

From NetworkingTimes.com

“Network Marketing Is...”

Last fall, as Wall Street blew up and the economy melted down, a number of large network marketing corporations posted some of the largest sales figures in their history. Even as millions of people saw their savings evaporate and stock portfolios disintegrate, network marketers world-wide were quietly taking stock of their businesses and asking, “Are we okay?”

In the main, the answer appears to be a cautious yes: network marketing historically has been to some extent counter cyclical, faring relatively well at times when the economy at large does poorly. Still, to find adequate comparisons to the economic panic of today one has to look back to the 1930s—a time when network marketing had not yet been invented. So how are we doing?

For this issue, we assembled a panel of American thought leaders to give us their thoughts on the state of the profession. The consensus: our current economic woes may well bring about a historic up-surge in the popularity of the network marketing model. — J.D.M.

American Thought Leaders on the Network Marketing Profession

John Assaraf

Many people have the wrong idea of what network marketing is; the truth is that the business has evolved significantly in the last twenty years. There are those who will shy away from network marketing because of its past, and then there are those smart ones who will make their fortunes because they can forget the past and see the future.

In network marketing, the power of your connections and determination allows you to build a highly successful business without the traditional costs of going into business on your own. The products, systems and ability to generate a great income and lifestyle make a powerful combination for those who want their share of the American dream.

John Assaraf is coauthor of the New York Times bestseller *The Answer*

Bob Burg

What I admire most about the noble profession of network marketing is that one succeeds only by helping others, by adding value to their lives—and for that matter, adding value to the lives of many. I also love the fact that anyone with a big enough desire to better their lot can succeed in the business if they are willing to work hard, and be consistent and persistent. The network marketing model in conjunction with a high-quality product or service presents an unparalleled opportunity for people to thrive. In this economy? Perhaps especially in this economy.

Bob Burg is coauthor of the Wall Street Journal bestseller *The Go-Giver*

DC Cordova

Network marketing is the most innovative system for the twenty-first century of connectivity, networks and relationships. Obviously the marketplace is ready for it. Done correctly, it's a win-win for all concerned.

DC Cordova is CEO of Excellerated Business Schools

Michael Gerber

Network marketing [provides a] purely democratic, highly entrepreneurial, deeply authentic and simple model for successful living. In network marketing, your success or your failure is completely up to you. . . . [In network marketing,] you're not in the business of simply selling products or a business opportunity, you're in the transformation business.

Michael Gerber is author of the New York Times bestseller *The E-Myth*

Seth Godin

Network marketing works when it's not about you. It works when it is about the customer. Not sort of about the customer as a way of helping you, not kinda about the customer when you imagine how they could act like you and become part of your downline. No, it works when it is generous and transparent and true. If someone buys from you because they are a friend or because it's easier than avoiding you, that's not about the customer. Here's my dream for you: find a product and a price and a story that people choose to seek out. Discover a niche that people would miss if it disappeared. Offer an experience that's about more than money, more than making a living and more than recruiting a new salesperson. When you bring joy and utility and trust to people (at a fair price), they'll embrace you.

Seth Godin is author of the New York Times bestsellers *The Dip* and *Tribes*

Stephen M. R. Covey

To me, the most interesting dimension of network marketing is the focus on building relationships of trust. All parties must be able to trust one another, or nothing moves forward. Accountability, transparency and other high-trust behaviors clearly flow out of your character and competence, which in turn help to improve, solidify and create better relationships. Those relationships are powerful fruits that enable you to enjoy greater collaboration, a better reputation and shared accomplishment.

When done well, network marketing is the speed of trust in action.

Stephen M.R. Covey is author of the New York Times bestseller *The Speed of Trust*

Ivan Misner

Though we cannot control the economy, we can control our response to the economy. Networking can keep your business alive and well during an economic downturn; you should never let a bad economy be your excuse for failure. During the last recession, I watched thousands of businesspeople grow and prosper, because they made a conscious decision to refuse to participate in a recession. They succeeded by developing their networking skills and learning how to build their businesses through word of mouth—an important key to success and the most cost-effective form of advertising there is. While others are looking at problems, those of us looking for opportunities will not only get through a bad economy but will prosper.

Ivan Misner is author of the New York Times bestseller *Truth or Delusion?* and founder of BNI

Nido Qubein

Network marketing rewards human potential, individual effort, collective support and positive action. It is a magnificent form of living free enterprise, of experiencing success and significance, and of enjoying the fruits of victory. It is also a way of growing as you prosper, a way of learning as you serve, and a way of sustaining recurring income as you live.

Nido Qubein is president of High Point University and chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Co.

