



Share the Spotlight

YOU'LL FIND NO GREATER REWARD in party plan than being the catalyst for someone else's success.

No amount of money or recognition will eclipse the satisfaction you'll feel knowing that you played a key role in helping others achieve their goals. Seeing your consultants onstage receiving an award or on the gangway as they board their first cruise ship will always be a highlight of your leadership. Helping them blossom into leaders of their own teams will be both personally and financially fulfilling for you.

The highest rewards in party plan go to those who inspire and empower others to reach their true potential. Your ultimate success will always be directly linked to how successful your team members become. Duplication is the name of the game, and when you share your knowledge, skills, and experiences with your team members, your business will thrive.

When you reach the elite status levels of your plan, you will enjoy stupendous rewards. From a six-figure income to exotic travel, luxury cars, jewelry, gifts, and recognition, you will have it all when you master the Seven Golden Rules of Leadership.

Golden Rule #1: Walk the Talk

Here's your million-dollar question: "If everyone in your organization does what you're doing, what kind of business will you have?"

Every consultant you sponsor will have different expectations, circumstances, talents, and priorities. What they will have in common is that they deserve a leader who "walks the talk." The greatest demonstration of leadership is to be a shining example of how the business works and the rewards that come with success.

Your team members will do what you do. They won't do what you don't do. If you're not doing enough, or you're doing the wrong things, your mistakes will be compounded many times over, as your team members duplicate your efforts.

By leading from the front, you will light the path for others to follow. Your success will strengthen their belief in the business, in you, and in themselves.

When your team members see that you are spending half of your time on personal activity, they will recognize and respect you as a leader who walks the talk.

Golden Rule #2: Work the Numbers

The only way to keep your business firing on all cylinders is to fuel it with new people. The more consultants you sponsor, the faster you'll grow and the more relaxed you'll be about the revolving door that is party plan.

One of the most positive aspects of the industry's open-door

policy is that we embrace a wide range of people. There is no discrimination based on gender, race, religion, experience, or education. Anyone over the age of eighteen can sign the Independent Contractor Agreement that gives him or her chance at success. Some will join with long-term dreams and some with small-time goals. A few will join on impulse with no set plans at all.

Whatever their motivation and however well you mentor them, some will perform a little, some a lot, and some will stall before they reach the starting gate. When you accept that the only security you have is numbers, you will make it a priority to sponsor a steady flow of new people.

New people breathe new life into your business and every one of them could potentially rise to team leader status, manager status, or higher. The more consultants who elevate, the faster you will elevate to the elite levels of your plan.

Golden Rule #3: Treat Every New Consultant as a Leader-in-Training

When you factor in the effort it takes to sign a new team member, the time you invest giving a person the best possible start makes good business sense. Surveys conducted by the Direct Selling Association show that half of all new direct sellers walk away from the business in the first three months. That's a huge amount of wasted energy spent bringing them into the business, as you are paid only on your team members' results. The sooner they start producing, the more they sell, and the longer they stay active in the business, the more you will earn from them.

Each new team member comes to you bursting with potential. You can never know how high they'll fly, but your belief, encouragement, and support as they navigate their first months will give them their best chance of success.

The relationship you establish at the start will set the scene for your relationship throughout, so make sure the commitment is mutual. If new recruits don't have a meaningful goal to work toward, and a commitment to the time needed to achieve it, they will drift like a boat without a rudder. Conduct a welcome interview to find out what they want to achieve and how much time they are willing to invest in their business. If you don't know what excites them, and how much time they plan to work, you will not be in a good position to help them.

Small goals are fine at the start. Many high achievers start with small goals that expand when they gain an insider's perspective of the business. Unrealistic expectations have a counterproductive effect. The fastest route out of this business is disappointment, whereas a series of small successes can lead to big progress over time.

At your welcome interview, help recruits understand the following:

- I You will do all you can to support them, but their success will not be due to what you do, but what they do.
- I It's okay to progress at the pace that's right for them. If they are willing to work and willing to learn, they will achieve their goals.
- I There are no magic formulas and no shortcuts. Activity will drive their business, and the only way to learn the skills is on the job.

