Public Perceptions of Direct Selling: An International Perspective

Stewart Brodie – University of Westminster, UK
Gerald Albaum – University of New Mexico, USA
Der-Fa Robert Chen - National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
Leonardo Garcia – De La Salle University, The Philippines
Rowan Kennedy – Monash University, Australia
Pumela Msweli-Mbanga – University of Natal, South Africa
Elina Oksanen-Ylikoski – Helsinki School of Economics, Finland
Thomas Wotruba – San Diego State University, USA

Westminster Business School
Research Report - 2004

ISBN 0-9539845-5-9
Published by University of Westminster Press

Authors

Stewart Brodie has been involved in direct selling since 1963. He is a former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Tupperware Company and former President and CEO of the Mary Kay Cosmetics operations in Europe. He is past Chairman of the UK Direct Selling Association (DSA) and currently serves on the Legal Affairs Committee of the Federation of European Direct Selling Associations (FEDSA). Dr. Brodie continues his research as Research Fellow with the Future of Work Research Group at the Westminster Business School, University of Westminster, UK. (brodies@westminster.ac.uk)

Gerald Albaum is Visiting Scholar at the Robert O. Anderson Schools of Management, University of New Mexico and Professor Emeritus of Marketing at University of Oregon, USA. He is also Senior Research Fellow at the IC² Institute, University of Texas, Austin, USA. Professor Albaum has been a visiting professor and scholar at universities in Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, Turkey, France, Finland and Hong Kong. (albaum@mgt.unm.edu)

Der-Fa Robert Chen is a professor and former chairman of the Department of Business Management, National Sun Yat-sen University, in Taiwan. He was the founding member of the board of directors at the Taiwan Institute of Direct Selling and was elected the chairman of the Institute in 1995. He established the Direct Selling Research Center at National Sun Yat-sen University in 1998 and has been the Director since then. He has organized an annual Academic Symposium on Direct Selling since 1995 and published the proceedings every year. Professor Chen is also the Code Administrator of the Taiwan Direct Selling Association (DSA). (derfa@bm.nsysu.edu.tw)

Leonardo Garcia, Jr., is a full Professor in Marketing at the College of Business and Economics at De La Salle University in Manila, and was formerly the Director of the CBE Graduate Studies and Chairman of the Marketing Management Department. Additionally, Garcia is currently a research, strategic planning, and integrated marketing communications consultant and a trainer/speaker of industry or company-sponsored seminars and workshops. Previously, he had over ten years of senior management, advertising experience in Korea. Professor Garcia was last year's President of the Philippine Marketing Association and is now its Director for International Relations. In 1999, he wrote a book on Advocacy Advertising, one of the three finalists in the Media Category of the 2000 National Book Awards, and a book on E-Marketing, published by Anvil Publications in 2002. (garcialr@dlsu.edu.ph)

Rowan Kennedy is a lecturer in the Department of Marketing at Monash University, in Melbourne, where she is completing her Ph.D. thesis. Currently, she is lecturing in Sales Management and Marketing Communication. (rowan.kennedy@buseco.monash.edu.au)

Pumela Msweli-Mbanga is Associate Professor in the Management Division of the School of Economics and Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in Durban, South Africa. She studied and received her doctorate at the University of Exeter, UK. Professor Msweli-Mbanga lectures in Marketing, Marketing Research and Business Research Methods. (mbangap@nu.ac.za)

Elina Oksanen-Ylikoski is currently working on her Ph.D. thesis, 'Network Marketing Images: Construction of Selling and Sales People in Social Settings', at the Helsinki School of Economics, in Finland. Additionally, she works as Marketing Manager at the Finnish Direct Marketing Association. The research interests of Oksanen-Ylikowski involve representations of personal selling, network marketing and salespeople in academic, professional and media settings. (elina@ssml.fi)

Thomas Wotruba is Emeritus Professor of Marketing, San Diego State University, where he taught for 38 years. He has authored or co-authored six textbooks and published more than 80 research monographs and professional journal articles. He is the former editor of the *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* and served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Marketing, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Marketing Management, Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* and *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management.* He has been actively involved in direct selling research since 1985, and received the Circle of Honor award from the US Direct Selling Educational Foundation in 2000. Professor Wotruba has travelled world-wide addressing conferences and meetings and taught for a semester in the MBA programme for the Czechoslovak Management Centre. (twotruba@mail.sdsu.edu)

Public Perceptions of Direct Selling: An International Perspective

Introduction

Some years ago, with the support of the UK Direct Selling Association, the University of Westminster published a Research Report (1998) 'Public Perceptions of Direct Selling in the United Kingdom'. An *ad hoc* group of academics attending the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA) Congress in Toronto as guests of the Direct Selling Education Foundation (DSEF) decided to repeat the 1998 study on an international basis. Eight countries participated and the data were collected during 2003.

