

ELEVATING

Health, Wealth & Happiness



A conversation with
Robert Oblon

Direct Selling

in the Online Retail & Gig Economy

Robert Oblon is a multifaceted figure in the world of direct selling. He started out as a graphic artist and home-based entrepreneur who became a meta-search pioneer and online travel expert. When he found network marketing, he fell in love with the business model and tried his hand at building a successful travel MLM.

As a company owner, his #1 priority was to build retention in a climate of veracity and transparency. After years of trial and error, Robert now owns one of the fastest growing direct selling companies in the world. It's a hybrid model, combining the efficiency of online retail and the perks of the gig economy with the unique benefit of residual income. Leaving behind the stigma of MLM, he calls this next generation of direct selling super affiliate marketing—SAM. Along with his group of strategists, who are icons in the direct selling space, Robert made a deliberate choice to keep the product business strictly separate from the entrepreneurial opportunity, with an overarching mission to “Elevate health, wealth and happiness.”—J. G.



Tell us a little about your background.

I've been in sales and marketing my entire life, starting in my late teens. My dad had an art reproduction foundry, so I started selling bronze reproductions. I was also a graphic artist so in the mid-nineties, I was designing websites for my friends at a time when there really weren't any websites yet. One friend owned a tanning salon and another was a chiropractor. At one point I decided to make a business out of it, because companies were starting to look at this worldwide web as "Maybe there's something here..." I launched my own web design company and my first client happened to be a travel agency out of Glendale, California. They already had a couple of websites, as the owner of that agency was forward thinking. So I learned to design travel websites in 1995—while Expedia wasn't founded until 1997!

Five years later—by 2000—I was known as this travel web guru. I was an expert not just in design, but also in functionality and SEO. These were the AOL and Netscape days. There wasn't even Google yet. One of the guys I grew up with in southern California happened to be a consultant for direct selling companies. In 2002, he introduced me to a network marketing travel business based in Irvine, CA. Travel MLM was in an infant stage at the time. Only one or two other companies had just barely popped up. Walking into this travel business, I became enamored with this business model I had never heard of. I knew of the big direct selling companies since the eighties, but this was the first time I saw a different version of it. Long story short, I tried to help, but I wasn't a networker. I was an entrepreneur and travel expert, so I gravitated towards this new technology that became the very first meta-search. Today booking sites like Kayak and Trivago allow us to search 200 websites at the same time. Well, that technology was birthed in about 2000, and this company was trying to bring meta-searching to market in a network marketing model. There

were no search options other than airline or ticketing back then, and we were able to search 80 or 90 online aggregators and airline sites.

I went to this company's launch in Puerto Rico in 2002 and what I saw there really opened my eyes. There was this guy on stage who looked like a burly cowboy, with his cowboy hat and cowboy boots, except he was crying. I thought, "Why is this grown man crying about this business?" In the world I grew up in, grown men don't cry, especially not cowboys from Texas. It really hit me that there was something more to this business model than just some travel technology. It was a people thing, a highly emotional element to the business. I learned later on in my journey that we don't sell products, we sell *hope*. That's another part of the story I'll come back to.

That particular "travel MLM" was really just a Ponzi scheme. There was no real product. Everything was based on recruiting—signing people up to pay for this "travel club tool" or search engine. It was really about monetizing the comp plan. I didn't know this at the time, because I was totally green, but I did have enough sense to realize, "This business model doesn't make sense. Needless to say, it didn't go very far.

