transactions involving companies competing in the



same space. Vertical mergers, such as an acquisition of or by a supplier, were also examined, but those purely vertical deals were less likely to be challenged.

The agencies will presume that if a merger results in a firm having a 30% market share or more, it will be deemed to lessen competition, and the agencies will generally infer, absent countervailing evidence, that a merging firm has or is approaching monopoly power if it

has a share greater than 50% in a market for a product, service, or route to market that its rivals use to compete with it. Many product categories that direct selling companies compete in (natural products, cosmetics, housewares, apparel) tend to be broad and deep markets. Perhaps for this reason, most deals in this space historically have not garnered significant regulatory review. However, as markets evolve,

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The Balancing Act of Noncompete Bans

May-June 2024 Issue By Brent Kugler

On April 23, 2024, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) voted 3-2 to issue a Final Rule banning the use of noncompete restrictions to prevent workers from joining competing companies. The FTC's action marks the first time in more than 50 years that the Commission has issued a rule mandating an economy-wide change in how U.S. companies operate. The FTC's ban on non-compete restrictions is the latest complication for direct sales companies seeking to balance incentivizing salesforce loyalty and restrictions on salesforce mobility. Salesforce mobility has long been, and remains, a unique issue (and concern) for direct sales companies. This is because, at one time or another, almost every direct selling company has experienced the disruption of a top leader leaving to join a competing company.

With the continued evolution of the gig economy and influencer/social-media-driven opportunities, there is a clear trend that company and brand loyalty have become less important to today's workers, while flexibility and mobility have become more important. According to a



wide-scale study conducted by consulting firm Deloitte, 46% of polled Generation Z workers and 37% of Millennials said that they worked a second part-time or even full-time job in tandem to their main work. Even if the FTC Final Rule is stayed by a court, five states currently ban the use of noncompete clauses. Moreover, even if a company's noncompete restriction is legally enforceable, it may still be problematic because the noncompete restriction may be viewed as a control factor suggestive of an employment relationship.

The best solution for companies to prevent disruption from a leader's exit is a non-solicitation restriction. Importantly, a non-solicitation policy does not prevent a consultant from working for another company. It does, however, prohibit a consultant from recruiting other consultants to leave for another company. Direct selling companies often "compete" with one another regardless of whether they market similar products or services. Indeed, several courts have recognized that in the multi-level business channel all multilevel-marketing companies compete

with one another to develop and maintain an effective sales force.

Depending on the state, a reasonable post-termination restrictive period is usually between six months and two years. However, in some states post-termination non-solicit restrictions are much more scrutinized. In California, several courts have recently held that post-termination non-solicitation provisions are not enforceable.

Today's workforce is demanding increased mobility. Contractual restrictions on consultant movement or involvement with other companies are increasingly more scrutinized. The FTC has declared war on noncompete restrictions. At the same time, states are rewriting their statutes to narrow the definition of "independent contractor." Given the unique nature and structure of direct selling companies, it is critical to have enforceable contractual provisions to prevent the severe disruption that can occur when a top leader solicits other consultants to leave for another company, while also allowing consultants the freedom to work multiple business opportunities.

FTC UPDATES MERGERS, CONTINUED FROM 20

regulators may define markets more narrowly to cover specific types of natural products. A premerger notification filing is required only for transactions above a certain size (for 2024, the threshold is \$119.5 million). Transactions below that threshold do not require notification to the agencies, and they are therefore less likely to be reviewed and are more likely to be able to proceed without regulatory delay.

As a final note, while there has not been significant consolidation in the direct selling space in recent years, it is conceivable that

evolving market factors—such as slower growth or increasingly more expensive capital—could lead to consolidation in coming months and years.

As markets consolidate, deals become progressively harder to get cleared by regulators, and there can be something of a first-mover advantage. It is therefore prudent to have a clear strategy, coupled with a company's best view of future market developments, in order to prepare contingency plans and be in a position to pivot quickly as markets change and evolve.



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The FTC’s New Business Guidance: Do You Need To Adopt All of It?

September 2024 Issue By John Sanders and Katrina Eash

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has faced several recent setbacks. Last year, in the *Neora* decision, a federal court rejected the FTC’s arguments that Neora was operating an illegal pyramid scheme and was making deceptive income and product claims. Then, in August 2024, a federal court in the *Ryan* decision enjoined nationwide the FTC rule that would ban worker noncompetes.