Research objectives

This research paper reports on a study of public perceptions and experiences of direct selling as a channel of distribution for goods and services and also as a personal business opportunity in eight different countries (United States, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, The Philippines, Finland and the United Kingdom). It deals with people who have, and also those who have not, been in contact with direct selling, as a customer, or even as a direct seller.

Direct Selling

Definition

Taking the earlier definition by Berry (1997) as a start and adding the 'and/or' caveat, we now define 'direct selling' as:

'the obtaining of orders and the supply of consumer products (goods and services) to private individuals away from normal retail premises, usually in their homes, or place of work, in transactions initiated and/or concluded by a salesperson'.

By using this definition it is also possible to differentiate between 'direct selling' and 'direct marketing', where 'direct marketing' implies that the initiation, at least, of the transaction is by the use of some form of media, for example, mail order catalogues, direct response, mail shots, advertisements, TV, electronic and tele-marketing, rather than by a person.

Extent

On a world-wide basis, it is estimated that 47.2 million individuals are involved in direct selling, producing over $85 billion in retail sales revenue (World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA), 2004). The individual figures given by the WFDSA for the participating countries are shown in Table I -

Table I

	Retail Sales (US $ 'millions)	Number of Direct Sellers	Total Population	Direct Sellers as % of total population
United Kingdom	2,024.0	501,000	58,800,000	0.9%
Finland	90.8	52,720	5,200,000	1.0%
South Africa	180.0	400,000	43,400,000	0.9%
Australia	1,200.0	650,000	18,972,000	3.4%
New Zealand	77.4	97,000	3,942,000	2.5%
Taiwan	1,255.0	3,200,000	22,300,000	14.5%
The Philippines	238.0	2,000,000	76,500,000	2.6%
USA	28,700.0	13,000,000	276,059,000	4.7%

Operation

'Direct selling' is usually undertaken by the sales forces of the direct selling organisations (DSOs) involved in the industry. These sales forces are largely made up of self-employed, part-time, independent contractors (ICs). However, these ICs usually trade under the 'banner', or logo, of a larger enterprise. Many of the well-known DSOs, such as Avon Cosmetics, Amway, Herbalife, Mary Kay Cosmetics and Tupperware, are, in fact, major, multi-national corporations with sales revenues measured in billions of dollars. DSOs normally operate on one of two principle methods, namely, 'person-to-person', or 'party-plan'. 'Person-to-person' is where the product is demonstrated and explained in private homes, or places of work, on an individual basis. It also includes the giving of a catalogue, or brochure, to a potential customer, thus providing the customer with the opportunity to study the product range, before placing an order with the direct seller at a later call. 'Person-to person' methods are used by about 90% of DSOs in the UK (DSA, 2004). 'Party Plan' is where the direct seller demonstrates to a group of people, usually in the home of a customer who acts as, and is rewarded by the direct seller for being, the host(ess).

Organisation

In simple terms, a direct selling organisation (DSO) may be organised in two differing ways, which basically reflect the remuneration plan for the self-employed, independent contractors who make up the sales forces of these companies.

A **single level** (SL) company offers the new direct seller the sole opportunity of making a retail profit by selling products on a person-to-person basis, or through party plan. In SL DSOs, recruiting and training of new participants is usually carried out by managers appointed by the company, who may or not be self-employed and may or may not be involved in making personal sales.

In a **multi-level** marketing (MLM) company, the new participant is immediately offered the opportunity of benefiting not only from their personal sales, which again may be from person-to-person or party plan, but also from the sales of those they may recruit, directly and indirectly, into the business. They will be paid over-ride commissions and bonuses based on the acceptance of their ongoing responsibility to train and motivate these recruits.

