



U.S. CONSUMER TRENDS IMPACTING THE DIRECT SELLING INDUSTRY



An analysis from GfK Consumer Life (Roper Reports®)

Prepared for the Direct Selling Association | July 2016

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Executive summary

Future of Shopping



Future of Shopping: Need to Know

With an increasing pace of life and shrinking patience, consumers have heightened expectations of the shopping process. Direct Selling companies must continuously work to deliver on a number of trends.



In an instant | speed and accessibility matter, every aspect of the shopping experience will need to be faster and made available 24/7. While some Direct Selling companies are at a speed disadvantage of mainstream retailers, look for opportunities to partner with players who can deliver speed/accessibility/convenience (Task Rabbit, Shyp, etc).



Shopping made simple | consumers first equate innovation with making things easier, Direct Selling companies need to remove steps in the shopping (one click check-outs, emoji ordering) and purchasing (mobile wallet, biometrics) processes. In addition, communication has to be clear and more concise (icons, visual cues).



Anticipated retail | with greater choice but less time, consumers need do-it-for-me, predictive solutions. The Direct Selling industry needs to leverage smart and cognitive technologies to better empower your sales force to provide anticipatory solutions and services.



Tech enabled intimacy | digital isolation has led to a yearning for more intimate and high-touch shopping interactions. Direct Selling companies are well positioned to foster intimacy but how can technology further amplify your consumer connections (building passionate virtual tribes, harnessing virtual reality, partnering with sharing economy business models).



Executive summary

Workforce Trends



Workforce Trends: Need to Know

With a new generation of employees, technology that constantly connects us and evolving business models, entrepreneurship is rising and work is being redefined.



Enriched expectations | younger employees are placing greater importance on careers with meaning over money. Direct Selling companies need to appeal to a more idealistic workforce, leveraging values such as helpfulness, open-mindedness, learning and knowledge. Keeping workers engaged and feeling a sense of purpose will be essential.



Seeking separation | technology has made it more difficult to separate work from leisure. Employees today are more stressed than ever, they need creative solutions to help them separate their work from their personal time (incentives/rewards to take time off, true off the grid hours, colleague coverage plans).



Peer to peer career | new business models leveraging peer connections are driving a renewed interest in entrepreneurship. The majority of young Americans today would like to start their own business, they are looking for control, flexibility and to follow their passion. How can the Direct Selling industry broaden its opportunity to tap into this wave of entrepreneurship (partnerships with P2P companies, unique Boomer second-career propositions, greater creative license among the salesforce, tailored opportunities for single mothers)?



Executive summary

Communications



Communications: Need to Know

Consumers are overwhelmed with information, today effective communications needs to be short, visual, relatable and ideally memorable and emotional.



Micro-engagement | communications must be tailored to consumers' waning attention spans and quick decision-making. Direct Selling companies need to make communications succinct and as memorable as it can be (leverage visual cues where possible). In addition, a consistent brand message should be seamless across multiple screens and channels.



Constant conversations | new communications opportunities have arisen from perpetual and real-time sharing. The Direct Selling industry should consider how best to leverage real-time broadcasting – how can you better affect consumers in the midst of product decision making? Direct Selling companies also have an opportunity to use social and digital tools to enable better collaboration or learning/training



Emotional influence | communicating directly with consumers requires relatability, authenticity, and an emotional connection. Younger consumers are more influenced by relatable social media stars rather than traditional celebrities, Direct Selling companies should consider how to better harness the power of their influence (or create their own social media influencers). Relatable also means more emotional, the Direct Selling industry needs to show how they can be more empathetic or provide unique sensibilities to both consultants and consumers.



Executive summary

Innovation



Innovation: Need to Know

In a rapidly changing marketplace, companies are expected to raise their own bar with a consistent flow of new products, packaging and communications.



Lessen my stress | with stress levels at an all-time high, Americans need mental health solutions. There is an opportunity for Direct Selling companies to provide both product solutions and workforce support, particularly important are consumers' rising needs for sleep, destress and focus.



Conscious consumption | increasingly, building brand trust includes supporting consumer social and environmental ideals, beliefs and values. Direct Selling companies have an opportunity to move beyond just CSR and embrace the values and initiatives they endorse as a part of their internal culture and everyday practices. Consumers are also looking for ways to contribute, consider ways to foster greater consumer social good participation.



Safeguard me | consumers are willing to pay a premium for peace of mind, they seek products and services that will help safeguard themselves and their families. There are innovation opportunities to provide greater consumer guardrails but also cast a wider safety net to consider protection needs surrounding where and how consumers use your products.



Amplify my experience | consumers will continue to push the limits with their desire for novel, stimulating and enriching products and services. In order to remain relevant, Direct Selling companies must strive to exceed consumer expectations, from the product and packaging to communications and sales force training.



Executive summary

Demographic trends



Demographic trends: Need to Know

The American consumer landscape is transitioning in terms of our average age, ethnic diversity, where we live, and our household/family composition.



Aging population | a growing older sector of the American population creates new product and workforce innovation needs. As this cohort represents a large percentage of the population, Direct Selling companies shouldn't ignore the possibility of providing second career opportunities or new product solutions for those wanting to live younger longer.



Urbanization | the explosion of urban areas across the U.S. will drive new product and service needs. Urban consumers live an accelerated lifestyle, they have a greater desire for convenience, speed & mobility. Direct Selling companies must ensure they are prepared with an urban strategy.



Multi-culturalism | as ethnic minorities slowly become the majority and cultures blend, the rules of entrepreneurship and marketing change. Multi-cultural consumers present a huge opportunity for Direct Selling companies, as they are most receptive to direct selling opportunities, seek flexibility and desire more intimate/nuanced communications.



Changing households | the proliferation of one-person households and multi-generational homes is adding more niche markets to target. The Direct Selling industry will need to meet the needs of multiple preferences in one home or product size for solo living.



Redefining families | with households taking numerous new shapes, brands and marketers have to evaluate new tactics to reach them. From more single parents needing self-care solutions or marketing portraying more diverse and inclusive family types, the Direct Selling industry must keep current with the ever-changing nuances of the American consumer.

