

Quick and Concise Guide To Choosing Your Opportunity

There are hundreds of direct sales companies to choose from and new ones start up all the time. Use this guide to help you choose the right opportunity for you.

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Your First Tip Is:

Be Smart! Use your common sense and don't let anyone talk you into anything you aren't sure you want to do.

Always keep in mind..... If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Don't be lured into shady opportunities. Always do your research by asking lots of questions, searching on Google, checking for complaints with the Better Business Bureau, and talking with direct sales consultants in a variety of fields.

By the time you've completed the steps in this guide, you'll be able to find an opportunity that suits your personality and interests. Plus, we'll arm you with the knowledge you need to help spot a scam a mile away.

Here's One of the Most Important Lessons

When it comes to choosing an opportunity, don't let money be the deciding factor in what you choose to do.

Many opportunities advertise the outrageous sums you'll be able to make and really don't even tell you about their products. This is NOT the way to choose what you'll be doing for the rest of your life.

The way to really start earning in direct sales is to gather **customers** because customers **buy** stuff. Focusing only on the opportunity usually leaves you with a bunch of people just trying to make it with direct sales who aren't selling anything.

First, choose and define your expertise. Your success depends on knowing yourself and finding a business that matches your strengths and passions. By finding that match and building and sharing your expertise you will begin to attract customers to you.

Most people aren't really shopping for products or a business opportunity. They are looking for solutions to problems. By sharing your expertise in how to solve those problems your business will thrive.

The classic example is this.... *people don't want a drill, they want a hole*. If you are identified as the expert in holes, people will come to you for advice and end up buying a drill from you.

Look for companies that offer products that match your expertise, passions, and strengths and the sales and profits will follow.

Avoid the Scams

As you begin looking around for a business opportunity you will come across information on Internet scams. For every legitimate business opportunity there are also scams out there.

If a business opportunity offers high rewards fast and for little work be cautious. Remember the caveat we stated in the beginning... If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

While most direct sales company require the purchase of a starter kit, watch out for companies that ask for a large initial investment without providing products and business materials in return. (Find more about start up costs in the section "What About the Money?")

The FTC has put together a website to help you identify and avoid schemes and illegal scams: <http://www.ftc.gov/bizopps/>

Do your homework and check out the opportunity well before joining. Talk to other members and former members. Search online for information about the company. Many direct sales companies are members of the [Direct Selling Association](#) and others may be listed with the Better Business Bureau.

Above all, listen to your instincts. If it doesn't really seem like a good idea, step away. There are plenty of legitimate opportunities out there waiting for you.

I Didn't Make Anything...Must Be a Scam

While you need consider the facts you uncover during your research, you also have to keep in mind that some people will scream scam just because they aren't earning money. Failure to profit doesn't necessarily mean it actually is a scam.

Building a profitable business takes work and time. There are many people out there who think otherwise and are expecting to simply join a business opportunity, make a few calls and watch the money roll in. When that doesn't come true they are quick to call it a scam.

Just as is true with a traditional brick and mortar business, you have to invest a fair amount of time and work to turn your business opportunity into a profitable business.

The company you are working with should provide you with some training material. Start there and apply what you are learning. Work on building your business a little each day and you will start seeing success and money will start coming in. It may not be as fast as you'd like, but it will come.

Never stop learning more both about your business opportunity and marketing it. You can find plenty of information about direct marketing both online and in brand. Until you can find out who to trust to provide you with good, valid information, take everything you hear and read

with a grain of salt. At the same time, you want to apply what you learn (that seems like a good idea and reasonable) as you go along.

What's Your Personality?

Choosing a business opportunity that will work well for you has a lot to do with your personality and what you like and don't like to do. Yes, you should represent a company whose products match your expertise and passion, but there's more you should consider.

For example, how do you like to work? Do you prefer to work alone, or have a team around you to exchange ideas with and get support from? If a team is important to you, make sure the business opportunity you are considering joining has a strong team in your area. You also want to make sure that you get along well with your potential upline and team leader.

