



Annette Estes
Columnist

Professional Development

Success at network marketing

Have you ever said you'd never do something and then did it? For years, I said I would never, ever, ever do network (or multi-level) marketing. I turned down a number of people who tried to recruit me to sell their products or services. And now, here I am, an Independent Marketing Representative for Champion Communications.

The reason I joined Champion is because Leighton Cabbage is the founder of the company and I wanted to align myself with successful, inspired people like him and his partners. Plus, I was very excited about the company's VoIP telephone service. That's all I'm going to say about Champion, lest you think this is a commercial.

I've learned a lot about network marketing in the past year, which has also helped me in marketing my coaching practice. Since multi-level marketing is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, I imagine many of you are already in network marketing or are contemplating doing so. So I'd like to share some of the best advice I've been given on how to be successful at it.

I interviewed two men who have become highly successful with Champion, as they were in their former careers, to get tips from them on how to succeed in this type of work in which you're in business *for* yourself, but not *by* yourself.

Dr. Hank Aldredge was a practicing psychologist when he got into his first MLM thirty years ago and built his business to garner a six-figure income.

Mike Sherman (Champion's most successful IMR to date) has been in sales and marketing all his adult life. Champion is his first venture into network marketing.

Both of them told me that Harvard and other universities now teach courses in network marketing. Sherman says many large companies, such as AT&T and Microsoft, use network marketing in some way, shape, or form, because it's the fastest way to get a product to market.

Here are some of the things they told me (in separate interviews) about how to be successful in this type of business.

Do your homework before choosing an MLM. Find out about the integrity of the company and its leaders. Choose one with a product that's in demand and is being introduced at the right time. You want to get in at the beginning of a trend that's going upward.

Set concrete goals. Know what you're working for and towards. Have a dream. If not, as the song goes, "how ya gonna make a dream come true?" Dr. Adlredge says he and his wife would go sit in the car of their dreams when they began their MLM business. They looked at houses, boats, etc. Visualize your desires and combine that with hard work if you want to be successful. Of course, goals can always be reset.

Have a strong commitment to succeed. Sherman likes to point out that it's called netWORK marketing. He says some people get into an MLM hoping to make a quick buck or succeed without working at it. It doesn't work that way. Make a commitment to consistency; commit and persevere. Decide how much time each day you'll devote to your business and do it – every day. Your conviction will be noticeable and will make others more inclined to do business with you.

Be coachable, willing to learn. Dr. Aldredge says if you think you know everything about sales and marketing, you'll fail. Listen to your sponsor and be willing to learn all you can about what to offer people, how to approach them, and how to run your business.

Be a good teacher. The next step is to help those whom you've recruited into the business learn what you've learned. The key to success in network marketing is duplicating yourself.

Desire to serve others. This includes those in your down line and your potential customers. Realize your product and service can help others in some way. It may help someone who hates his job go into business for himself, succeed, and be happy. Your product may save people money, improve their health, beautify their surroundings, and provide many other benefits essential to living a better life. Don't fret over those who don't want or need what you offer. Just smile and move on.

I just noticed I'm about to reach my word limit and I have much more advice from these two gentlemen who graciously agreed to help me with this column. The main thing I've noticed about the network marketers I associate with is their willingness to help others.

So, I'll stop here and continue with more tips next time.

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