Chris Widener

In today's economic uncertainty and turmoil, network marketing has become an even more viable option for those who want to be their own boss, earn a substantial full- or part-time income, and find more time freedom to pursue the things they really love in life. Now more than ever, you can take your future into your own hands by starting your own business and earning substantial profits rather than relying on traditional wages determined by someone else.

Chris Widener is author of the New York Times bestseller *The Angel Inside*

Sen. Orrin Hatch

During these difficult economic times, there is no doubt that the entrepreneurial spirit of network marketing companies and its sellers helps keep the American dream alive. It is this same spirit that will lift our country out of our current economic crisis. The hard work, tenacity and boundless energy of our country's direct sellers never cease to amaze me. We need you now more than ever.

Orrin Hatch is a six-term (and current) Republican Senator from Utah and former Chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee

Vic Conant

As good as the products are in network marketing, they are really secondary to the personal development. Go to any network marketing convention: what are they talking about? They talk about the freedom they're enjoying, the fabulous growth they're experiencing, how wonderful their relationships are, how much they're learning about life and about themselves. It's not the supplement or the skin cream that did that. Sure, in many cases, you do have life-changing products. But what's really changed is their entire life.

(Oct 02)

Vic Conant is President and CEO of Nightingale-Conant Cor

Paul Zane Pilzer

More than any other business, network marketing starts with the core: not with the product or the service, but with helping other people by teaching them how to succeed, regardless of their education or what business or field they've been in. What's so exciting about network marketing is that you can offer this opportunity to anyone, and people can maximize the value of their life experiences instead of having those life experiences limit their opportunity.

(Aug 03)

Paul Zane Pilzer is author of the New York Times bestseller *God Wants You to Be Rich*

Sharon Wilson

People who are attracted to network marketing tend to be more open; they're already "outside the box" thinkers, looking for a better way ... a way that gives them a better sense of balance. This goes hand in hand with an inquiry into more spiritual values. I think network marketing provides a fertile ground for spirituality. The concept of network marketing itself is all about creating an opportunity for collaboration, for win-wins, for everyone achieving their dreams.

(Aug 03)

Sharon Wilson is founder of the Coaching from Spirit Foundation

David Bach

The simplicity of network marketing is that you find something you deeply believe in, then use it yourself and tell other people about it. I believe God put each one of us here to do something special. Most of us aren't doing whatever it is we were put here to do, because we're living paycheck to paycheck. Network marketing is a chance for you to make a little extra money, and with that, to buy your freedom. Do that, and you'll spend the rest of your life doing what you were put here to do.

(Mar 05)

David Bach is author of six consecutive New York Times bestsellers, including *The Automatic Millionaire*

Robert Kiyosaki

Network marketing teaches basic, critical life skills. It teaches people how to overcome their fears, how to communicate, and how to handle rejection and maintain persistence. This kind of education is absolutely priceless. Here's what I tell people: "Even if you don't like it, stay with it for five years and you'll be better equipped to survive in the real world of business. And you'll be a better person." The people who are successful in network marketing have a spiritual cause. They genuinely want to help better others' lives. If you don't have that, if you just want a paycheck, then work for the post office!

(Mar 05)

Robert Kiyosaki is author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Rich Dad Poor Dad*

T. Harv Eker

The unusual and wonderful thing about network marketing is that everyone around you is working to help you grow, instead of trying to keep you down! In what other business do you have people making \$50,000 and more a month—and they're willing to tell you exactly how they did it?

(May 05)

T. Harv Eker is author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Secrets of the Millionaire Mind*

Denis Waitley, Ph.D.

Network marketing is a tremendous way to cross boundaries and eliminate prejudice. This business offers an opportunity to transcend cultures, geography and even belief systems. It gives you the opportunity to deal with your global neighbors around the common idea of being more self-determined. It gives you the opportunity to eliminate or at least sidestep hierarchies—politics, ethnicity, culture, any barriers—and do business with one another, directly and globally. It doesn't really matter whether you speak the language or whether you eat differently or pray differently.

(Jan 04)

Denis Waitley is author of the New York Times bestseller *Seeds of Greatness*

Brian Biro

The beauty of network marketing is that if you are an effective coach, if you really do build people and help them break through their fears, it becomes a complete circle of success. You feel great, they're going to do better, that feeds your business and your income—and you're also providing a model for this person, who's now also going to become a coach. You don't have to be the most articulate; you don't have to be the most educated; you don't have to be the greatest speaker.