Here's an example of what to say:

“Lucy, I think you have incredible potential to make a success of your business. The best advice I can give you is don't underestimate your business because it cost so little to start. If you are willing to work and you're willing to learn, you can achieve anything you want.

“I know you can do it. If you hit a few speed bumps, welcome to the club. That’s the learning process we all go through, and I’m here to support you all the way. All I ask in return is that you promise me you won’t give up until you achieve what you set out to achieve.”

The sooner new consultants start earning, the happier they will be. Nobody quits once they start making money, and even the most skeptical husband will come around when he sees the checks rolling in.

Having the first six to eight parties booked as soon as possible is critical to every new consultant’s success, so schedule the Launch Parties as soon as possible and make sure you are there to support her. Your presence will provide a confidence boost, and you can keep an eye out for hot prospects in her inner circle whom she may overlook due to first-night jitters or familiarity.

It’s your new consultant’s time to shine so don’t dominate the party but do ask to speak to her friends directly so you can convey this clear message: “I know you are all excited about Lucy’s new business and we really appreciate your being here. The best support you can give her right now is to host one of her first parties. The good news for you is that the rewards you get for helping Lucy get started are incredible. Let me show you . . .”

Make sure you focus your new consultant on sponsoring from the start. Zoom in on her closest potential prospect by asking, “If you could take one friend with you on vacation, which friend would it be?”

Suggest that she invite that friend to join so they can support each other through their first few months. When two friends join together they both do better. New consultants may wonder if sponsoring will affect their sales. Reassure them that the opposite is true. The more people who represent their prod-

ucts, the more people will hear about them, start looking for them, and feel comfortable buying them.

Golden Rule #4: Give Clear Directions

Most new party planners have not been in business before and have to acquire the skills from scratch. If their expectations are realistic, they'll be emotionally equipped to stay the distance.

One of the greatest threats to new party planners' success is the small investment they made to start their business. When they hit their first sticky patch, they can walk away having risked nothing and lost nothing. To encourage new consultants to stay the course rather than drift away after a few setbacks, create a realistic roadmap for them.

Don't overwhelm them with information. Focus on what they need to learn *now*. As necessary as it may be for legal and ethical reasons, no one is going to be motivated by the policies and procedures manual or detailed explanations of the compensation plan. Focus on the products, the bookings, and the party. If your corporate manual is a blockbuster, recommend sections they should read first.

Make the corporate "Fast Start rewards program" their goal and their guide for their first three months. Every milestone



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Support your new people through their first weeks by preparing a simple "cheat sheet" that lists training dates, coaching calls, and deadlines for their "Fast Start" rewards. Text a "Don't miss out" reminder a week before each "Fast Start" deadline and make a congratulatory call soon after they achieve it.

they achieve will strengthen their confidence in the business and themselves.

The first month will be their honeymoon period. They'll be swept up in the excitement and have lots of people to talk to. But they must learn how to transition from friends and family to a wider range of contacts. After thirty days, reality will set in and you must be generous with your time and your support. If they have mined their inner circle without generating a solid schedule of future bookings, they may begin to doubt the viability of the business, or themselves.

By monitoring their progress closely you will spot the red flags:

- I If they're saying that "No one is interested/has the money/the time," they need help making calls. Chances are their enthusiasm is coming across as a sales pitch and they're not taking time to connect with their prospects.
- I If they don't have forward bookings, they need training on how to expand their contacts. Most newcomers need help transitioning from their "warm list" of contacts to new people.
- I If their party results are low, check that they are not making common mistakes:
 - I Taking everything
 - I Talking about everything
 - I Focusing on the wrong things (e.g., the return policy)

Don't let seemingly small problems fall through the cracks. The sooner you fix small problems, the less likely it is they'll bal-

loon into big problems. The longer you leave them unattended, the harder it will be to repair them.

Crunch time will come around the sixty-day mark. Some new consultants will be seeing real results and others may be struggling. If you have built a good relationship, you will know when to praise and when to gently suggest areas for improvement.