From there I partnered with one of the original inventors of the meta-search technology, this Korean genius, who literally figured out meta-search in travel before there was a Kayak or Trivago. We spent a couple of years working together, me as a designer, and he as the programmer. He had a team of programmers and was trying to figure out how to make that a better "mouse trap" from just a product perspective, unrelated to direct selling. Two years later, by the end of 2004 our team basically "broke the code" for meta-searching vacation packages, which changed everything. In 2004, the average vacation was \$2,200 and the average commission was

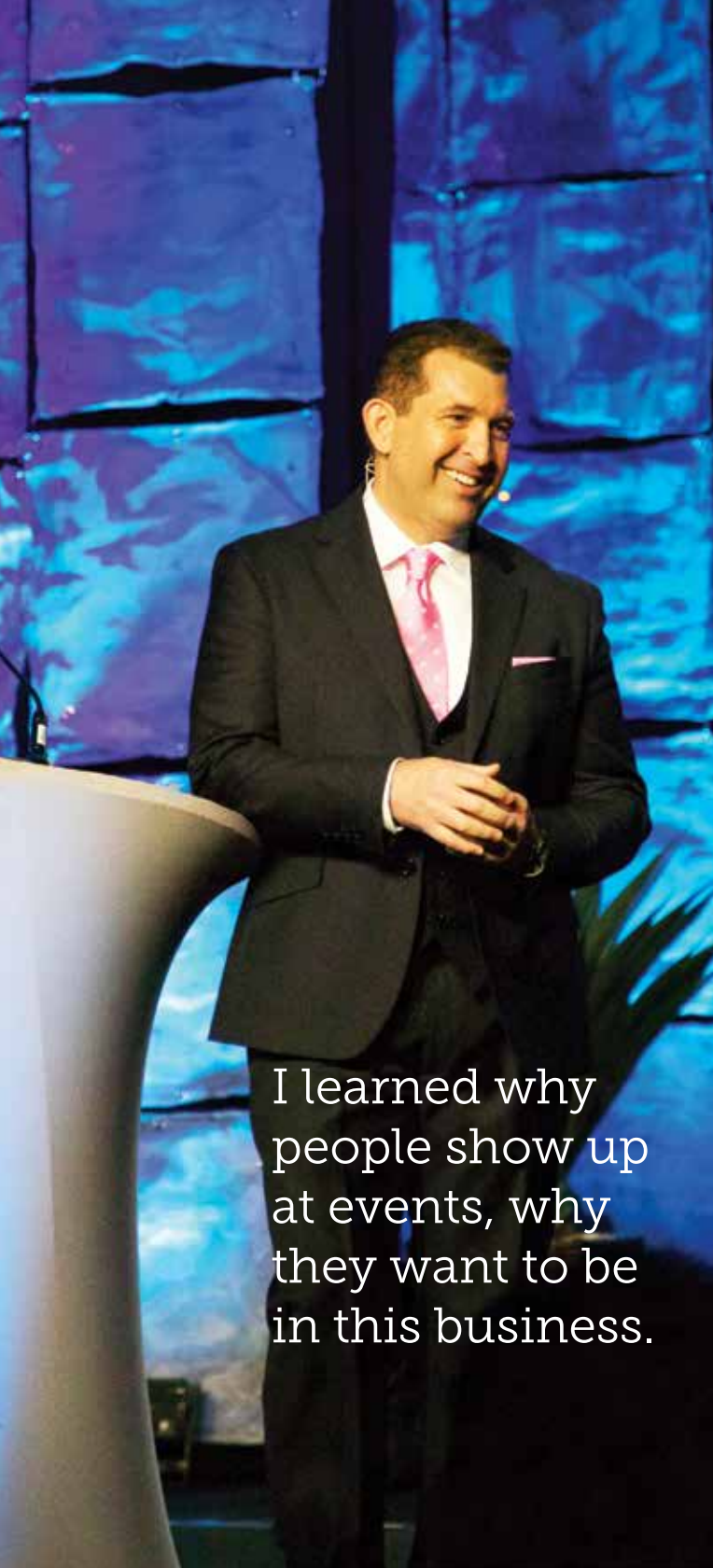
In our business, we don't
sell products, we sell HOPE.



10%. Now you had a \$220 potential commission that could be shared.

I can see how this appealed to your entrepreneurial spirit.

