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Direct selling – A Home Based Career for Military Spouses

Living your dream within your lifestyle.

by Tami Longaberger



Tami Longaberger, right, greets Michelle Davidson, corporate development director of the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network, at The Longaberger Company's sales leader meeting this year. Michelle was a guest of the company, which has a history of commitment to military families. Company founder Dave Longaberger - Tami's father - was stationed at Ft. Hood in the early 1960s. It is where Tami spent the first year of her life. In 2003, the company convened a Military Blue Ribbon Panel of Longaberger Home Consultants to provide insight into what military families are looking for.

HERE ARE SOME QUALITIES TO CONSIDER:

1. Does this company understand your lifestyle? You have unique needs and challenges. Some companies take those into account. Look for a company that understands APO/FPO requirements and your special shipping needs. Some companies provide free online websites to help you conduct business anywhere.

2. Does this company provide training? Training to help you launch your business, market it and reach customers - especially when you find yourself on a base or post or moving often - is critical. Look for a company with the support you need to succeed.

3. Does this company allow your business to move with you? Some companies establish sales territories; others do not. Those without territories are your best option because they allow you to move your business anywhere.

4. Does this company align with your values? It often starts with the product and permeates the organization. Some companies are large publicly traded corporations. Others are small and nimble. Look for a company that respects women and that promotes the American Dream through its products and career opportunity.

Beyond these considerations are the intangibles. Direct selling taps into the passion and spirit of women in a powerful way. It provides an opportunity to set goals we never before imagined, learn new skills and achieve more than we ever thought possible. **MSM**

There are 15.2 million people involved in direct selling companies in the U.S. More than 85 percent are women. While no one tracks the number of military spouses in direct sales, I personally believe it is quite high based on the anecdotes I hear. In fact, a large number of Longaberger Home Consultants are people just like you. There's a good reason they've been attracted to direct selling companies like ours.

The benefits of direct selling make it an ideal career for military spouses. It provides an opportunity to launch a home business on your terms and without the significant investment that might be required if you start from scratch.

If a transfer takes you to a new locale, your business goes where you go. You still can take care of your current customers and, as you move to a new location, you have an opportunity to expand your business. That's because direct selling creates social opportunities by bringing together people with common interests. You'll even find yourself developing business and marketing skills that rival those of the corporate world. In other words, your career fits your life.

While the benefits are tremendous, it can feel overwhelming to start thinking about how to get involved in direct sales. The sheer number of direct selling companies operating today can make sorting through the options mind boggling.

There are some tired-and-true ways to find your niche. It all starts with knowing what's out there. The best place to begin is with the Direct Selling Association (DSA) in Washington, D.C. Any reputable direct selling company will be part of DSA, which subscribes to a code of ethics that its members are accountable to uphold. There are more than 200 DSA member companies you can learn more about at dsa.org. Look for products and company stories that appeal to you. Then look for the best fit

Your Home Business Checklist

- Research through the Direct Selling Association
- Look into whether they are military friendly
- Examine their values and their products
- Ask about their training and support
- Make sure your business can move with you