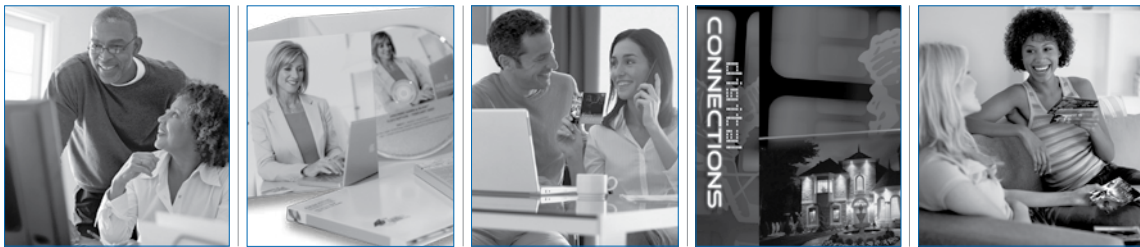


The Use of
Communication Tools
in Direct Selling:

Message of the Month





The Use of Communication Tools in Direct Selling: *Message of the Month*

The use of communication tools has been a crucial piece of the puzzle for many direct selling companies. Adopting these tools has transformed them from slow, steady organizations to fast-growing success stories.

Messages of the Month, also known as subscription-based corporate communication tools, are one of the oldest forms of effective communication tools in the industry.

Dozens of companies profited from field-driven subscriptions such as the Tape-of-the-Month and Book-of-the-Month programs. Emphasizing personal and business development, companies like Amway/Quixtar discovered that business acumen, and therefore retention rates improved.

These retention tactics can be utilized today through Message of the Month communications. Direct selling companies find these are effective in both motivating and retaining associates. Another benefit to these programs is that they are funded by the subscriber, and the cost to implement is low, so breakeven-ROI is virtually a given.

Message of the Month programs provide a steady stream of information from the corporate level to representatives, and can relate to:

- Training
- Motivation
- Incentive programs
- New products

No matter the subject, information is seamlessly conveyed from the company to the representatives on a monthly basis.

Technology, which has made participating low-cost, has also completely changed the way monthly message programs can be implemented.

“Tapes/books of the month” have been replaced by more-affordable optical discs—CDs or DVDs. These are less expensive to replicate as well as less expensive to ship. Web downloads are also a cost-effective way to distribute information—although download speeds and compatibility can be an issue.

Consistent Motivation, Stronger Retention

A tools culture is simply the company-wide, consistent practice of creating sales opportunities, recruiting activity, training and motivation through communication tools.

By regularly utilizing your strongest resources, such as dynamic field leaders, material from events and even encouraging monthly messages from corporate leadership, you’ll find that associates are able to maintain commitment to their goals. This naturally produces stronger sales, in turn leading to better retention rates.

Primerica, one of the United States' top direct selling companies, utilizes audio CDs for its monthly messages. Simply titled *Message of the Month*, these 30-minute audios feature Co-CEO John Addison speaking directly to associates from a studio. John's plain-speaking manner regarding activity and attitude, his humorous anecdotes and his enthusiasm for the potential of Primerica's opportunity makes him the strongest resource for Primerica's subscription-based communications.

Other leading direct selling companies, like Arbonne, feature a variety of leaders, including field associates, for their monthly audio CD messages.

One key to implementing a successful corporate *Message of the Month* communications program is instilling a strong tools culture. A tools culture is simply the company-wide, consistent practice of creating sales opportunities, recruiting activity, training and motivation through communication tools.

Often, companies are close to having a very solid tools culture. Their commitment is there, the tools are in place and the results are beginning to be evident. What's missing is the final step—providing a simple system to allow reps to gain access to the proper tools on a regular and consistent basis.

For those companies on the verge of achieving a tools culture, the corporate communications program is ideal. By delivering the materials your reps need, you place in their hands the power to succeed.

Another plus of a *Message of the Month* subscription is the corporate example of consistency—and the dedication to associates' success that it demonstrates.

How Companies Benefit from Subscription-Based Message of the Month Communications

Keeping the Field Motivated

For both new companies and long-standing organizations that have established a tools culture, the challenge is often keeping motivating material fresh and relevant. National conventions and regional events achieve this by creating a sense of urgency and enthusiasm among representatives. However, despite the representatives' best intentions, the passion soon fades and reps lose their focus. That's where corporate Monthly Messages help keep a sales force motivated.