Yes, I was naive enough to think that I could take this technology and start my own direct selling company. I saw a non-tangible product with a real commissionable possibility and spent the next six months building my own travel MLM. Because of the relationships



I learned why people show up at events, why they want to be in this business.

of them, one of whom lived here in Dallas. Combining my technology with some of his ideas, we decided to start a company in August 2005. I built the websites, the brand, and the back office. He brought distributors as he had been in the field his entire career to that point.

In December 2005 we launched what would become the largest travel MLM to date. I spent the next four years cutting my teeth in that business. The first lesson I learned was that we didn't sell products or services—we sold *hope*. I acquired some real-life experience changing people's lives. I learned why people show up at events, why they attend super Saturdays, and why they want to be in this very unique business model. I also became familiar with attrition and the challenges of selling a "non-tangible" product. In terms of compensation plans, one of the critical lessons I learned was the risk inherent in using binary compensation plans. This became one of the reasons why I ended up moving on from that company in late 2009. It had turned into something that wasn't congruent with why I had started the company in the first place. I've always operated in absolute veracity and I ended up having to leave my own company, not by choice. That was a very tough and valuable lesson for me. I need to be true to myself, as a human, as a person.

Must have been painful to leave your own company when you really didn't want to?

Yes, being “green” in 2004, I didn't know what I didn't know. But the good news is that it set me on a path that led me to what I'm doing now. I went through a couple of years of lethargy and even depression. I was trying to figure stuff out and broke ties with many people. Like so many others who got hurt in churn—a sad side-effect of many networking deals—I swore I didn't ever want to be in multi-level marketing again. But I had this knowledge and experience in travel. I was still an entrepreneur and wanted to find a better way. I'd never had a job in my life, so what was I going to do now? The terms of my departure from my former company came with a significant exit bonus, so I had some capital to start a new business. I held on to my principles and vowed to build something better. I immersed myself in technology again and started to produce virtual training for network marketing companies.

In early 2010, I built a video production studio here in Dallas, but monetizing self-improvement or personal development training was too difficult, so I ended up running out of money. I decided to go back into travel since I had all the contacts and some really cool travel deals. This time, instead of structuring it as a multilevel, I created a non-MLM travel club. When I ran into some challenges in getting it off the ground, my friend Garrett McGrath reached out and the company he was with hired me to build all of their sales and marketing tools. So I jumped in with the goal of taking his company to the next level by providing better marketing videos and training for the field.

The company had initially given me the reins to put my spin on marketing their products. There I learned for the first time how to market tangible products—something I had never done before.

Unfortunately, I walked into a team of typical MLM guys, and needless to say, we butted heads because that wasn't who I was. I just wasn't made for that kind of political environment.

In 2013 I got recruited into another company based in Austin. It was a “healthy coffee” company that had this really cool technology around coffee berry. I went down to meet the owner and I thought this guy was different. He wasn't a network marketer and he said all the right things, so I jumped into that, helping them produce training videos and events. But it ended up being another environment with owners in the downline, manipulating the genealogy, all the same stuff I had seen before. I started scratching my head wondering, “Is this what everybody does? Is there any real ethics going on in this business?” And obviously, there is, but mostly in what we would consider legacy companies that had been around for decades. It was these newer companies—many founded by former network marketers—that often lacked the wisdom to create something better. I know I'm biased and opinionated, but my thought process at the time was that former network marketers shouldn't own network marketing companies. I had witnessed time and time again how they built the comp plan around themselves. They were in the downline usually, especially if it was a binary, and it created the same havoc I experienced in the companies earlier in my career. Given what I learned, it wasn't a tough choice. I left that company, too.

Were you done with working for MLM companies?