Industry Data

Much of the data regarding direct selling in the UK come from the Direct Selling Association (DSA), the trade association for the industry, who are very specific as to what should be included and excluded in their data. Their data (DSA, 2004) **include** (1) person to person direct sales in private homes resulting from (a) cold sales calls, (b) appointments made either by telephone, or in response to a lead generated by an advertisement or a leaflet drop, (c) the collection of orders following the prior distribution of catalogues, and (d) the offer of ongoing credit arrangements, or the collection of regular pre-payments; (2) sales to groups of customers at sales 'parties' held in private homes and at other social events; and (3) sales made to individuals or to groups of individuals at their place of work.

Equally, DSA data **exclude** (1) the sale and delivery of non-frozen food, milk and grocery items supplied by regular roundsmen; (2) direct sales of financial services, as regulated by the Personal Investment Authority; (3) sales of double glazing and other home improvements involving on-site labour costs; (4) all other categories of direct marketing, for example, mail order catalogues, mail shots, off-the-page and direct response mail order, TV home shopping and Internet; and (5) matrix based multi-level marketing (MLM) schemes offering participants, in return for regular subscriptions, discounts on goods and services, in addition to rewards for recruitment, since such schemes are illegal under the Trading Schemes Act 1996.

The UK DSA practices and policies regarding data included and excluded are generally applicable to other countries.

Gender bias of direct sellers

As a general indicator, with regard to gender, the current break-down of UK direct sellers (DSA, 2004) is shown in Table II -

Table II

Female	69%
Male	12%
Partnerships	19%
Total	100%

Products (Goods and Services)

As an example, in Table III, the range and value of UK Direct Selling relating to consumer products shows (DSA, 2004) -

Table III

Category	**Products**	**%**
Personal	cosmetics, fragrances, skincare, jewellery, ladies' and children's clothing and other personal items	26%
Food	frozen food, nutritional supplements and diet plans	4%
Wellness	nutritional supplements, diet plans, aromatherapy and other products	7%
Household	security, water treatment, energy saving, electrical, home decorative, furnishings, cookware, tableware, kitchenware, houseware, home and car cleaning and other household products	14%
Family	books, toys, games, audio, video, financial, other household products and business aids	17%
Services	telecoms and utilities	32%
Total	all products (goods and services)	100%

It can be argued that direct selling is in a strongly competitive market place, since all these products ranges are not unique to direct selling and are aggressively marketed in the normal retail outlets.

Other direct channels of distribution

Home shopping may be split into five categories: agency and direct mail order, direct selling, direct response and TV/on-line shopping. Whereas sales growth is expected in all categories of home shopping (Verdict Retail Report, 2002), the changes are forecast to be dwarfed by the growth of on-line shopping. Worth some £1.3 billion in 2000, the UK on-line shopping is expected to reach £14.4 billion in 2006. By way of comparison, in 2002, UK direct selling accounted for £2.0 billion total sales (DSA, 2004).

Research Methodology

After due diligence, it was decided that the best format, allowing for time and finance restraints, would be the interviewing of a quota sample (n=500). These samples were to be created to represent each participating country's total population, with reference to chosen variables, in this case, gender and age. As an example, the UK sample creation, based on figures from UK Census (2001), is detailed in Appendix A.

As the interview questionnaire would be referring to the purchase of consumer goods, it was decided that the interviews should ideally be conducted in major shopping malls, where it would be easier to guarantee the interviewing of the complete quota sample, as created.

In the UK, all 500 interviews were conducted within four days by a team of University of Westminster post-graduate students. By careful selection of the interviewees during the third and fourth days, the team was able to fulfil the targeted age group allocations as planned. The entire UK sample actually contained 499 useable observations, 256 female and 243 male.

The procedure used in the UK is an example of the procedures used in most countries. However, in the US, because of resource restraints, the procedure involved gathering responses by internet rather than through shopping mall intercepts, or other face-to-face methods. Therefore, it has been decided to define the sample selected in each country as a convenience sample (n=x) of adults aged 16 and over, without any particular reference to gender, age, marital status, socio-economic grouping or domicile (urban/suburban/rural). By the same token, the eight countries participating are also a convenience sample and were not deliberately chosen as representative of direct selling around the world. However, in Table IV, the breakdowns by gender and age is given for each country's convenience sample are given -

Table IV

	n=	Male %	Female %	Aged 16 - 64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	499	49%	51%	80%	20%
Finland	496	49%	51%	81%	19%
South Africa	545	51%	49%	83%	17%
Australia	500	39%	61%	89%	11%
New Zealand	500	39%	61%	88%	12%
Taiwan	500	51%	49%	89%	11%
The Philippines	500	42%	58%	99%	1%
USA	723	76%	24%	96%	4%
Global Sample	**4,263**	51%	49%	88%	12%