How do you see yourself spending your days working the business? Do you prefer to go out there and meet new people and introduce them to your products and business opportunity? Or would you rather sit in front of your computer and work your business online? If so, you should pay close attention to what the company you are considering has to say about websites and marketing online. Most provide you with a website where you can send customers to order. Will they allow to make changes to their site, or let you set up your own? If you plan on doing business online, you will want to establish your own online presence with a website or blog (separate from the one the company may provide). Be sure to question and understand the company's Internet policy to determine whether it's compatible with your plans. Some companies are very strict when it comes to marketing online, so do your research before you join if this is important to you.

Another aspect to consider is how you prefer to learn and work. Would you rather be able to be creative and try your own strategies and ideas, or do you prefer to have your steps laid out for you.

Take some time to think about all this and come up with a rough idea of what your ideal company looks like. Then it's time to compare the business opportunities out there that you are considering against it and see how they measure up.

If you are having trouble evaluating your personality or you still aren't sure that direct sales suits you, here's another resource. Take the *PerfectBizFinder Entrepreneur Survey* to receive your customized report identifying your entrepreneurial strengths.

Visit ChooseYourOpportunity.com/perfectbiz.html for the survey.

What's Out There?

Now that you have a pretty good idea of what to look for in a business opportunity that's just right for you, it's time to begin the search. Use Worksheet 2 or your own note-taking system to keep track of the companies that interest you.

One of the best ways to get a good overview of many of the opportunities out there is to browse through direct sales listings and directories such as:

DirectSalesDirectories.com

or SearchForDirectSales.com

and

InternetBasedMoms.com Direct Sales Directory

Not only will you be able to find out about a lot of different opportunities at once, but you can also compare them side by side and get some objective information on each of them.

You can also do a Google search by typing in one of your interests and either "Direct Sales" or "Business Opportunity". You should get a pretty decent list that way.

Another way is to go to message boards that are frequented by moms in direct sales and look at the signature files of the posters. Many of them are promoting a business opportunity and you can start seeing what's out there. Here are a few:

SelfStartersWeeklyTips.com/forum

InternetBasedMoms.com/bb

WAHM.com/forum

Don't jump on the latest opportunity! Take your time. Talk to some friends and acquaintances that are involved in a direct sales company. Not only can you learn about their particular business opportunity, but they may also be able to introduce you to people involved in other opportunities.

The Selection Process

First you'll probably zero in on a particular industry that interests you, such as jewelry or gourmet food. Next, start narrowing down your company choices. Identify your top three or four companies for further research and begin talking to potential sponsors for each.

Initially, until you've decided on a company, you can focus your sponsor interviews on the company and products. Once you've decided on a company you will be more focused on choosing the best sponsor for your needs.

Try out one or two products from each company. At this stage of the process you'll probably want to ask for product samples, but later on, before you make your final decision, it's a good

idea to order from a company to get an idea about customer service, packaging, and delivery time.

Worksheet 1 contains a list of questions you can ask potential sponsors. Add your own questions about other factors that are important to you.

When you first talk to potential sponsors, tell them that you're still considering other companies and that you will be interviewing other potential sponsors within the same company.

Look for a sponsor who shares your goals and who seems to have a leadership style that's compatible with your needs. You want a sponsor who can lead by example, who has developed a marketing strategy that can help you reach your goals, and who can provide the level of support you need.

Beware of the Upline Posers

The person that recruits you and the upline behind them play very important roles in your training and ongoing support.

The upline includes is the person that signs you up (your recruiter or sponsor), as well as the person that signed her up and so forth up the line. The most important person for you is your sponsor. She or he can get you off to a good start and provide you will all the training you need to make your business successful. The easiest way to make sure this will happen is to sign up with someone that's already successful in this business.

