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Training 101 - Hostess Coaching

Effective hostess coaching should only take you a total of about 30-40 minutes per party maximum.

Hostess Coaching is one of the most personal and beneficial aspects of direct-sales. Working one-on-one with our Hostesses allows us to build a relationship with her that can last a lifetime. Why then do so many consultants fall short when it comes to such a vital part of their success? Many times it's because they do not have the right tools, the know-how or the discipline needed to get the job done effectively and efficiently.

Top ten things to remember about good Hostess Coaching.

1. Be sure to foster a 'team' mentality when talking with your hostess.
2. Be clear about what your company hostess plan is, and make sure your hostess understands it.
3. Walk your hostess through the Hostess Information Packet, and talk with her about each section.
4. Encourage your hostess to invite at least 40 guests, as only 1/3 are usually able to attend.
5. Let your hostess know your expectations; don't be passive. Many hostess don't have a clue as to how to have a good party, and they are depending on your expertise to help them through the process.
6. Don't think that because your hostess has already had a party, or because she is a consultant with another company, she knows how to have a successful party.
7. Encourage your hostess to keep it simple when it comes to food.
8. Be sure to ask everyone at the party if they are interested in booking a party. To be fair, if you ask one, you have to ask everyone.
9. Always be upbeat and positive with your hostess. If she seems uncertain about her ability to do a specific task for whatever reason, offer to do it for her. An hour of phone calls may mean the difference between 2 guests showing up, and 20 guests showing up.
10. Treat your business like a business even if you only have a couple of parties a month. By effectively hostess coaching your hostess, you will have more parties booked, higher attendance, and better sales averages. Whether 2 or 10 parties a month, your time is worth making the effort to be successful.

Effective hostess coaching is vital to the success of your business. By taking steps to becoming a great hostess coach, you will be able to systematically guide your hostesses through the steps necessary to have a successful party outcome. Hostess coaching, many times, is thought to be tedious, unnecessary and boring. This is unfortunate because when consultants have this attitude, often they are left with low job satisfaction, household turmoil due to many evening hours out of the house with little to no return, and few repeat hostesses and limited new bookings. On the contrary, by working to develop a team mentality with your hostess, understanding her excitement as well as her anxiety over having a party, and walking her through the steps to a successful party, you will effectively build a relationship with her that can last a lifetime.

Now let's talk about success for a minute. That word, 'success', conjures up many different expectations in every consultant. Some see success as lots of income, or time home with the family. Some see it as a great big party with lots of guests, and yet some see it as a full datebook, and so on, and so forth... Ultimately, no matter what success means to you, it all boils down to great hostess coaching. I am sure many of you have read, "A Tale of Two Hostess", but ultimately, who is to blame? I place 90% of the success or failure of the parties in question on the consultants. Might be a bit harsh, but perhaps it should have been called, "A Tale of the Fortunate or Unfortunate Outcomes of Two Hostesses, Perpetuated by their Consultants Ability or Lack There of to Hostess Coach." Of course however, that title is much too long, and isn't quite as, should I say, fluffy. Your goal should be to say for every party, "I couldn't have done it any better. I gave it my all."

When you are at the hostesses house totaling up the orders and your customer is sitting there contemplating having a party, do you wonder if she is thinking to herself, "Hmm, if I book a party for a month from now, I can procrastinate sending out my invitations by at least 25 days, and not call any of my girlfriends. Then I can play phone tag with the con-

sultant until the night before the party when I will simply give her directions, and let her know that I am pretty sure that I have a few guests coming. I will spend all week dreading my party, but unwilling to call my consultant to let her know. I will work all day on cleaning the rim around my toilet, spend at least \$50 dollars on groceries and half the day baking dishes I have never before prepared just so that I can impress my guests. Then, maybe one or two of my neighbors will stop by a half-hour late, and I will walk away with a small and unneeded parting gift that will be stuffed to the back of my closet, because I never wanted that item in the first place. Finally ending up satisfied with the fact that I will NEVER HAVE ONE OF THESE THINGS AGAIN!" Of course not! Even if her last party did turn out like that and she is braving another party, she is hoping for the best return on her investment, and whether she booked the party to get some great stuff for free, she loves getting together with her girlfriends, or she is simply helping her hostess, you owe it to her to guide her through the steps needed to have a successful show.

So now the questions you may be asking are, "What does hostess coaching look like?" And "Which comes first, booking a party, or great hostess coaching?" With out booking a party, you don't have to hostess coach, and without great hostess coaching, you won't book any parties. But for argument sake, let's start with booking the party. It looks something like this.

You meet a guest at the hostesses house and

"Don't assume that if your hostess is a repeat hostess, or she is a consultant with another direct sales company, she knows how to have a successful party. I once had a party with a consultant of another company, assumed she knew what she was doing, and to my dismay, she served M&M's and lemonade, and the only guest that showed up was her Mother. I learned a big lesson that night, never assume they know what they're doing!"