Client: PrePaid Legal, Inc.

The Challenge: To create a corporate communication program that maintains enthusiasm and builds belief among representatives between field events and conventions.

The Background: With its breadth of existing training materials, Pre-Paid Legal wanted a new program to provide more timely and consistent communication between the company and its distributors. To achieve this, Pre-Paid Legal enhanced their subscription-based package called e-Services, the back-office online management aspect of their client services. While their an online library of



electronic training resources includes communications to associates regarding training and business builders, the enhancement is a DualDisc called *Digital Connections Magazine (DCM)*, mailed to them monthly. *DCM* increased participation through added value. There is a “set format” for most issues, giving subscribers approximately 30 minutes of original content, including a Platinum showcase of the most successful associates every month and a Rising Star for belief/dream building, training, tips, techniques and news and events. In addition to the DVD, an audio CD is part of the monthly mailing. This CD features “Best of the Best” audio from live trainings, conferences and presentations from leaders all across North America. Twice a year the format changes and delivers hours of training and highlights shot at their convention. This extends the excitement and energy from the event to thousands of associates that may not have been able to attend.

Pre-Paid Legal only pays a few dollars per month per subscriber to ensure accurate delivery of timely information, which is filmed both in-house and at conventions.

DCM is a monthly reinforcement that reps can achieve success just like the leaders in the video—“rising stars” and “platinum profiles” that focus on various stages in the cycle of success.

The Payoff:

Tens of thousands of Pre-Paid Legal representatives are now enrolled in the monthly subscription and that number grows with the increasing ranks of Pre-Paid Legal representatives. Use of the subscription is relevant to Pre-Paid Legal and their reps because it reinforces the use of tools, which PPL uses to drive recruiting as well as sales. The cost is affordable for both the representative and the company.

Monthly Messages—No Cost to Low Cost

One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to optimize the urgency and enthusiasm created at national conventions and regional events is to record them on audio and/or video, and use portions of these recordings for Monthly Messages.

While PrePaid Legal issues a single DualDisc of this material after a national event, it’s also effective to use, throughout the year, portions of the material gathered at significant events.

By utilizing material that is gathered at events or even asking leaders to create audio training or motivation tips when they visit the corporate office, material for Monthly Messages is relevant and, best of all, affordable.

This means that while the company’s cost of Monthly Messages is covered through the cost of the subscription, the IBO’s subscription cost can remain affordable, too.

Training with Communications

You can utilize a subscription program to provide corporate communications on a monthly or even weekly basis. The concept is simple and the execution can be just as easy. Deliver quality training information to those who need it most—your income-producing sales force.

Client: Arbonne

The Challenge: Transition Arbonne’s “Learn and Burn” training tools from online access to monthly media.

The Background: For years, Arbonne utilized the Web for its representative training. Each month, new audios were made available for downloading to personal computers where they could be burned on CD. The training came from recorded calls and in-house training—a task that was inexpensive and easy to complete. However, as with any technology, the medium had limitations—some could successfully download the materials and others could not. Rita Davenport, President and field mentor takes the time every month to conduct interviews with key Arbonne consultants, sharing best practices for building a successful Arbonne business. Many simply wouldn’t



take the time to download the information and burn the CD. Now, as an option Arbonne has created a monthly CD subscription to its series of audio training for just \$5 a month. The CD is mailed by VideoPlus so the implementation is hands-off for Arbonne and increases use without adding to the workload of the company.

The Payoff: Thousands of representatives now have a timely, topical form of training that they are comfortable using. Audio CDs are easier and more efficient than any other delivery mechanism, although the option of downloading material still exists. What is significant is the nominal price—reps pay only \$5 a month for this form of monthly training, and the time-savings it creates has garnered a strong subscription base.

The subscription to Arbonne’s corporate communications has driven the use of the training to new levels—more people are receiving the tools than ever as this company continues to grow at astounding rates.

The Results

Regular motivation and timely information are two keys to associate success. Both are simple and affordable with a subscription-based Monthly Message corporate communication program.

Top direct selling companies have increased success by using a monthly subscription program to enable their corporate communications. From the elaborate to the simple, subscription-based corporate communication programs can equip associates for success.

For information and guidance to help you create a message of the month program:

Please call VideoPlus at [1-800.752.2030](tel:1-800-752-2030) or visit www.videoplus.com.