Obviously sponsors are aware of this fact and will do what they can to make you believe they are doing well with the business opportunity. Unfortunately many of them aren't doing nearly as well as you think they might and finding out what kind of profit someone is making can be difficult. For many, income is one of those personal facts that we don't like to share, making it hard to determine whether a potential sponsor is making money. If a potential sponsor makes any income claims you have every right to ask for proof. If they don't want to provide it, move on. But in most cases potential sponsors aren't making income claims and you will have to ask some pointed questions that will at least provide some indication. For example, ask about average party sales or average monthly sales volume for both the individual and the company as a whole. Or ask about her income goals and when she expects to reach them. Sometimes just the manner in which these types of questions are handled is as informative than the answers themselves.

What Kind of Support Do You Get?

Carefully consider the level of support you will receive from your sponsor and the company. It is a very important factor in your success. When you first get started, you will have a lot of questions and need some training to get going. What initial training does the company provide? Are there manuals, courses, or an online training site? Make sure the training materials provided suit your needs.

- What about questions as you go along?
- Will your sponsor be available to answer questions?
- Ask if there are weekly or monthly meetings for reps in the area or online. Meeting with other reps, exchanging ideas and getting ongoing training can be a big motivator to keep you building your business.
- Ask the person recruiting you about her training experience and see if she will let you take a look at her training materials.
- Consider your own learning style. If you learn best by someone telling you how to do something, and the company hands out a big training manual, will your sponsor be willing to go through the material with you?

In other words, make sure you can make the training material work for you.

What About the Money?

As you compare compensation packages and start-up costs keep some things in mind.

When looking at compensation plans, don't just look at the commission percentage. Compare earnings potential. One company might pay 50% but the cost of a 3-month supply may be just \$45. Another company may be paying 35% commission on a product that costs \$120 every 3 months. Of course if the \$120 is just an inflated price that will be difficult to sell it's probably not the best choice.

Look for both competitive product prices and competitive commissions percentages.

One question we are asked all the time is this: "How much should I pay to get started?"

With all these work at home scams out there that take your money and give you nothing in return, people are worried about falling into the same trap with a direct sales company. If you do your homework that won't happen, so let's take a look at how much you should pay.

Joining, or better, getting started in direct sales usually involves spending some money. The startup cost can range from as little as \$10 to several hundred dollars. What you should pay depends on what is included with your fee. Some companies only include some training materials, while others ship you an entire kit of products for you to try and to take to sales parties. In those cases you are usually getting more retail value than what you are paying to join.

If you are getting a good kit, some training materials and maybe even some promotional materials (like order forms or catalogs), it is perfectly fine to spend several hundred dollars. After all, this is a business and starting from scratch on your own could be a much more costly option. And don't automatically eliminate a company whose start-up costs are out of your reach. Some companies offer a way to earn your start up kit and many companies offer starter specials several times a year.

New or Established Company?

Of course there are no guarantees, but an established company may be less likely to close its doors than a newer, unproven company. But with a newer company you may have more opportunity for team building and growth. Weigh the risks and benefits of each and determine if you prefer one over the other.

What About the Products?

Early in the guide we told you to choose and define your expertise and that by sharing your expertise you will gather customers who will buy from you. Here are some other factors to consider that will help make sales.

Will your customers recognize the products as something they use and want or will you have to also explain what they are and why they should use them? For example, everyone knows what candles are and what they're used for, but if you sell Phytonutrients you may have to explain what they are and convince your customers of their benefit.

Are the products consumable? If you sell consumables, products such as lotion or food that customers use up and need to replenish, you're more likely to have repeat customers. Alternatively, sell something that people regularly purchase more of. For example, people buy just one toaster or mixer, but will buy additional jewelry.

Don't try to be all things to all people. It's a common misconception that a product or service should appeal to the widest audience possible. While it's true that there are more potential customers for a product that most everyone needs, it's extremely difficult to market to everybody. By specializing you will become the "go to" person for a product or service your target market wants.