Actually, there was one more shot at trying to help another company that was in its final days. In late 2013 I got a call from the former president and CEO of a travel network marketing company that was in bankruptcy. He had been called by the board to come back and try to save it, so he reached out to

me. I went up there as this was my sandbox—travel! Ironically, this used to be the largest travel company in direct selling before the one I had co-founded took that position. It was a surreal but stimulating environment for me. It gave me the opportunity to do online travel again the way I wanted to do it. Unfortunately, I wasn't in a position to help acquire the asset in the bankruptcy but it allowed me to conceptualize how I would structure a travel company—and that's how my next company and a new brand was born.

My approach was essentially to marry two passions I had: *travel* and *personal development*. In 2014 we brought Shawn Achor in to teach people how the standard formula for happiness was backward, and that the happier you are, the more likely you are to succeed. The company was born out of that, instead of what I grew up in with network marketing, where the first thing we teach people is how to build a list of a hundred names and do three-way calls. What if the first thing we taught you was how to get happy as a prerequisite for success? While immersing myself in Shawn's research, we discovered we could teach people how to change their neuropathways in 21 days and be happier.

During that time I was also producing the videos for the Association of Network Marketing Professionals (ANMP) and I had this giant epiphany for a new product: what if we could do this self-improvement while on vacation? Instead of going to a seminar in a hotel in Dallas, why not have it at a four-star, all-inclusive resort in Cancun? I came up with the concept of "Vacationars," which are seminars on vacation, and that became the essence of my next attempt at my own direct selling company. However, I had the same problem we had faced at my previous company, namely that a non-tangible product company is almost impossible to build. When you have a tangible product, you have something that comes in

the mail every month—what network marketers refer to as "auto-ship". When you have that physical box showing up every month, you're far less likely to cancel than if you had a non-tangible such as travel or even personal development. Several previous attempts at selling self-improvement had been made in network marketing over the years—and all of them had failed. I thought maybe if I married travel into it, I could make a difference.



How did you overcome the obstacles related to the non-tangibles?

So now we are at the end of 2015 and I'm failing miserably in my "Vacationar" company. I had no real leadership, I was out of money, and then, these guys come to me with this product they want me to build the videos and websites for. I was incredibly intrigued by the product, which contained something called xanthohumol, a molecule extracted from the hops plant, typically used to brew beer. The big breakthrough though was that this molecule is one of the very few natural ingredients—a bio-flavanoid—that can get your body to release its own oxytocin, known as the hormone of happiness.

By this point in my journey, the concept that we sell hope in Direct Selling had evolved into "selling happiness," because what hope really means to most people is their own pursuit of happiness. Happiness



means different things to different people, but it comes down to five things: we're all looking for *love*, *better health*, we're looking to *see the world*, we want a *sense of purpose*, and of course everyone wants *more money*. I had moved on from the hope revolution to “elevating happiness.” That became our mission—to help you in your pursuit of happiness. Then out of the blue, some guys showed up with a nutraceutical that, if consumed, could elevate your sense of wellbeing or in other words: happiness. All of a sudden I was handed on a silver platter a tangible, consumable product that tied into happiness! I ended up with the exclusive on that product, while my travel and personal development company was stagnant. It wasn't the right platform for this new product, so in June 2016 we launched another brand around this tangible consumable and our tagline became, “Elevating health, wealth, and happiness.”

I went from travel all those years to this physi-

cal product, and I was again like a fish out of water. I had to figure out how to manufacture products and deal with labels, boxes, shipping and receiving—stuff I'd never done before. We spent about a year slowly growing the business and we continued to provide our support for the ANMP as sponsors, as we had done since 2014. Later in 2016, I hired a woman, who had knowledge and experience with consumables and manufacturing. She had been working as a consultant from her home in Florida, and she's the one who introduced me to the formulator and genius behind the products I have today.