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sometime during the evening you find out she is contemplating having a party. Now either she is somewhat interested, but still has some questions or concerns, in which case you should read [Training 101 - Customer Information Cards](#), or she is excited to get a date on the calendar, and begin thinking about the upcoming event. In which case to start off, I recommend you read [Training 101 - Two-part Guest list Forms](#), and then give her the form and follow the directions in the training. (Side note: You will see that I will reference different trainings and products throughout this text. That is because I believe in the products that we create to be valuable to the success of the consultants that use them. I created them either when I was in direct sales because of a void I found in product offerings to me as a consultant i.e.: the hostess packet, or because proactive, successful consultants have contacted me over the past few years requesting that certain products be made for them, such as the two-part guest list forms. Should your company not offer you products such as we do, or if you prefer the style of products that we offer, please feel free to use our products to help you be successful.) Let her know that you will help her through every step of the hostess process, and if she has any questions at all, she is to call you right away, so that you can answer them. Then give her a [hostess packet](#), and let her know that you would like her to read over the information inside the packet and you will get in touch with her the next day to answer questions she may have. Be sure to send her a [party reminder postcard](#) right away.

The first call is the longest (about 15-20 minutes), most important, and made the day after she books the party. It is done to get her excited about her party, and talk with her about the hostess packet, as well as her wish list. By knowing what is on her wish list, you can get a better idea of how many guests or orders, she is going to need. Let her know that only about 1/3 of those guests invited usually attend the party, so she needs to invite at least 40. By getting her excited, and letting her know your expectations, you will get her on

the right track to a successful party. Be sure to find out if she has any questions. If she doesn't have any, ask her questions in an excited voice like, "Isn't our hostess benefits program exciting. Do you remember how much your party needs to be to qualify for benefits?" Or, "Do you know what you would like to put on your wish list?" Think of some questions that are important to answer, to get her going on the excitement. And remember, it is very important that she knows how your hostess plan works.

The guest list is vital to finding out how many people she has invited, as well as future contacts for your business, and whether or not you are sending out the invites for her, make sure you let her know that she needs to get the guest list form back to you by a certain date, and how important it is that the reminder cards get out on time. Let her know that you will be expecting the guest list, and in the mean time her job is to invite personally by phone or in person, everyone she knows and to let them know that they are able to bring a friend. Be sure to set a date with her for your next phone call which will be about 12 days before the party, in the mean time, she needs to get that guest list to you ASAP and make those calls.

The second call, made about 12 days before the party, is just a quick call (about 5 minutes) to find out if she has any questions, and ask her what sort of response she has gotten from her friends and family about her party. Make sure she has personally invited all her guests, and to let her know, if she is sending out the reminder invites, that she needs to get them in the mail right away. If you are sending them out for her, (I recommend you do) then this is just a reminder that you are sending them out, and she should be expecting some RSVP's. Let her know that her next task is to call the people on her guest list that she hasn't heard from, and find out if they will be attending. If not, she can offer to get them a catalog. Let her know that this is a team effort, and you appreciate the time that she is putting into having a great party!

The reminder postcards should go out about 8-10 days before the party. That way, they will be arriving in the mail about 6-8 days prior. If you are sending them out, you will know when they are in the mail, if not, then be sure to call her a couple of days ahead of time to remind her to get them in the mail.

The third call, made about 4 days prior to the party, is the litmus test of how well you have hostess coached your hostess. Barring any disasters that have come up that requires her to reschedule her party, she should be well on her way to a successful party. During this call, you will be able to find out from your hostess how many guests are planning to attend, based on her phone calls that she has made. If she tells you that there are only a few guests attending, encourage her that when she makes her reminder phone calls over the next couple of days, to remind her guests that the more attendees, the more fun, and they are welcome to bring a friend. Reassure her that your goal is to help her get everything on her wish list, and in order to do that, she needs to have X amount of guests at the party. Perhaps offer her a special incentive if she gets 15 guests at her party and 5-7 pre-party orders. Make sure to be excited, and upbeat, no matter what happens, and how you feel inside. Help her where she falls short. One of the best parties I ever had was when I sent out the invites, and made the reminder calls for my hostess. Many guests were impressed that they were contacted by the consultant, and therefore, they just HAD to show up. Make sure to get directions, find out if she has any last minute questions, and let her know that you are very excited about the party.

Hostess coaching is simple, when you do it with every hostess. Consistency is key to being successful in direct sales, and by doing this every time, you will build a strong hostess base, that has strong parties. You will book more parties because there will be more guests in attendance, and you will recruit more team members because your hostesses will see how successful your business is.