At this stage of the process you probably have at least one or two companies that seem to be good matches for you. If so, continue on to select your sponsor. If not, take another look at some of the companies on your list or look for other companies to find a more compatible choice.

Choose Your Sponsor

In your company research you have probably hit it off with one two potential sponsors. Now you need to make the final decision. Take a look at your notes and the suggested questions in Worksheet 1. Complete or clarify any questions that aren't completely clear in your mind.

Before making the final decision about your sponsor, talk to her upline or the person that you would be assigned to if your sponsor leaves the company. This discussion doesn't have to be formal or thorough, you just want to feel comfortable that you could work with her too.

Your upline is your source of training and support. Make sure you choose carefully. Once you find someone who knows what they are doing and does it with integrity, go for it.

Now that you've made your choice, it is time to take action. Your sponsor will guide you through the sign up process and your first steps. The first few weeks of your new business are particularly exciting. Soon you'll have your first order and before you know it, you'll be one of the potential sponsors someone else is interviewing.

And don't forget notify the other sponsors that you interviewed so they know that you've made your decision and signed up with a company and sponsor.

With planning, hard work, and the support of your sponsor and company you're on your way to success!

Give it a Real Go!

Now that you're on your way, it's about time we share our number 1 tip with you to keep your business from failing. That's right, the vast majority of direct sales reps fail because they don't take this little piece of advice into consideration.

Don't Give Up!

That's right, *don't give up*. Don't throw in the towel after a few weeks because you're not making hundreds of dollars. Don't give up because you had one bad party or a large order fell through. Don't give up because your friends won't join under you as you had hoped.

This is a business you are building. Treat it like that and don't expect to be making much of a profit right away. You won't know if this really doesn't work unless you have stuck with it and worked on it for 6 months to a year. In fact, many businesses don't start turning a profit in the first 2 years...but since you're joining an established company that provides the product, your success should come a bit sooner. You may not be a millionaire, but you should see progress as the months go along.

Of course we come across some opportunities every once in a while that turn out to be just horrific. Get out as fast as you can if that happens. Otherwise give the opportunity an honest effort. Put your heart and time into it for up to a year.

Wait... There's More

In a couple of days we'll email you five reasons why a direct sales business may be perfect for you. And a few days later we'll follow up with a list ten direct sales companies that seem to be popular among consultants and customers. Stay subscribed to the mailing list and later you'll receive tips and resources to help you build your direct sales business.

Here's to your success!

Worksheet 1 – Questions to Ask During Your Research

Questions About the Company

How long has the company been in business?

What type of consultant training and support does the company provide?

What are the ongoing costs of running this business?

Does the company impose any restrictions on advertising (online and offline) and use of the company name? ***This is a crucial question if you plan on marketing online.***

What sales methods can be used (home parties, online, fundraisers, etc)?

Is the company leadership and customer service department responsive, professional, and knowledgeable?

Before making your final decision research the following financial information:

For publicly traded companies you can find the information on the company site. Privately owned companies may or may not readily provide the information. Your sponsor may have the answers to these questions, but you will probably have to speak to a company representative. Don't be surprised if some won't give much information (which for privately owned companies is their right), but the way the questions are handled will be information in and of itself.

How is the company financed (investors, investments, loans, etc)?

Is the company debt free?

What is the annual sales revenue?

Who is the company leadership and what is their business experience?

Questions About the Products

Can customers buy the products from sources other than the company consultants?

How does the pricing compare to competition?

Have there been any quality concerns?

Have there been delivery issues?

Questions about a Potential Sponsor

How long have you been in direct sales?

How long have you been with the company?

Is this the first direct sales company you've worked with?

Why did you choose this company?

Is this the only direct sales company you work with?

How many team members do you have?

What type of support do you provide to your team members?

How many hours a week do you work your business?

What's your average monthly sales volume and what is the team's average?

What are your business goals?