Interview Protocol

The interviews were carried out using a specifically designed questionnaire (as an example, Appendix C shows the UK edition of questionnaire), to be completed by the researcher at the time of the interview, and supporting cards, to be shown to the interviewee. The questionnaire was created using SphinxSurvey data analysis software. The perception questions were answered by the respondents giving a rating on a five-point Likert-type scale, where '1' indicated 'very poor/low', '3' indicated a 'neutral' position and '5' indicated 'very good/high'. The ratings on 'pressure to buy' were reversed when entering the data, thus maintaining that a higher Likert score still corresponded with a more positive comment. Based on the quota sample (Appendix A), the researchers were given the profiles of those they had to interview, for example, 'male - age 25 - 54'. They would then approach a male of 'likely' age and, showing Card 1 (Appendix B), ask into which age group they belonged. If the answer was the correct age group, the interviewer would continue with the interview and, if not, the interview was terminated and the interviewer would seek another possible respondent to match the profile.

Again if the respondent, on being shown Card 2 (Appendix B), indicated that, during the past 12 months, they had not purchased any of the named products, the interview was terminated. After being shown the list of selected DSA member companies, operating in their country, interviewees were asked if, during the past 12 months, they had purchased products from any direct selling company. If the answer was 'No', then these non-customers were asked, prior to the termination of the interview, (i) if they would ever consider buying from this type of company, and (ii) to rate their perceptions of five variables relating to direct selling. Those interviewees identified as 'customers' were asked further questions, including their perceptions of direct selling and direct sellers.

Analysis of Results

All data were entered into the SphinxSurvey data analysis software, where it was possible to tabulate, automatically, the coded questionnaire responses. Various one-way tabulations were carried out on the total data and data for the gender and age group sub-samples. Additionally, comparisons were made between those respondents who had been 'customers' of direct sellers and those who were 'non-customers'. To add some degree of detail in the analysis, comparisons of results are provided by gender and age for each sub-sample of 'Customers' and 'Non-customers'. The term 'Global Sample' is used to describe the sample created by the aggregation of the eight, individual country samples. It should be noted that, for all analyses, non-responses were ignored. Additionally, within any cell where the number of cases within a sub-sample is ten or fewer, this is flagged by a bracketed asterisk (*) in the cell.

Comments are limited to the global sample and any obvious, country deviations from the norm.

Product Purchase

Eligibility to move forward with the questionnaire was based on the interviewees being shown Card 2. This gave an extensive list of products obtainable from direct sellers, as well as through normal retail distribution. If, for any reason, the interviewee had not purchased any of the products listed within the previous 12 months, the interview was terminated. Table V shows the percentages that had purchased at least one of the products on the list –

Table V

	All	**Male**	**Female**	**Aged 16-64**	**Aged 65 and over**
United Kingdom	99%	99%	100%	99%	98%
Finland	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
South Africa	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Australia	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
New Zealand	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Taiwan	92%	91%	93%	95%	70%
The Philippines	92%	84%	98%	92%	(*) 83%
USA	91%	94%	81%	92%	68%
Global Sample	96%	96%	97%	97%	94%

Globally, only 4% claimed not to have bought any of the listed items. The USA 'female' and 'aged 65 and over' sub-samples were noted to be substantially different from their counterparts in the other countries.

DSA Member Company Recognition

Interviewees were shown Card 3, on which was printed a selected list of DSA member companies in their country, and then asked if they recognised any of the company names. If required, a prompt that 'These are all direct selling companies whose products are sold by direct sellers in the home or office, rather than in shops' was given. Table VI shows the percentage recognising at least one company –

Table VI

	All	**Male**	**Female**	**Aged 16-64**	**Aged 65 and over**
United Kingdom	95%	92%	97%	95%	95%
Finland	96%	93%	98%	97%	91%
South Africa	99%	98%	99%	99%	95%
Australia	95%	92%	96%	94%	96%
New Zealand	95%	94%	96%	96%	92%
Taiwan	91%	89%	93%	93%	69%
The Philippines	94%	90%	96%	94%	(*) 100%
USA	99%	99%	98%	99%	100%
Global Sample	96%	94%	97%	96%	92%

Globally, a total of 96% of all respondents recognised at least one name of a local DSA member company and, in many cases, all. The lowest recognition (92%) was from the group aged 65 and over. It is noted that the percentage figure for the 'aged 65 and over' sub-sample in Taiwan was much lower than the other countries.

