

The Business of Bridal Makeup

Creating the foundation for a successful bridal makeup career.

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Week 4: Retail & Repeat Business Direct Sales Considerations

The following text is from a blog post that I wrote in June 2016.

The bridal makeup artists' world is changing, and for many, the idea of incorporating direct sales is a 4-letter word. Let's face it, the hustle is not getting easier, and offering your clients the opportunity to purchase skin care or cosmetics from you can fill the gap in your income. In a world where cut throat undercutting is wreaking havoc on the industry, it only makes sense to offer product sales with your services, and earn a commission. *But direct sales? Ugh. Become "one of them"? Exactly.*



I found myself getting sick and tired of sending my customers to pad the pockets of the big box retailers. I knew that by offering retail, I could take a potentially one-and-done customer and turn her into a repeat customer. *Offering retail was on the table; how to do it was the challenge.*

If you're thinking the same thing, I'm sure you've considered many options. Are you going to create your own makeup or skincare line from the ground up? Should you private label makeup, or perhaps try the direct sales route. Either way, you're going to consider things like cash flow, required investment, product quality, and company reputation no matter which route you choose. **You've spent years building your reputation, this stuff is seriously important, and you're essentially a bad foundation match away from ruining your reputation as a pro artist.**

The direct sales model is trending with bridal makeup artists, and for good reason. It's a low-investment way to start offering products to your customers right now. *Literally - sign up today, sell today, cash checks tomorrow.* Until you realize that you're stuck in a less than desired compensation plan that only adds grief and frustration to your already chaotic bottom line. I'll address that in a moment.

How do you not get caught in "comp plan hell"? Are you stuck playing direct sales roulette? Well, you have a lot of options if you decide to that direct sales is your route. You can choose traditional and well established companies like Avon or Mary Kay. Maybe you choose skin care exclusive lines like Nerium and Rodan + Fields. What about the consumer friendly and trendy packaged



cosmetics offered by Younique or Maelle? Or, do you go with the companies that cater to the pro-artist like Motives and LimeLife by Alcone? Of course, there are many others out there... **but it doesn't really matter who you go with; what matters is that you understand what these companies have to offer and how to spot a red flag in the matrix when it's staring you right in the eye.**

Choosing a direct sales company should be a process, especially if you're a professional working in the beauty industry. You have things to consider that the average soccer

mom selling eye shadow to the neighborhood association doesn't. **The information on these pages are not about which company or products are better; it's about the dark corners of the direct selling world that don't surface by reading company literature or talking to a representative that's trying to recruit you.** It's about asking the right questions and getting the right answers to make an informed decision so, at the end of the day, you're cashing checks and not sitting on a pile of inventory and bitter losses.

I've done my research; an obscene amount of it, and have come to the conclusion that it's up to each one of us to look at the details and ask the right questions. **As a professional bridal makeup artist, this is what I believe that you need to consider when going into direct sales.**

Product Quality

Can you stand behind these product professionally? *Can you use the products in your bridal work, and do they work on camera? Do the products last, live up to their promises, and does the price point jive with your customer's spending habits?* Does the packaging line up with your professional image?

This is where you need to do your due diligence. Get your hands on the product. Make a purchase and see what the customer experience is like. Consider your audience to determine if the company delivers on your expectations. **This is a big deal.**



Company Integrity

I know that you know how to get your inner creeper on, so go do it. Start digging into what the direct selling world often refers to as "culture". *The culture of a company, it's reputation, and how the public views the company will make or break your business as a professional.* Start by asking your inner circle if they've tried the products or had experience with it's representatives. Join a few Facebook groups or find reps online to keep an eye on. A simple internet search will help you land on these pages. How do the reps behave? Are they "vultures"? Do they sound like an infomercial? Are they spammy? Pushy? Annoying?

You can't judge an entire company by one or two people, but spend a couple of hours digging through the internet into some of the people that are the face of the company. **Is that someone you want to be and associate your hard working business with? The reputation of the company and it's reps as a whole will reflect on your business.**

Find a Leader

Just because your cousin's best friend's little sister sells the makeup you're interested in doesn't mean that you should sign up with them. Polish your internet stalking skills and get to work, because when you join you are stuck with your enroller for the duration of your time with the company. Direct selling leaders are easy to find all over social media, and finding the right one can make or break your success in the company. Ask around, snoop through Facebook pages, or even contact the company's corporate office.



What you look for in a leader really depends on your personality and skill set. You may want to partner with someone similar to you, or as a pro you might want to find someone that's got a strong direct sales history. **It's most important that you find someone you like, want to work with, and that won't leave you hanging when you need help.**

Yes, you can "interview" potential leaders, but when you do that – be upfront about it. Let the people you talk to know that you're getting a feel for the company and talking to a few people to find the right leader for you. If anyone has a problem with that: red flag. *You're a professional, and you don't have time for the petty "I saw her first!" mentality.*