He's created and manufactured products for many companies for almost four decades. He had very similar experiences as I did with company owners and we bonded while sharing stories. Next, he introduced me to nootropics, which are natural botanical stimulants like caffeine. He had this one formula that he had not given to anyone. It tricks your brain

ELEVATING THE WORLD



Our global mission and vision is to elevate people's mood and energy

into believing that you've eaten comfort foods, the "bad" foods that make you feel good but also make you gain weight. This incredible product actually elevates your mood and the "side-effect" is weight loss. He had tried to bring this product to a couple of other companies, but they didn't want it because it was too complicated or the COGS (cost of goods sold) were too high, so I was the lucky recipient.

You saw one more way to "elevate happiness"?

Yes, I was crazy enough to say, "I want that." To this day, it's our flagship product. I named it "Elevate" coffee. Everything in our company hinges on the word *elevate* because we're elevating people's mood and energy. Here's a functional beverage in the form of a coffee that can help your body release dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins. Plus, we have that original nutraceutical that can help you release

your own oxytocin. These two products—a coffee and a capsule—together formed a critical juncture and that's how DOSE was born. D.O.S.E. stands for Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, and Endorphins, the four "happiness hormones." They are the chemicals your body releases to regulate your sense of wellbeing, mood, essentially how you feel. When you take the capsule and the coffee together, that's a D.O.S.E. With these two products, we're changing lives in a way that I had never experienced. Another critical part is that when you drink the coffee, you can feel the effect within 10 to 15 minutes. So we now had a product that provides instant gratification, which is part of how we got to where we are today. These products were unlike any other products I worked with before, where you had to convince people of what it did, or they were overpriced, which easily happens in direct selling. Not only did these products noticeably elevate your sense of well-

being, but they also came with a welcome side effect—weight loss! People felt so good they forgot to eat. The nootropics replaced what the comfort food was doing.

This was happening at the beginning of 2017 when I still didn't have any real leaders to speak of. I was kind of a solo artist. I had a database and we had "inherited" some people, but we were selling barely enough product to pay the bills. There was no real growth and I hadn't gone out and raised capital, because things were so difficult. Now I had this incredible product, so I said, "Okay, I need to create a new strategy around this business. I realized I had to do some things differently so I immersed myself in "Blue Ocean Strategies," from the book of the same name *Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant* by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne (2005). It describes two types of playing fields: Red oceans, where competition is fierce, the waters are bloody, and strategy centers on beating rivals. Blue oceans, where the market space is new and uncontested, and strategy centers around value innovation. Basically, blue ocean strategies put companies in a position to create their own market within a market, ultimately rendering the competition irrelevant. That's what I wanted to do: I wanted to create my own version of direct selling. My idea was to bring travel back into the conversation but in a hybrid business model. I started studying companies like Expedia and Priceline—Expedia in particular—and recognized that they had become diversified holdings companies. They became the "800-pound gorillas" they are today by buying up all the competition. A lot of people don't know that Expedia owns Hotels.com, TripAdvisor, Hotwire, Trivago and CheapTickets. They own just about every brand in the space, and the ones they don't own, Priceline owns. Because I'm a travel guy, I was focused on Expedia and publicly traded companies, but simul-

taneously I was studying what we would call legacy direct selling companies that were also publicly traded. I was laser-focused on attrition prevention, and one of the things I discovered was that part of the reason the public direct selling companies had much lower attrition is that often the distributors were also shareholders of the public company. As a result, they became much more loyal because they felt it was their company.

So you found a way to incorporate this piece to prevent attrition.

Exactly. In this blue ocean strategy of looking at publicly traded companies, both in and outside of direct selling, I decided that would be something I could add as another differentiator, because there were only a handful of publicly traded companies in the entire landscape of direct selling. However, I didn't know of a single diversified holdings companies that owned a subsidiary that was a direct selling company. The Expedia or Priceline or even Berkshire Hathaway model of diversification meant that from a blue ocean strategy perspective I could do something different than maybe had ever been done before. So I searched and figured out how to acquire a shell of a public company and did what you might call a *reverse merger* in an effort to create a parent company that would own the direct selling division.

