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Direct Selling News

DSA News

Building Our Brand With Policymakers

by Paul Skowronek

Smart companies that recognize the advantages of the direct selling channel in growing their businesses understand that building their brands around robust corporate social responsibility programs helps them establish legitimacy and trust with consumers, whose expectations continue to rise.

To succeed at building the direct selling channel's brand with a policymaker audience over time, however, DSA—in partnership with our members—must credibly demonstrate the value of the channel by injecting it into policy conversations of the day.

This is precisely what we did in late July when DSA played a key role in helping American Action Forum (AAF), a prestigious Washington, D.C., policy think tank, orchestrate an event about the rise of the independent worker and the proliferation of technology. This was to help policymakers better appreciate the value of direct selling, which, of course, is among the most established entrepreneurial opportunities.

Rodan + Fields President and CEO as well as DSA Vice Chair Lori Bush stated that the direct selling channel allowed her company and consultants to succeed by breaking out of the glass counter, allowing consultants to set their own hours, create their own business plan and determine how to best serve their customers. Rodan + Fields consultants found the business to be an attractive alternative to otherwise successful careers that did not afford the work-lifestyle balance they sought.

Commissioner Maureen Ohlhausen of the Federal Trade Commission also delivered an important message: The still-nascent market for working independently in the 21st century needs to continue to develop before officials consider how to strike the right balance between encouraging entrepreneurial business opportunities and protecting customers.

So long as news stories about Uber, technology and the sharing economy continue to proliferate—raising questions around workplace fairness, the status of independent contractors and related issues—there will be a need for policymakers to better understand that direct selling is one example of working independently done right.



Rodan + Fields President and CEO Lori Bush shares

with policymakers how direct selling helped her company in ways retail could not.

DSA will continue to seek out opportunities for direct selling to be part of enlightened conversation in this and other areas. While we will always need to fight often difficult legislative battles in the states and here in Washington, D.C., that could diminish direct selling if

lost, we also can bolster the image of the channel over time. We can accomplish this if we become more astute at explaining our value proactively, and most importantly, in a manner that isn't overtly self-serving and that resonates with a policymaker audience.

To learn more about the July 30 AAF event, please visit: <http://goo.gl/5sn4YX>.



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