(Apr 04) Brian Biro is author of *Beyond Success*

Cameron Johnson

In the past few years, the model of affiliate marketing and click-through plans has helped legitimize the model of network marketing for a whole new generation. Network marketing is huge. Word of mouth is the best form of advertising.

(Jul 04)

Cameron Johnson is author of the international bestseller *You Call the Shots*

Scott Allen

Network marketing has so obviously been such a successful business model, there's a good deal here that mainstream networkers can learn. The top network marketers know that the three-foot rule is not what you do. If there is a three-foot rule, it's this: Anybody within three feet of you is worth getting to know a little better.

(May 06)

Scott Allen is coauthor of *The Virtual Handshake* and is Entrepreneurs Guide for About.com

Jim Turner

The significant thing that people often miss about network marketing is that it's in the vanguard of a major consumer movement, in which consumers and producers are merging and becoming the same thing. In a way, multilevel marketing companies are the first generation of what Alvin Toffler calls prosumers [producer-consumers], because the marketing network is also the customer network. Every individual produces and consumes; it's like breathing—exhale, inhale. The more balanced you can be in production and consumption, the better your life is. And the more people who are balanced that way, the better the society is. There are now some fifteen million people in network marketing [in the U.S.], and this is making a huge difference in the maturation of what it means to be a consumer, because you are by definition playing a more involved role in the production / consumption cycle. If you made this the leading story of what multilevel marketers are doing, it would really help fuel the further growth of the community. And in doing so, you could easily become a significant part of the majority of households in America.

(Nov 06)

Jim Turner, Esq. is cofounder of Swankin & Turner and Chairman of the Board of Citizens for Health

Frank Maguire

I believe America's economic future, the health of its commerce and service, is rooted in effective network marketing. People are sick and tired of the deprivation of human dignity they experience at the hands of so many of today's corporations, which in the past ten years have scooped up all the quid for the guys on top, leaving behind some very talented people without a future. Network marketing is turning off the spotlight of working for a corporation, and turning on the floodlight of the greatness that we all have within us. I love what you're doing in network marketing, because you're creating an opportunity to affect the self-esteem of many, many people. You're giving people hope and providing a launching pad for them to discover their own greatness. I think network marketing is potentially the greatest economic opportunity that has ever existed.

(Sep 06)

Frank Maguire is former senior executive for FedEx, KFC, ABC and American Airlines

Bob Proctor

The beautiful thing about network marketing is that it is the most moral form of compensation there is. And it follows the very best income-earning strategy: you're leveraging yourself and you're providing great service. You're waking people up. You're showing people how to spend their days doing what they love to do, while at the same time earning an excellent income. Properly executed, network marketing gives people time and money freedom. It gives them liberty, which is their birthright.

(Mar 07)

Bob Proctor is author of *You Were Born Rich*

Brad Sugars

The reason I think network marketing is the best business for so many people is that you don't have to learn everything about business to start. You don't have to learn production, shipping and so many other aspects of business. You've got to learn sales, marketing and team-building. If you can get those three things down, you'll be all right. Your first year in network marketing is your apprenticeship. If you don't make any money in your first year, who cares? You've spent a year learning the trade.

(Jul 07)

Brad Sugars is author of *Billionaire in Training*

Barbara Marx Hubbard

I like network marketing because, at least to some degree, it transcends the current competitive system. It's about synergistic leadership, that is, leadership that facilitates and empowers rather than dominates and controls. I don't think we're going to have peace if we

don't piece together the emergent potentials of our system. The pieces need to be networked— and that brings us back around to network marketing. I think it is prefiguring global intelligence.

(May 08)

Barbara Marx Hubbard is author of
Conscious Evolution

Gregg Braden

Every species in nature benefits from cooperation. When they behave cooperatively, they consistently produce more off-spring, live longer and live more successfully. And [researchers have] found the same thing within indigenous human populations throughout the world: longevity and quality of life increases when they cooperate in the gathering and sharing of food, water and other resources. The same principles apply in business: the more we can cooperate, the better we'll do. That's what network marketing is all about.

(Jul 08)

Gregg Braden is author of the
New York Times bestseller *The Isaiah Effect*

Dr. Leonard Laskow

Network marketing is really about love. What makes network marketing more successful and in many ways more efficient than many other forms of marketing, is that it's based on one-to-one relationships. Most successful network marketers sooner or later recognize the role of connectedness or relatedness—which is to say, love—in network marketing. The top people in networking are very much in touch with their hearts. The heart's intelligence is the recognition of the oneness and the unity of all. If a business is going to be successful, it's ultimately going to have to come down to a recognition of unity.

(Nov 08)

Dr. Leonard Laskow is author of *Healing with Love*