In the first quarter of 2017, I acquired a company called Sharing Services, Inc. and made that the parent of my direct selling company. I was intending to add travel as a second subsidiary, separate from my nutritional company. I wanted to have two network marketing companies that were sisters, because I had seen too many direct selling companies that would add another division that had nothing to do with their core business. For instance, I'd seen nutritional companies add energy services and vacation clubs or travel companies add health

and wellness lines. This creates confusion, because if you're talking about healthy coffee or weight loss, you can't be talking about wholesale vacations and vice versa. You need to have a core conversation and keep things separate. So my idea was to have two sister companies that on the front end would be separate, but on the back end would share the same genealogy and the same comp plan. When you came in through either path or lane, you would automatically be in the other.

That became your plan to create something that had never been done before?

Yes, I relaunched my travel company as the vacation

club it was meant to be, sidelined to my nutritional company. Then the rumor mill started going that I was starting a new travel networking company, and many people wanted to get in at the beginning, thinking that only the first ones to join make all the money. Needless to say, by June 2017 people started showing up for the travel opportunity and we began having conversations. They were looking to participate in the travel business and had no idea that I had this health and wellness company. When people came into the travel business, we were sending them our nutritional products as a welcome gift. I'd sent them a tub of coffee and the capsules, and as people were trying these products, they were blown away.



You need to have a core conversation and keep products separate.

One of the new leaders I met, for instance, was taking significant amounts of pain-killers because he had been hit by a drunk driver 12 years before. When he started drinking our coffee, within two weeks he was able to drastically reduce his painkillers because of the nootropics in the product. That story then went viral so he and his wife decided to build the wellness business. It was funny to see all these people showing up, while for years I had been trying and failing to bring people into the equation. The main reason new leaders were joining was that privately I was beating this other

As an owner, my wealth creation mechanism [and goal] is now market cap and share value.

drum of wanting to clean up and refine the network marketing approach. In my office, I would do whiteboard sessions where I was boldly telling the truth about the problem I saw with network marketing today, and that is company owners taking positions in the compensation plan. When you have owners in the downline, you run the risk of genealogy manipulation, “Business Development Agreements” (commonly referred to as BDAs), and the other covert things almost everyone knows about.

In too many cases, the top leaders or what we call one-percenters in the profession, are getting special deals. In other words, they don't earn their position—and even though they keep this quiet, everyone knows about it. Without naming people

or companies, I would simply state my belief that one of the reasons direct selling is in a little bit of pain is because of these non-standard practices. Many people who had been in the business for a while were really resonating with what I was saying, because no other company owners were talking about this. It was just swept under the rug and half the people were part of the problem because they were getting the BDAs. In the end, it was as though the stars aligned. Finally, someone was standing up and offering a new path where the owner is not

only not in the downline, but not making a dime from the direct selling business. How does that work? I would explain that as the largest shareholder of the public company, my wealth creation mechanism became just that, meaning my goal now is now market cap and share value. If I could reach my goal of a hundred dollars a share, my wealth and the wealth of any other participants would be set in stone.

As an owner, you don't want or need to pull money from the compensation tree?

Absolutely not! This was a critical pivot from the conversation, because far too many owners are getting wealthy through the comp plan, because they are in it. In other words, they were making all their money from the direct selling company and doing all the deals. I created a model where that doesn't exist. To this day, we have never done a single BDA, a single deal, or a single bridge.

So now I had one last problem to overcome. I had these two separate network marketing companies. Distributors were trying to figure out, “Are we in this company or in that company? How does this work? What do we call ourselves?” In an at-

tempt to separate who we are as entrepreneurs from the products, I created an overarching business for the wellness and travel arm. We launched this new company in December 2017, effectively separating the opportunity from the product business. When you go to our website to buy nutritionals, there is no mention of the opportunity or the comp plan. Part of the reason for that was the belief that I had that there were too many people who, if they knew a product came from a network marketing company, they would refuse to buy it. I had a bunch of people in my life who felt that way. Since I wanted to share these products with as many people as possible, I wanted to remove that potential obstacle.