Compensation Plans

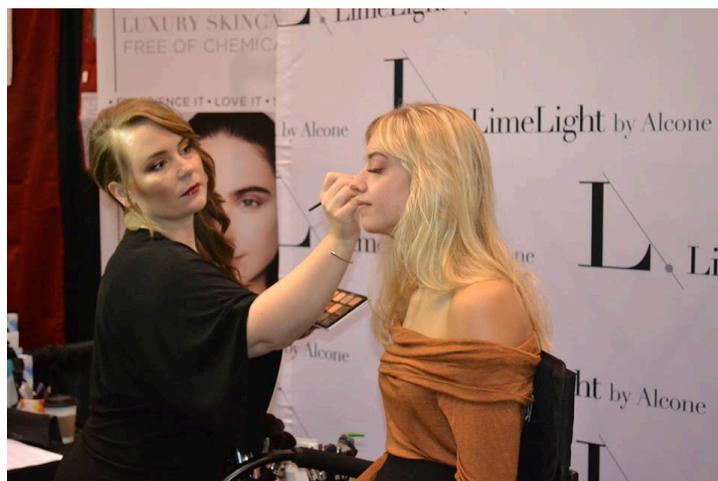
This is where direct sales plans get sticky, and where you should be paying the most attention as a pro. Getting paid, no matter what company you go with, can be confusing when you're in direct sales. All compensation plans are different and the structure can make knowing how you get paid like figuring out a complicated calculus equation. I'm just going to assume that few pro makeup artists are dabbling in calculus right now, so expecting to fully understand the compensation plan before you join isn't ideal or likely. There are some things you need to know that get hidden in compensation plans and will make a big difference on how you get paid.

- 1. Personal Commissions.** You'll often hear that you'll earn "up to X%" commission on your personal sales. Find out what it takes to get to X%. Do you have to *have* a team to get to X? Can you do it on your own? Get clarification on the commission structure and make sure it lines up with your goals.
- 2. Auto-ship Requirements.** Some compensation plans make it a requirement that you have a certain number of people signed up to a monthly auto-ship. Some companies only give preferred pricing to customers if they are signed up with an auto-ship. How do you feel about that? Some people are great with the idea, others aren't. *I personally don't dig the idea of telling my customers that in order to get a good price on their products, they have to sign their debit card over to me every month.*

3. **Sales Requirements.** Find out if there's a minimum sales requirement in order to stay involved in your company. Almost every company has some kind of minimum sales requirement for one reason or another. Get down to what that requirement is and what happens if you don't reach it. Every recruiter is going to tell you that those requirements are "no big deal", but I disagree. You need to feel comfortable with the requirements set in front of you.
4. **Downline Income.** You may not think you'll ever get on board with the idea of starting a "team" or recruiting other people. If you're with a great company however, you'll be surprised at how people will want to join you, including your customers. I'm all for this concept – you're darn right I want my customers going out and selling products to all of their friends and family so I can earn commissions on it. Sounds like a fantastic idea. What I've learned is that this downline income is where I see compensation plans really screw people over the most.

Here are a few things to get clarified:

- o **Do you *have* to build a team**, and if you don't build a team, what are the consequences? You should have the ability, as a pro, to decide if team building is for you or not. Is the base commission enough without a team's sales? **Can you earn the maximum personal sales commission without a team?**



- o How much do you get paid for your enrollees, and does that number change as time goes on or you advance through the company? What does that look like? This can be confusing but it's important.

Example A: some companies start you off with a very low percentage of sales on your downline. When you're new, you're working hard to build sales, promote, and train your downline to do the same, it's a pretty terrible deal to not be fairly compensated for that. In my opinion – red flag when you only start making money off your downline sales as you promote to the top.

Example B: some companies will pay you well on your enrollees until they reach a top level in your organization. Then they "break away" from your "tree" and *you stop making money on them all together*. Break away is very misunderstood when people get started in direct sales and completely stifles your income potential as you grow. It also causes leaders to build their team members to the point just below break away and then sabotage their efforts to build further. Seriously. This is a thing. Remember when I talked about culture? Companies with break away have huge competitive culture problems.

- o **When do you start making money on your downline? If the answer isn't "right away" that's a HUGE red flag.** It's very common for a company to require you to promote once, twice, or even more before you start earning money on your

downline. So, you recruit a new person, enroll them, train them, work with them, and get absolutely nothing unless you've ascended to a rank that the company deems worthy.

- Do people under your enrollees count? What I mean by that is, let's say you enroll Jane. Jane enrolls Sue. Six months later Jane is no longer selling. Does Sue still count for you? This is called "rollup". What if Jane is still with the company but not doing a whole lot – maybe selling \$100 here and there, but Sue selling and promoting like a boss. Does Sue count for you? If she does, this is called "compression", and it's a rare gem in direct sales.

5. **Car Bonuses.** It can be a big deal in direct sales to "earn the car". Beware of this concept and find out what happens if you earn the car one month, but your sales don't stay high enough to keep it the next month. Maintaining a "car promotion" in direct sales can be a difficult task, and you can get a huge penalty if you don't make it. What often happens is you and your lesser commissions will be making a new big car payment. Ouch.
6. What happens if you go missing for a few weeks? What if you go on vacation, have an accident, or become ill and can not maintain sales? Does your organization crumble? Do you forfeit commission off your downline? This is important to find out.
7. Find out what kind of fees are included to join and stay enrolled. Some companies have a monthly fee, yearly fee, quarterly fee, or a combination. Find out what the fees cover. Do you have to have your own card reader or does the company handle credit card transactions? Who pays those fees?

Bottom Line

Research. Ask questions, get answers, align yourself with the right people, and be excited about the products before you join.

As a professional in the makeup industry, a direct sales line can be the perfect way to add to your bottom line. Be smart about it. You owe it to yourself and to your clients to represent the right products and get fairly compensated for your sales.