Despite these setbacks, in April 2024, the FTC issued new business guidance concerning direct selling companies. On June 28, 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Loper Bright* decision overturned *Chevron*, reversing four decades of courts’ deference to the interpretation of ambiguous statutes by federal agencies.

Much of the 2024 Guidance outlines areas the FTC will consider in evaluating whether direct sellers are pyramid schemes or have engaged in deceptive practices under Section 5 of the FTC Act. Some of the FTC’s guidelines are



novel, while others retrench or even retract earlier positions previously taken by the FTC. For years, courts (and the FTC itself) have stated that an MLM is not a pyramid scheme when a seller’s compensation plan is connected with retail sales. Now, the FTC states that “[t]here is no safe harbor under the FTC Act for such a compensation plan.”

Courts have often considered purchases made by participants to be legitimate retail sales to “ultimate users.” The FTC confirmed as such in its 2018 Guidance. In a turn of events, the FTC’s 2024 Guidance now rejects its previous position, explaining that it will instead look to, among other things, whether purchases made by participants

satisfy personal or retail demand and whether companies encourage participants to purchase products for reasons other than “true retail demand.”

The Supreme Court helped to answer that question with its June 2024 *Loper Bright* decision. After four decades of dominance, the *Chevron* doctrine died with *Loper Bright*. The Court reasoned that agencies have no special ability to interpret ambiguous statutes. Instead, courts do. Thus, courts should exercise their own judgment in interpreting ambiguous statutory provisions. *Loper Bright* represents a sea change in how courts view administrative law.

Still, much is uncertain about the standard of review adopted in *Loper Bright*. Lower courts will likely need to flesh out its contours over years—or even decades. *Loper Bright* holds that courts should give “due respect” to agency interpretations when those interpretations are longstanding and well-reasoned.

For direct selling companies assessing whether to adopt positions the FTC takes in the 2024 Guidance, the uncertainties inherent in *Loper Bright* are directly in play and must be carefully considered. For example, the FTC’s new pronouncements that direct sellers should avoid claims about even “modest” or “supplemental” income is far from “longstanding”—indeed, the FTC routinely suggested such language to direct sellers for many years prior to the 2024 Guidance.

Put simply, while the legal landscape appears more favorable to direct selling companies under *Loper Bright*, a post-*Chevron* world raises many new uncertainties for direct selling companies. Those uncertainties necessitate an individualized assessment of each position taken by the FTC in the 2024 Guidance to evaluate the extent to which your company is (or is not) at risk for failure to comply with a position taken in the Guidance.

Social Media Updates Pose New Risks, Opportunities for Direct Selling Companies

November 2024 Issue By Sam Hind

In today’s digital landscape, social media is evolving rapidly, with platforms like Meta introducing a range of new features—AI-powered content, Threads communities, advanced Reels options, and more. These updates bring exciting potential for the direct selling industry, creating fresh ways to engage audiences and build connections. But with these tools also come new risks: The potential for misuse, misinterpretation, and an overwhelming volume of options can quickly lead to unproductive habits. At its heart, direct selling is about relationships,

and while digital tools can enhance these, they can’t replace the need for authentic connection. Leadership plays a pivotal role in steering efforts to keep this balance.

Meta’s recent AI-driven updates, which include comment summaries, content recommendations, and automated tools to enhance post engagement, bring an undeniable appeal. For busy consultants, these features provide a way to stay on top of interactions, reducing the time required to manage engagement. However, an



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SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES, CONTINUED FROM 22