And so far, this has proven to be very successful?

Today we are at a 10-to-1 customer/distributor ratio in just one year, which is almost unheard of. This is the result of incredible products and their success stories going viral. Also, the way we've built it from a customer acquisition standpoint, our distributors or what we now call affiliates don't talk about the business. They don't talk about the comp plan. They don't talk about the money. They just share their story, their testimonial about the product, and then they ask if you want to try it, too. I talked about this on the CEO panel at the 2018 ANMP. I said we are concentrating on customer acquisition and at that time in June, I think we were at a 6-to-1 customer/distributor ratio already.

Also, my participation with the ANMP over the last five years led me to develop a close relationship with Keith Halls, who is a board member and the treasurer of the association. Back in the eighties, Keith co-founded what grew into one of the biggest direct giants in the world, and he's just an all-around incredible guy. After years of his friendship and aid in this journey, I asked him to come and be the president of our direct selling company.

After we launched a year ago, it just kind of took off like a rocket ship. We literally quadrupled our business in 30 days. We went into instant momentum, even though there was no traditional business opportunity conversation or presentation. Until December 2018, we did not even have a comp plan document. Our affiliates aren't talking about the comp plan. Instead, they share testimonials of what's happening with the product. We've never seen anything go so organically viral. Now, that also comes with a host of other problems—the kind everyone wishes for—because eight months ago, we weren't prepared for the growth. We went from doing \$200,000 a month in December 2017 to doing almost a million dollars in January 2018. In February we tripled that. And in March we doubled that. We went from zero to almost 10 million a month in a year. It happened in one very organic viral movement, meaning people sharing their experiences of loving the product.

Even at our events or conventions, we don't talk about earnings or who makes the most money. We do recognize people, but not with the typical storyline of money and cars. That's another thing people find refreshing. We have the weight loss stories created by the nootropics, but there's a bigger story that blossomed in 2018. It's crazy, but we've had many women tell us that we've "saved their marriage." It turns out that there's a serotonin epidemic for men. Especially middle-aged men who suffer from serotonin deficit. Once these men start taking our product, they experience an elevated sense of well-being. In other words, they are happier and their wives are saying, "You changed my husband. He's not this grouchy old man anymore!" Now think about the demographics of direct selling: 74 percent women. In our company we are at 80 percent, so you have all these women running around talking about how happy their husbands are.

Finally, it occurred to me recently that there was another significant outcome with the use of our products: some of our customers are reporting that taking our nutritionals is bringing them relief from their anxiety and depression symptoms. We are living in an overmedicated society plagued by anxiety disorders and increasing suicide rates. It's not spoken about enough, but there's a suicide epidemic and I want to be a part of creating a trend to reverse that. We want to help people "elevate themselves" out of the negative spiral that too often leads them down a path where they eventually no longer want to live. Our D.O.S.E. might possibly be a significant aid in this fight.

So here you are, a year later, and you haven't slowed down?

We've strategically not launched any new products. We're trying to manage the momentum we have going. We just got past the hurdles of inventory and back orders. A year ago we had 12 employees and today we are at 77 and growing. We are a marketing company so we have to hire talent and experts. We're so lucky Clare Holbrook recently joined us as CMO. Her passion is sales and marketing, and she comes with 25 years of experience in direct selling. I'm always trying to elevate women, because we don't have enough women at the C-level in direct selling.

Through using some of Larry Thompson's incredible insights, we have been able to focus on some of the core fundamentals he introduces with other companies, but that they have yet to embrace. It's really about getting back to the basics of what direct


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selling was about, going back to the eighties when he launched what would become the world's biggest weight loss company. Everyone remembers the button that said, "Lose weight now, ask me how!" It was attraction marketing before the term became popular.