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Schedule an observation party with new consultants toward the end of their first six parties so you can see what's working well and where help may be needed.

Share your feedback with a "commend, recommend, commend" approach. If consultants feel good about what they're doing well, they will feel more confident about working on areas that need improvement. All feedback should start and end on a positive note.

Golden Rule #5: Be a Strategic Mentor

It's only natural for you to feel responsible for the consultants you sponsor. You introduced them to the business and you want the best for them. You also know that your success will be determined by how successful they become. But being self-employed means taking responsibility for your own success.

One of the greatest mistakes a leader can make is to work with the wrong people, and women are more likely to make that mistake. We are nurturers by nature and that can make us over-protective. But when someone you believe in fails to perform, making allowances, accepting excuses, or looking for ways to solve her problems for her is a surefire way to put the brakes on your business.

Some consultants will join with starry eyes but underestimate the amount of work involved or lack the drive and discipline it takes to be self-employed. It can be tough when someone you had high hopes for doesn't live up to expectations, but you must invest the bulk of your time mentoring new consultants and those who are producing results.

To put it bluntly, support those who deserve it, not those who demand it. Allocate the highest percentage of your time to new consultants and those who are producing. They are your future leaders.

Try to avoid the most common mistakes made by inexperienced leaders:

- I *Giving parties to consultants who don't have bookings.* A consultant who can't create her own bookings is not going to learn anything from having them handed to her on a plate. Meanwhile, you have created two new problems: You have most likely destroyed the host's chance to earn booking credits, and you have squandered the leads that a skilled consultant could generate from the party. Your "generosity" will come at a huge cost.
- I *Giving undue recognition to yesterday's performers.* Your consultants need to learn from role models who are actively working, and you're sending the wrong message by giving former stars influence or accolades they don't deserve. There are other ways you can show former contributors that you value them.

You may notice that the people who are doing the least are making the most noise. If you accept complaints or demands above performance, you're not doing your team members any favors. You're training them to dump their problems on you.

Just as the greatest gift you can give your children is the gift

of independence, the greatest gift you can give your team members is to empower and equip them with the attitudes and skills they need to become independent managers capable of leading their own teams.

Golden Rule #6: Be a Proactive Manager

The greatest success in party plan goes to leaders who take a proactive approach to managing their business.

If you're a mom, or you're working another job with dreams of making your party plan business your sole source of income, time will be your greatest challenge. You're not going to have enough time to do the things you want to do, so don't waste time doing things you don't need to do.

If you're shuffling paper around your desk, chatting on the phone, or checking e-mails when you should be doing parties, coaching your hosts, and conducting sponsoring interviews, you'll be on a fast track to nowhere.

The only way you will build your business to the point where you can quit your day job is to ask, "What am I willing to give up in return for my dreams?" If you have to make phone calls during a lunch hour, miss a movie with friends, or resign from the school committee, do it! Don't waste time doing things that don't fit into your master plan.

No one has a greater stake in your business than you, so take responsibility for everything that happens, good and bad. People will sometimes let you down or fall flat on their promises. That's business and that's life. Party plan is a people business and that makes it volatile. But when you own the problem, you own the solution and that's leadership.

Let your results do the talking, and when something's not working for you, change it. No matter how much you want it, and how much you work at it, you won't grow if you keep repeat-

ing your mistakes. If you repeat them enough, even the smallest errors can sabotage your business big time.

Hold regular meetings at the same time each month and expect team members to attend. If you alternate live meetings with virtual meetings, there will be no excuse for nonattendance.



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Don't waste time creating training that is already available through other sources. Your leadership time is best spent on mentoring, not disseminating information. Consider yourself a resource center and direct team members to the best place to access the information they need when they need it.

Supplement your corporate training program with books and audio workshops from credible authors who have walked the talk and understand the challenges involved in building a party plan business.

Give new team members (or encourage them to buy) their own copies of *Be a Party Plan Superstar*; *Be a Recruiting Superstar*; and *Be a Network Marketing Superstar* to guide them. All three are available at most retail or online bookstores or my Web site, www.marychristensen.com.