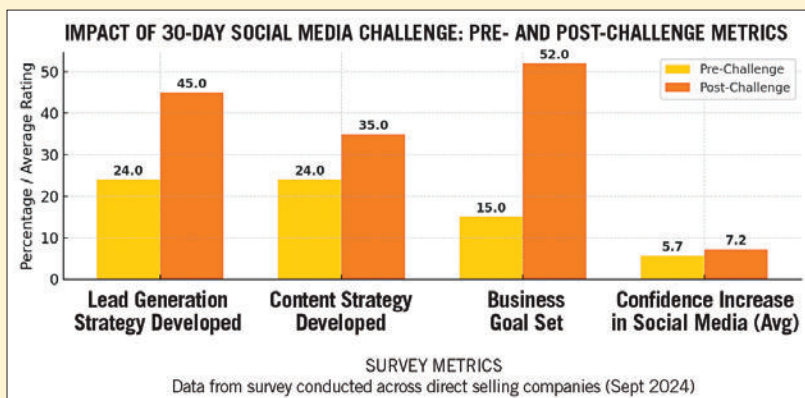
over-reliance on these AI features risks diluting the unique voice and personality that consultants bring to their brand. As AI suggestions dominate, consultants might unknowingly slip into a pattern where they're defaulting to using AI-curated posts rather than thoughtfully engaging their audience.

The introduction of Threads and Messenger Communities by Meta offers an exciting opportunity for consultants to cultivate meaningful relationships with their audiences. These platforms enable the creation of exclusive, tight-knit groups where consultants can connect more personally with customers and prospects. In a world of constant social media updates, one thing remains unchanged: the importance of leadership that provides clear, actionable guidance. Consultants look to their corporate teams for direction, and this support can shape the entire field's momentum.

Without clear leadership, consultants can easily become overwhelmed by the array of tools and trends. When they're unclear on how to achieve results, they're more likely to disengage, leading to a cycle of low morale, inactivity, and frustration. With so many new tools at their fingertips, consultants face the risk of burnout from "always-on" marketing. Here, too, leadership has an essential role to play. By advocating for structured, balanced social media habits, corporate teams can protect consultants from burnout, empowering them to engage consistently without compromising their personal lives.

As social media platforms continue to evolve, the direct selling industry stands at a crossroads: Will we embrace these tools as a means to support genuine connections or risk losing the trust and authenticity that define us? With thoughtful leadership, consultants can learn to wield these tools with finesse, fostering relationships that resonate.

At its heart, direct selling is about relationships, and while digital tools can enhance these, they can't replace the need for authentic connection.



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Women CEOs in the Channel

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- Kendra Brassfield, NeoLife International
- Janine Belmont, Yanbal
- Érika Herrero Bettarel, Belcorp
- Sunny Beutler, Sunrider
- Asma Ishaq, Modere
- Mary Young, Young Living
- Jill Blashack Strahan, Tastefully Simple
- Amelia Warren, Epicure
- Malou Caluza, QNet
- Joni Rogers-Kante, SeneGence
- Nancy Bogart, Jordan Essentials
- Heidi Leist, Lemongrass Spa
- Sharron Walsh, Isagenix International
- Heidi Thompson, Scentsy
- Camelle Kent, Thirty-One Gifts
- Jeannie Lorin, Beauty Society
- Chrissy Weems, Think Goodness Brand Collective
- Gretchen Huijskens, Trades of Hope
- Jessica Honegger, Noonday Collection
- Deborah K. Heisz, Neora
- Mindy Lin, Damsel in Defense
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- Lori Bush, Solvasa
- Aspen Emery, Bravenly
- Kristina Kajic, Bella Grace Global
- Heather Howard, Integrous Wellness

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Year-End Review

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- Rallyware
- Hussle Technology
- Krato
- NOW Tech
- BlooKanoo
- Cheddar Up
- GenieChat
- Penny AI

Executive Search Companies

- Direct Sales Experts Inc.
- Serendipity Executive Search
- Hanna Shea Executive Search
- C3 Executive Search
- Pam Anthony Recruitment

Product Manufacturing Companies

- Factory6 Inc.
- Intermountain Nutrition
- Cosmo International Fragrances
- Concept Laboratories
- Gemini Pharmaceuticals
- MANA Products
- Progressive Laboratories
- Valentine Enterprises, Inc.
- Wixon Inc.

Commission Payment Companies

- Payquicker
- Global Payroll Gateway
- Hyperwallet
- i-payout
- Propay

Merchant Processing Companies

- Nexio/CMS
- Metrics Global
- ACI Worldwide
- Global Payroll Gateway
- MassPay
- Nuvei
- Paymenture
- Propay

People on the Move



CLAYTON JONES, 4LIFE

4Life Research has hired **Clayton Jones** as chief legal officer (CLO). Jones has spent over 15 years in wellness and direct selling. He most recently served as CLO of **Helo Corp.** He had also served 12 years at **Nu Skin**. In this new position, Jones will oversee legal matters, Affiliate compliance and product registration.