As a part of the overarching strategy for evolving network marketing, we're looking at the marketplace more closely for clues. Over the last six months, we continued to ask ourselves, "How do we elevate the state of direct selling?" We created a new term to replace MLM, calling it SAM—Super Affiliate Marketing. My vision for the future is to

continue asking ourselves, "How do we elevate the state of direct selling?" This is why I invited John Fleming, who has been a very important mentor and coach to me over the last decade, to join the conversation and become part of our team. John was the publisher and editor in chief of *Direct Selling News* for ten years. He pointed out that in the last two years, and for the first time in the history of direct selling, our global business volume has declined, and so has the number of worldwide participants. Why is that? Part of the reason is the new gig economy we're in. This ties into the Blue Ocean strategy, meaning how do we render the competition irrelevant? What we need to recognize is that



I'm always elevating women,
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in direct selling.—R.O.

our competition is no longer the other direct selling companies; it is Uber and Lyft, and Amazon and the big online retailers. Last year Uber issued more 1099s than all direct selling companies combined. What does that really mean? We have a lot of people who want the same thing we've been selling: they want to work part-time, have some time freedom, and earn a little extra money. But the difference between Uber and a direct selling company is that you don't have to learn anything to be an Uber driver. You don't have to study a com plan. You don't have to attend trainings or events.

You don't have to go out and sell.

Right, you just have to get in a car and drive. Another difference is that the average Uber driver makes an extra \$686 dollars a month. So the core question we need to ask ourselves in our business is *how do we help people make an extra \$500 to \$1,000 a month?* First, we need to embrace the fact that our competition today is no longer other direct selling companies. It is the entire gig economy (Airbnb, Uber, Lyft...) and the big online retailers like Amazon and eBay! Many people aren't aware that the largest company in the US—Amazon.com—is a network of affiliates. However, while Uber and Amazon are offering competing income opportunities for independent contractors and affiliates respectively, neither of them offers the potential for residual income. This is our most powerful competitive advantage! In many ways, we have to behave like Uber and Amazon, but we also have to function as a direct selling company, because we have something extremely valuable and desirable that they don't have—our residual opportunity. The bottom line is, we need to evolve the direct selling business model if we want to remain relevant in the new economy. No offense to network marketing, but I believe the current model is outdated. Compensation plans are a big part of the problem. There are countries now that are banning binary compensation plans.

When you look at the regulatory landscape of the last couple of years, it's clear that we have to analyze and improve our business model, especially when it comes to customer/distributor ratios and recruitment incentives.

My vision for our company is to lead the charge and birth that next generation of direct selling. My core *why*, besides what I already mentioned, from ethics to transparency, is to elevate the state of what I still believe is the greatest profession in the world, because it's going through some growing pains right now. The strategies I've developed are working and we are showing proof of concept. How do you take a company from zero to \$10 million a month in one year, with a 10-to-1 customer/distributor ratio and no comp plan document? The answer is, people are resonating with what we are offering. They want to be part of the change. They are tired of the old model with the bling, the ego-driven "leaders," and the BDAs. Sure, our affiliates talk about how to make money, the importance of building teams, and the benefits of creating volume from selling products. We're talking about compensation, but at a really high level. Today we do have a compensation plan document, but it's so short it fits on a 5 x 7 card. We still don't want our sales force to focus on recruiting or hitting ranks. We are proving that you don't have to build a direct selling business by leading with the money or the comp plan. That's probably our biggest point of attraction: you can now join one of the fastest growing companies in direct selling with no deals, no BDAs, no comp plan conversation. Instead, you simply talk about your experience with the product. "I don't know what's in it; it just makes me feel good." We teach consumers who love our products how to use the power of stories and attraction marketing. A lot of direct selling companies have been saying this, but I believe we're at a point where people are tired of the talk, and they are ready for the walk. ■