Purchasing from a DSO

Interviewees were asked if they had purchased from a DSO in the previous twelve months. The percentages of the various samples who had, are shown below –

Table VII

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	51%	47%	55%	53%	42%
Finland	25%	12%	37%	27%	13%
South Africa	72%	68%	77%	77%	51%
Australia	37%	19%	48%	37%	35%
New Zealand	33%	23%	39%	34%	19%
Taiwan	42%	32%	51%	43%	26%
The Philippines	69%	57%	77%	70%	(*) 40%
USA	43%	47%	29%	43%	37%
Global Sample	46%	40%	53%	48%	32%

Globally, just under half (46%) of all interviewees had made a purchase from a DSO in the previous twelve months. However, there was considerable variation among the countries. South Africa had the highest response at 72% and Finland the lowest at 25%.

At this stage, all those who answered 'Yes' to the previous question were considered to be 'customers'. The 'non-customers', that is, those respondents who answered 'No', were then asked if, in the future, they would ever consider purchasing from a direct selling company. Table VIII shows the percentage of those who responded 'Yes':

Table VIII

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	59%	57%	61%	59%	59%
Finland	63%	63%	64%	68%	46%
South Africa	67%	67%	67%	65%	70%
Australia	54%	49%	59%	56%	37%
New Zealand	57%	56%	58%	60%	42%
Taiwan	24%	19%	30%	24%	(*) 24%
The Philippines	78%	79%	77%	78%	(*) 67%
USA	76%	78%	71%	76%	92%
Global Sample	59%	59%	60%	61%	50%

Perceptions of Direct Selling

Both 'customers' and 'non-customers' were asked to rate their perceptions of direct selling with reference to five variables, using Likert-type response scales, from '1' (Very poor/low) to '5' (Very good/high). The responses for the negatively framed variable 'pressure to buy' were reversed at data entry and thus, in all cases, '3.0' = neutral and a higher scoring is a more positive comment.

The following five tables, one for each variable, compare the results of non-customers and customers for each of the eight countries and the global sample.

Table IX

Image of Direct Selling

		All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	Non-customers	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.9
	Customers	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.5	3.4
Finland	Non-customers	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.8
	Customers	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2
South Africa	Non-customers	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0
	Customers	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.2
Australia	Non-customers	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.3
	Customers	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.9
New Zealand	Non-customers	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.7
	Customers	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.5
Taiwan	Non-customers	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.6
	Customers	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	(*) 3.1
The Philippines	Non-Customers	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	(*) 3.3
	Customers	3.3	3.0	3.4	3.3	(*) 3.5
USA	Non-Customers	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.9	3.3
	Customers	3.7	3.7	3.2	3.7	(*) 3.4
Global Sample	Non-customers	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8
	Customers	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4

Whereas the global sample of non-customers, irrespective of gender and age, and based on second-hand information, hearsay, and other people's opinions (where their informants may or may not have had first hand experience of direct selling) shows a slightly negative perception of direct selling, the general tendency is that customers, based on their actual, first-hand, personal experience, have a considerably higher, more positive perception of direct selling.

Table X

Image of Direct Sellers

		All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	Non-customers	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9
	Customers	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.2
Finland	Non-customers	2.9	2.7	3.1	2.8	3.3
	Customers	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.9
South Africa	Non-customers	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.1
	Customers	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.2
Australia	Non-customers	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.7
	Customers	3.2	2.7	3.3	3.1	3.7
New Zealand	Non-customers	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.5
	Customers	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.2	3.4
Taiwan	Non-customers	2.4	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.3
	Customers	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	(*) 3.8
The Philippines	Non-Customers	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	(*) 3.0
	Customers	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.2	(*) 4.0
USA	Non-Customers	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.8	3.2
	Customers	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.9	(*) 3.9
Global Sample	Non-customers	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.9
	Customers	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4

Again, whereas the global sample of non-customers, irrespective of gender and age, and based on indirect information, opinion and hearsay, shows a slightly negative perception of direct sellers, the general tendency is that customers, based on their actual, personal experience, have a considerably higher, more positive perception of direct sellers.