KETCH SU, PARTNER.CO

Partner.Co has promoted **Ketch Su** to general manager of Taiwan in addition to his current role as Asia regional sales director. Su will work to establish a robust sales strategy to increase market share across Asia. He had previously been general manager of Taiwan for **Kyani**, **Rain International**, **Genesis Pure** and others.



LAURENT BILLION, LIMELIFE

LimeLife by Alcone has named **Laurent Billion** as CEO. Billion has worked with LimeLife since L'OCCITANE Group increased ownership in 2017. He went on to guide in several capacities, such as chief operations officer and chairman. Now, company co-founders have transferred all ownership to L'OCCITANE Group.



STEVEN FASCHING, NATURE'S SUNSHINE

Steven Fasching has joined the **Nature's Sunshine** board of directors. Fasching brings over 30 years of experience leading financial and strategic planning. He has been chief financial officer of **Deckers Brands** since June 2018, where he started in 2011. Before that he worked in finance for **Princess Cruises** for 20 years.



JAROM WEBB, ASEA

ASEA has appointed **Jarom Webb** to CEO. Webb joined ASEA in 2009 as a founding executive and had also served as president (2012-2021) and vice chairman of the board (2021-2024). He succeeds **Scott Aldred**, who is retiring after being with the company for 13 years and serving as CEO since 2023.



KELLY NEWCOMER, NORWEX

Norwex has hired **Kelly Newcomer** as chief sales officer. With over 20 years in business development, operations, and field development within the purpose-led DTC category, Newcomer has worked with direct sellers such as **Stella & Dot**, **Avon**, and **Arbonne**. She was most recently CSO of **OHEHOPE Wine**.



ROBERT TOTH, MANNATECH

Mannatech Inc. has appointed **Robert Toth** as vice chairman of its board of directors. He had previously served on the board between March 2008 and May 2023. Toth has more than 40 years' direct selling experience, having worked with **Avon** for nearly 30 and consulted for the industry as well.



RICHARD HIGBEE, AMARE GLOBAL

Richard Higbee has rejoined **Amare Global** as general manager of the Americas. With over 30 years' experience in direct selling, Higbee was president of sales and a founding executive of the company in 2017. Now he will oversee strategy to advance commercial operations as well as lead education, sales programming and communications.



SETH NIEDERHAUSER, PARTNER.CO

Seth Niederhauser has joined **Partner.Co** as senior director of human resources. Niederhauser brings more than 10 years of experience in HR leadership roles to his new position with a focus on driving competitive advantages and stability in high-growth companies. He will oversee HR strategy, employment law compliance, performance management and more.



CHRIS BECK, AMARE GLOBAL

Amare Global has hired **Chris Beck** as chief information officer. Beck brings more than 25 years of global IT leadership experience to the company and will lead IT business growth strategies and enterprise-level system improvements. He previously served as chief of IT for **Modere** and led IT for **Harry's**, **Coach** and others.

People on the Move



FELICITY SISSENER, AMARE GLOBAL

Amare Global has promoted **Felicity Sissener** to chief marketing officer. Most recently chief digital officer since January, Sissener has more than 20 years of experience working with omnichannel retail brands such as Cartier, David Yurman, and IPPOLITA. She will now guide Amare Global's digital-first transformation and global omnichannel strategies.



BEATRICE NELSON-BEER, SELDIA

Beatrice Nelson-Beer has been appointed as chairperson of **Seldia, the European Direct Selling Association**. Nelson-Beer, chief legal officer of **Lifepius**, will take on the role for a second term. As chairperson, Nelson-Beer will look to strengthen Seldia's advocacy efforts, promote sustainability and ethical practices in the industry, and facilitate collaboration.



ADAM BROTMAN, CABI

Adam Brotman has joined **Cabi's** board of directors. After starting his career as an attorney in corporate and business law, Brotman has served in leadership roles focused on digital experiences and AI for nearly 30 years. He has worked at companies such as Starbucks, J.Crew, and Brightloom and is co-founder of Forum3.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS, SELDIA

Seldia's newly elected Board of Directors are: **Frédéric Billon**, vice-chairperson (France DSA); **Soledad Hijano**, treasurer (Spain DSA); **Giuliano Sciortino** (Italy DSA); **Krister Fraser** (Sweden DSA); **Tomasz Muras** (Poland DSA); **Gintautas Zaleckas** (Baltics DSA); **Alessandro Tschirkov** (**Herbalife Nutrition**); **Ewa Kudlinska-Pyrz** (**Mary Kay**); and **Pontus Andreasson** (**Oriflame**).



