You're Not Going to Break the Internet

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1087 words | 5 pages

Many folks in direct sales, especially at the leadership levels of sales organizations, have been around a while. You did not grow up as part of the "digital generation." You did not spend your high school years instant messaging with your friends, or your college days texting. Instead, you've probably perfected the art of person to person human communication, which is one of the reasons you're as good at direct selling as you are.

So is it any surprise that many established direct sellers view this whole "social media thing" with suspicion? After all, you've got a system that has worked for years. You've built a huge sales organization around that system. Why mess with something that isn't broken?

The thing is, though, that the world is changing. People are communicating in different ways. In fact, some of those tried and true communication methods we've relied on, especially the telephone, aren't working as well as they used to. Younger

generations don't like to talk on the phone.

(In my own experience, as a teenager who spent HOURS on the phone, this blows my mind a bit.) As business people, we understand that we can't just ignore entire generations of people if we want to build a sustainable business. We have to prepare a home for them on our teams. And that means understanding (and embracing) the way that people communicate today.

What does this mean in practical terms? It means that you're going to need to be prepared to communicate with team members, prospects, and customers using such technology as texting and social media tools.

And whatever gets invented next.

And this is where a lot of fear pops up. I've noticed it more with technology than with any other type of new concept. People who are not comfortable with technology have an innate fear of breaking it. I live with someone who has dealt with that fear. "It takes a long time. Things could go wrong. I don't know what I'm doing and I don't understand and why isn't it working and what is wrong I need help…. "

Sound familiar?

What makes this so easy for some people, when it's so hard for others? How is it that some people can jump into any new technology and understand it immediately, while it takes others ages and ages? It's not just that some people are part of the digital generation, and some are not (although that's part of it…the digital generation approaches technology with a different mindset.)

If this describes you, here's a couple of things I want you to keep in mind.

You're not going to break the internet. You may not completely understand everything you're doing, but you CAN do this.

Look for patterns. People who are good at technology understand that there are certain patterns to it. For example, when signing up for a new social network, you'll most likely have to create a username and password, provide a bio, and upload a picture. There's most likely a menu bar somewhere along the top. Etc. The more you use technology, the more you'll come to sense the patterns that make this easier.

It's OK to take it slowly. You don't have to be a super-adopter to be proficient at technology. Identify the ONE tool that you see others having the most success with (maybe Facebook or texting) and focus on that. You'll get overwhelmed if you try to do too much.

Keep an open mind. One thing that is instantly crippling is the decision that you're bad at this or you don't like it. As soon as you decide that, you are going to have a harder time with all of this. Instead, tell yourself each day that "I am getting better at this." You don't have to be perfect. Heck, I don't even profess to know everything about how each tool works. Just focus on mastering one small element. Then move on to the next. But don't decide you can't do it. You'll be right.

Get educated. If you're not comfortable with technology, get help. But get it from someone who will be patient with you. If your teenager would rather just do it for you because it's faster, that's not going to help you get better. Invest a little money in hiring a coach, or taking a class. Knowing how to use this stuff is going to make you money by helping you tap into new generations who ONLY communicate this way. It's worth it for you to invest a little to learn this.

You are a bright, educated, and intelligent person who CAN DO THIS.

Don't let fear hold you back. Truly, you're not going to break the internet. Spend some time each day getting comfortable with this technology. It will make all the difference in helping you

create an inviting place for future generations. And that's what helps you create a sustainable income for the long term.

Seriously, just do it. Log onto Facebook, TODAY. Start to use it. You don't have to be a pro. You don't even have to use it for your business (yet.) Just begin. It's the first step to success.

Jennifer Fong is a speaker, consultant, and trainer, who teaches direct selling companies and individual direct sellers how to use social media effectively as a business building tool. A former direct sales company CEO, Jennifer built her company from the ground up, and understands what it takes to build, lead, and train a team, as well as the 3 major principles of any direct sales party plan business: book, sell, and recruit.

A champion of social networking and social media marketing in the direct sales industry, Jennifer is passionate about teaching direct sellers how to use social media tools to enhance their businesses, while remaining true to the basics of a party plan business.

She provides consulting services to direct sales companies, helping them skip the learning curve and achieve immediate success through a comprehensive social media strategy.

She also coaches and trains individual direct sellers, and other business owners, on how to put the principles of social media to work in a profitable way, maximizing the return on their social media investment.