Table XI

Value for money of products

		All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	Non-customers	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.3
	Customers	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.5	3.4
Finland	Non-customers	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.0
	Customers	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
South Africa	Non-customers	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3
	Customers	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.6	3.2
Australia	Non-customers	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.6
	Customers	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.9
New Zealand	Non-customers	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8
	Customers	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.9
Taiwan	Non-customers	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.5
	Customers	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	(*) 3.4
The Philippines	Non-Customers	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	(*) 3.0
	Customers	3.3	3.0	3.4	3.3	(*) 3.5
USA	Non-Customers	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.8
	Customers	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8	(*) 4.2
Global Sample	Non-customers	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0
	Customers	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4

Taking the global sample, it is seen that there is a tendency for customers to rate 'value for money of products' at a much higher level than non-customers. This, of course, could be partly to rationalise and justify their purchases.

Table XII

Convenience of Direct Selling

		All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	Non-customers	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.3
	Customers	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.7
Finland	Non-customers	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.1	2.9
	Customers	3.7	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.8
South Africa	Non-customers	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.7
	Customers	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.7
Australia	Non-customers	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.8
	Customers	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3
New Zealand	Non-customers	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.3
	Customers	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	4.0
Taiwan	Non-customers	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0
	Customers	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.4	(*) 4.1
The Philippines	Non-Customers	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	(*) 3.7
	Customers	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.5	(*) 4.0
USA	Non-Customers	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.2	4.3
	Customers	4.1	4.2	3.8	4.1	(*) 4.3
Global Sample	Non-customers	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.3
	Customers	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9

Globally, whereas non-customers do rate 'convenience' positively, actual customers rate the 'convenience of direct selling' much higher.

Table XIII

Pressure to Buy (Reversed Entry)

		All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	Non-customers	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.0
	Customers	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.3
Finland	Non-customers	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.6
	Customers	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.8
South Africa	Non-customers	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.3
	Customers	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.9
Australia	Non-customers	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.7	3.0
	Customers	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2
New Zealand	Non-customers	2.9	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.6
	Customers	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.3	4.0
Taiwan	Non-customers	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.9
	Customers	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.0	(*) 4.1
The Philippines	Non-Customers	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	(*) 3.0
	Customers	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	(*) 2.5
USA	Non-Customers	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.8
	Customers	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.6	(*) 3.7
Global Sample	Non-customers	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.0
	Customers	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.3

It is noted that, globally, non-customers tend to hold a less than neutral perception of possible 'pressure to buy' within the direct selling environment, whereas customers are more positive with scores over 3.0. That is, they tend to perceive that there is not 'pressure to buy' in the direct selling environment. However, in The Philippines it appeared that even customers had a negative perception of 'pressure to buy'.

Reasons for purchase

Customers were then asked specifically about their most recent purchase from a direct seller and asked to select from a selection of seven variables up to THREE main reasons for their purchase. The variable 'social obligation' refers to the concepts of 'social blackmail' and the 'I had to buy it – the direct seller is a friend/neighbour/member of the family, etc.' comment. The first table (Table XIV) shows the top three reasons given in each country, whereas the following seven tables (Tables XV – XXI) show the percentage of votes for each of the suggested reasons.

Table XIV

	1		2		3	
United Kingdom	Convenience	22%	Value for money	20%	Product need and appeal	18%
Finland	Product need and appeal	26%	Convenience	20%	Value for money	16%
South Africa	Product need and appeal	21%	Value for money	20%	Service provided	16%
Australia	Product need and appeal	25%	Convenience	20%	Service provided	17%
New Zealand	Product need and appeal	25%	Convenience	23%	Value for money	21%
Taiwan	Product need and appeal	25%	Convenience	20%	Social obligation	15%
The Philippines	Product need and appeal	22%	Convenience	18%	Company Image	16%
USA	Product need and appeal	31%	Value for money	23%	Convenience	19%
Global Sample	Product need and appeal	24%	Convenience	19%	Value for money	17%

As seen in Table XIV, on a global perspective, 'product need and appeal' (24%) is clearly the most popular reason for making a direct selling purchase with 'convenience' (19%) and 'value for money' (17%) occupying the next two positions. On the same basis, 'social obligation' and the 'image of direct seller', both at 8%, were the least selected reasons for making a direct selling purchase. However, it is noted that Taiwan, which has the highest percentage of customers (15%) voting for 'social obligation' as a reason for their most recent direct sales purchase, also has a much higher percentage of direct sellers in the population (14.5% - see Table I) than the other countries.