BETH KINNEBERG, CABI

Cabi has added **Beth Kinneberg** to its board of directors. Kinneberg has more than 20 years of experience in retail apparel merchandising, including 12 years with Target. She is currently VP of merchandising, women's apparel and design partnerships for Décor Apparel. She will focus on supporting Cabi in delivering innovative product offerings.

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WHAT'S NEW ▶▶

Natura Plans to Bring Franchise Business Model to Mexico

The Brazilian sustainable beauty brand **Natura** will transition away from the direct selling model in Mexico in 2025 and will implement a franchise business model in the country. The company wishes to tailor the franchise format to fit local preferences and will adapt its operations and layout of current stores to fit the market. The model will also follow similar structures in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru. According to the company's general manager in Mexico, Jans Werner, "The first franchises will be led by our current leaders. They will be the pioneers who will have the opportunity to start the first franchises." To lead the initial Natura franchises, these 30 current brand leaders will run the stores with plans for a measured expansion over time. The Mexican franchise sector shows continued growth, and the Mexican Franchise Association anticipates it will add 5% to the country's GDP in 2024.

Stemtech to Merge with VIÁGO, Proposes RTO of Eevia Health

Stemtech Corp., the stem cell nutrition company, and **Seacret Direct LLC** (dba **VIÁGO**), a wellness and travel brand, have reached an agreement to merge their businesses. The goal of the move is to drive growth and enhance shareholder value. Stemtech and VIÁGO will each keep their individual sales channels to ensure seamless continuity for consumers. Stemtech CEO and Chairman Charles S. Arnold will continue as chairman of the holding company, and VIÁGO CEO Izhak Ben Shabat will become CEO of the company. Following this news, Stemtech also announced a proposal for a Reverse Takeover (RTO) of **Eevia Health Plc**, a Finnish producer of bioactive organic plant extracts and nutraceuticals, which is listed on the Swedish Spotlight Stock Market. The strategic RTO would create "a vertically integrated health, wellness, and lifestyle entity that manufactures its own products." Eevia will acquire Stemtech, and VIÁGO once that merger is complete, and issue new shares with Stemtech then owning approximately 85% of Eevia. The remaining 15% will stay in the hands of existing shareholders.

BBB National Programs Appoints Leadership for Self-Regulation Initiatives

BBB National Programs has made two leadership appointments to reinforce industry self-regulation efforts. Howard Smith has been promoted within the organization to executive director of its 501(c)(3) charitable foundation, the Center for Industry Self-Regulation (CISR), as well as vice president of BBB National Programs. Nancy M. Burke has been hired as vice president, national partners and business development, BBB National Programs. Smith, who has been with the organization since 2019, most recently served as deputy director of the Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council (DSSRC) and led RMAI Services. He will head industry self-regulation programs across various industries, spearhead academic research and education, and raise public awareness about self-regulation. Burke has over 20 years' experience in industry self-regulation, having served as vice president of membership at the Direct Selling Association (DSA). She was also influential in launching the DSSRC in 2019. In her role, she will work to engage the organization's National Partner community as well as oversee strategic new business development and recruitment efforts.

Tupperware to End Operations in Vietnam

Tupperware has announced it will cease operations in Vietnam at the end of 2024. The company, which launched in the market in June 2013, had opened its first retail store 11 years ago in 2016. Its store count had grown to almost 200 stores across the country. In a statement on social media, Trang Do, CEO of Tupperware Vietnam, shared "Thank you for making Tupperware a trusted name in your homes and for helping us create such a remarkable story in Vietnam." The closure comes after Tupperware Brands had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in September. The company had experienced a decline in demand and increased debt over the years. A group of lenders purchased Tupperware in October for \$23.5 million in cash as well as \$63 million in debt forgiveness. It also plans to close its last U.S. factory in Orlando, Florida, by January 2025, which will lay off 148 employees.

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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