More than 18 million Americans are involved in direct selling to make a few extra dollars, to build a business, or to buy products at a discount. That's because direct selling offers a low-risk way to participate in a fast-growing part of the economy.

Direct selling remains a relationship business. Some of those relationships still happen face-to-face; however, direct selling has changed along with the rest of the economy. Individuals are building relationships through social media, using e-commerce sites to complete transactions, and sometimes functioning as mobile “show rooms” for emerging product lines. The appeal of direct selling is often the ability to experience the product first hand and build a relationship with a sales person who uses the product themselves. Direct selling fills in an important gap in the emerging online economy.

For most Americans involved in direct selling, the revenue they earn is not their primary income but the way to a family vacation, or presents for the holidays, or just a little extra spending money. In fact, most direct sellers only work part time in direct selling, and many have other jobs.

Direct sellers are your neighbors, your friends, and your family—and whether they work a few hours a week or full-time, they are American entrepreneurs in the truest sense of the word.

The information contained herein gives you a visual snapshot of direct selling in America. We hope you’ll take a couple minutes to better understand what direct selling is all about.

Direct Selling Is Part of the Fabric of America

The number of people involved in direct selling in the U.S. exceeds the population of each state in the U.S. with the exception of the four largest.

About 1 in 7 U.S. Households Are Involved in Direct Selling


U.S. Census (https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/popest/state-total.html)
Direct Sellers Value Opportunity

Direct Selling is the Most Accessible Path to American Entrepreneurship

Direct Sellers are Empowered

Direct Selling Is Popular by Any Measure

Long-term Supplemental Income

$62%

Provides Flexibility

65%

Products at a Discount

62%

Source: DSA 2014 National Salesforce Study

Direct Selling Is the Most Accessible Path to American Entrepreneurship

Direct Selling Is Accessible With a Low Cost-of-Entry

Direct Selling Is Low Risk

Refund Percentage If You Decide to Stop

$106.40

$1,000-$3,000

$100,000+

90%

0%

0%

Direct Sellers

Realtor

Chain Restaurant Franchise

Source: DSA Code of Ethics

*2013 DSA Strategy Survey

**Source: Conservative estimate based on cost of courses needed to obtain real estate license, pay for initial materials, MLS system costs, REALTOR membership. Costs vary by state.

***Conservative estimate. Many large chain restaurants have start up costs in excess of $1 million—though some are less.

Direct Selling provides Flexibility

Products at a Discount

Long-term Supplemental Income

Source: DSA 2014 National Salesforce Study

Direct Selling Is Popular by Any Measure

78% Met or exceeded expectations

82% Excellent/good

78% Would recommend

Source: DSA 2014 National Salesforce Study

Direct Selling is Popular by Any Measure

78% Would recommend

Source: DSA 2014 National Salesforce Study

Direct Sellers are Empowered

Direct Sellers Are More Affluent Than the Average American

Percentage of Household Incomes Greater than $50K

All Americans: 52%

Direct Sellers: 58%

Source: U.S. Census

2014 DSA National Salesforce Study

Direct Sellers Are Better Educated Than the Average American

College Graduates

High School Graduates

Direct Sellers

U.S. Average

Source: U.S. Census

Source: DSA 2014 National Salesforce Study

National Center for Education Statistics

Source: DSA Code of Ethics

*2013 DSA Sales Strategy Survey

**Source: Conservative estimate based on cost of courses needed to obtain real estate license, pay for initial materials, MLS system costs, REALTOR membership. Costs vary by state.

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