The following tables (Tables XV – XXI) show the percentage of votes for each of the seven reasons suggested.

Table XV

Company Image

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	15%	17%	13%	15%	13%
Finland	11%	8%	12%	11%	9%
South Africa	12%	13%	11%	12%	12%
Australia	5%	8%	5%	5%	7%
New Zealand	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Taiwan	12%	11%	13%	12%	(*) 17%
The Philippines	16%	15%	17%	16%	(*) 33%
USA	9%	9%	7%	9%	(*) 6%
Global Sample	11%	12%	11%	11%	11%

Table XVI

Image of Direct Seller

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	6%	6%	6%	6%	9%
Finland	8%	8%	8%	8%	12%
South Africa	12%	11%	12%	12%	14%
Australia	5%	6%	4%	4%	9%
New Zealand	4%	5%	4%	4%	8%
Taiwan	7%	8%	5%	7%	(*) 3%
The Philippines	14%	11%	15%	14%	(*) 0%
USA	5%	5%	7%	5%	(*) 12%
Global Sample	8%	8%	9%	8%	10%

Table XVII

Product need and appeal

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	18%	17%	20%	19%	14%
Finland	26%	30%	25%	27%	21%
South Africa	21%	21%	21%	20%	24%
Australia	25%	23%	26%	26%	18%
New Zealand	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Taiwan	25%	24%	26%	25%	(*) 30%
The Philippines	22%	19%	24%	22%	(*) 33%
USA	31%	31%	29%	31%	(*) 35%
Global Sample	24%	24%	24%	24%	21%

Table XVIII

Value for money

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	20%	19%	21%	20%	21%
Finland	16%	13%	16%	17%	6%
South Africa	20%	20%	20%	20%	17%
Australia	15%	13%	15%	15%	14%
New Zealand	21%	20%	21%	21%	25%
Taiwan	7%	5%	8%	7%	(*) 3%
The Philippines	13%	14%	13%	13%	(*) 0%
USA	23%	23%	27%	23%	(*) 24%
Global Sample	17%	18%	17%	17%	16%

Table XIX

Social obligation

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	7%	8%	5%	7%	5%
Finland	7%	7%	7%	6%	9%
South Africa	6%	5%	7%	6%	8%
Australia	12%	11%	13%	13%	11%
New Zealand	5%	5%	5%	6%	0%
Taiwan	15%	16%	15%	16%	(*) 10%
The Philippines	7%	9%	6%	7%	(*) 0%
USA	6%	6%	3%	6%	(*) 6%
Global Sample	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%

Table XX

Convenience

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	22%	22%	23%	22%	25%
Finland	20%	18%	20%	19%	27%
South Africa	13%	13%	14%	14%	10%
Australia	20%	22%	20%	20%	23%
New Zealand	23%	20%	24%	23%	22%
Taiwan	20%	22%	19%	20%	(*) 27%
The Philippines	18%	20%	17%	18%	(*) 33%
USA	19%	20%	17%	20%	(*) 12%
Global Sample	19%	19%	19%	19%	20%

Table XXI

Service provided

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	12%	12%	12%	11%	14%
Finland	12%	15%	12%	12%	15%
South Africa	16%	17%	15%	16%	16%
Australia	17%	16%	17%	16%	19%
New Zealand	19%	20%	18%	19%	17%
Taiwan	13%	13%	13%	14%	(*) 10%
The Philippines	9%	12%	8%	9%	(*) 0%
USA	7%	6%	8%	7%	(*) 6%
Global Sample	13%	13%	13%	13%	15%

Relationship between Direct Seller and Customer

Again, based on their most recent involvement with a direct seller, interviewees were asked what was their relationship (Family, Friend or Stranger) with the direct seller. The following three tables (Tables XXII – XXIV) show the percentage for each relationship -

Table XXII

Family

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	14%	13%	15%	13%	24%
Finland	6%	16%	3%	7%	0%
South Africa	26%	25%	28%	25%	36%
Australia	8%	14%	6%	8%	0%
New Zealand	8%	9%	8%	8%	8%
Taiwan	6%	6%	7%	6%	(*) 10%
The Philippines	22%	28%	20%	23%	(*) 0%
USA	17%	19%	10%	18%	(*) 0%
Global Sample	16%	19%	14%	16%	19%