For price savings on bulk copies, see the copyright page of this book for details on how to contact the publisher directly.

Monitor results every week so you know who is working and who is lagging and where to direct your energies. Don't be an end-of-the-month manager who looks at the figures only when it is too late to influence results. By keeping a close eye on performance, you will spot red flags, such as an emerging manager who hasn't placed an order by midmonth, so that you can intervene before the situation gets out of control.



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Scheduling the bulk of your parties in the first half of the month allows you to spend the second half supporting your team.

Run your team promotions for the first three weeks of the month to encourage your consultants to follow your lead and ensure against end-of-month blues.

Golden Rule #7: Build Relationships

If you take care of your people, they'll take care of your business. Start by letting them know you value them as people, not just as producers. When you know what's going on in their lives, you will know how best to support them.

Make all team members feel involved and appreciated by planning a program that embraces everyone, from the lowest to the highest producers. There are many ways to do this:

- I Share your vision. You won't be inspiring if you are not inspired.
- I Keep their "why" alive by encouraging everyone to revisit their goals every year.
- I Adopt a team name, and if you are a new leader, invite suggestions from team members and come up with the name together.
- I Scatter a mix of business and social events throughout the year. Mobilize your troops from holiday to work mode with a lively jump-start meeting early in January, schedule a family picnic to unite the team through summer, and end the year on a high note with a celebration party.
- I Promote one team, one dream. When your corporation announces the annual incentive trip, theme a meeting to fit the destination and encourage the whole team to

commit to qualifying. Be first to step up, by saying, “I’m going. Who’s coming with me?”

- I Create excitement with team “book-athons” and “sponsor-athons” at key times to quick-start holiday bookings or launch a new catalog.
- I Challenge your more competitive team members to beat their personal best and surpass your personal bookings, sales, or sponsoring results every month. You can be sure that some will rise to the challenge.
- I Bring the team together to man a booth at a job or craft fair. You’ll forge stronger bonds by planning and working the event together.
- I Give your business heart by adopting a cause in your community. Invite your team to raise money to help a returned soldier, a child needing an operation, or a family who has fallen on hard times.
- I Never be too busy to communicate on a personal level with a card on a team member’s birthday or a call when a family member is ill.
- I Be generous with praise and rewards for work well done. It’s impossible to overstate the value of frequent calls and cards to recognize achievements and milestones.
- I Make your meetings fun. If your meetings are dull, no one will show, or you’ll forever be chasing down reluctant RSVPs. In Chapter 15, you’ll find a wealth of games to pep up your meetings. Every meeting planner knows that the way to get people to come to a meeting is to host great meetings, and the key to great meetings is FIRE.

Fun!

Inspiration!

Recognition!

Education!

Make sure every meeting is a winning combination of all four components. If you focus solely on education at your meetings you will miss out on a perfect opportunity to build personal relationships and team spirit.

- I Work hard to engage your team members when you're training by phone or they will quickly become distracted and inattentive. You don't want them to be folding laundry or checking e-mails when they're supposed to be learning.
- I Don't rely on technology for all your communications. While your competitors are scrambling to find high-tech ways to make their lives easier, be the high-touch leader working the front line of your business, building and strengthening relationships with your customers, prospects, and team members.
- I Take pride in maintaining harmony in your group. Even the slightest discord can have a destructive effect, and left unchecked could sabotage your business.
- I Party plan is an emotional business. Fill and refill your team members with belief in their products, their business, and themselves, so no matter how often they are bruised by disappointments, delays, and downturns, there'll always be enough belief to see them through.
- I Remember to acknowledge your team for the contribution they have made when you take the stage on awards night. Shared achievements build morale and strengthen loyalty.
- I Above all, build fun into your business. Think back to the times you most enjoyed while you were growing your business, and work hard to create an environment where your consultants will feel included, involved, appreciated, and happy.

The good times will help balance out the challenges that are part of business growth, as it will take more than money to keep your team united through good times and bad. There may even be times when you'll hope your team members will step up to the plate for you, and that's when you'll need a big reservoir of team spirit and goodwill to call on.