Table XXIII

Friend

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	22%	20%	24%	24%	16%
Finland	52%	40%	55%	52%	50%
South Africa	43%	43%	43%	43%	38%
Australia	29%	14%	33%	30%	21%
New Zealand	21%	20%	21%	22%	8%
Taiwan	55%	54%	56%	57%	(*) 20%
The Philippines	58%	46%	64%	58%	(*) 100%
USA	47%	48%	41%	47%	(*) 43%
Global Sample	42%	40%	43%	43%	28%

Table XXIV

Stranger

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	63%	67%	60%	64%	61%
Finland	42%	44%	42%	41%	50%
South Africa	31%	32%	30%	31%	27%
Australia	63%	72%	61%	61%	79%
New Zealand	71%	70%	71%	70%	83%
Taiwan	38%	40%	37%	37%	(*) 70%
The Philippines	19%	25%	17%	19%	(*) 0%
USA	36%	34%	49%	35%	(*) 57%
Global Sample	42%	41%	42%	41%	53%

From the previous three tables it may be seen that, globally, 16% of the purchases were from a member of the family, 42% from a friend, and 42% were from strangers. However, purchases from ‘family’ ranged from 26% in South Africa to 6% in Taiwan. Purchases from ‘friends’ ranged from 21% in New Zealand to 58% in The Philippines and purchases from ‘strangers’ ranged from 19% in The Philippines to 71% in New Zealand.

Customers' overall experience with direct selling

By definition, at this stage in the questionnaire all interviewees were customers and they were asked to think of their most recent direct sales purchase and the direct seller involved and to rate him/her on the following points from ‘1’ (very poor/low) to ‘5’ (very good/high). The responses for the negatively framed variable ‘pressure to buy’ were reversed at data entry and thus, in all cases, '3.0' = neutral and a higher scoring is a more positive comment. Tables XXV – XXXII show the scoring on these variables, globally and within each country, by the various sub-samples -

Table XXV

Courtesy and friendliness

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.9	3.7	4.1	3.9	3.9
Finland	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.4
South Africa	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.5
Australia	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4
New Zealand	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.2
Taiwan	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.4	(*) 4.1
The Philippines	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	(*) 4.0
USA	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.6	(*) 4.7
Global Sample	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

Table XXVI

Honesty and sincerity

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.7	3.7
Finland	4.1	3.8	4.2	4.1	4.4
South Africa	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4
Australia	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.0	4.2
New Zealand	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.8
Taiwan	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3	(*) 4.0
The Philippines	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.6	(*) 3.5
USA	4.4	4.5	4.1	4.4	(*) 4.7
Global Sample	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8

Table XXVII

Professional approach

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9
Finland	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8	4.1
South Africa	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5
Australia	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.4
New Zealand	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8
Taiwan	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.2	(*) 3.6
The Philippines	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	(*) 4.0
USA	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.2	(*) 4.4
Global Sample	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.9

Table XXVIII

Pressure to buy (Reversed entry)

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.0	2.9
Finland	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.8	4.0
South Africa	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.3
Australia	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.4
New Zealand	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.7
Taiwan	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	(*) 3.4
The Philippines	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	(*) 2.0
USA	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	(*) 4.0
Global Sample	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.3

Whereas, globally, the respondents perceive that there was not 'pressure to buy' in their most recent direct selling purchase, it was noted that there appeared to be a tendency towards this perception in The Philippines.

Table XXIX

Interest in your specific needs

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5
Finland	3.0	2.7	3.1	3.0	3.1
South Africa	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.2
Australia	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.4	3.5
New Zealand	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.7
Taiwan	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	(*) 3.9
The Philippines	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	(*) 3.0
USA	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.1	(*) 4.6
Global Sample	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.4

Table XXX

Responsiveness

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9
Finland	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.2
South Africa	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.2
Australia	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.1
New Zealand	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.3
Taiwan	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.3	(*) 3.3
The Philippines	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	(*) 4.0
USA	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3	(*) 4.7
Global Sample	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.7

Table XXXI

Knowledge of products

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.1
Finland	4.0	3.8	4.1	3.9	4.5
South Africa	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.7
Australia	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.5
New Zealand	4.0	3.6	4.1	3.9	4.3
Taiwan	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.2	(*) 3.7
The Philippines	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5	(*) 4.0
USA	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4	(*) 4.6
Global Sample	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.1

Table XXXII

Ability to guarantee products

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.7
Finland	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6
South Africa	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.3
Australia	3.9	3.5	4.0	3.9	3.5
New Zealand	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.8
Taiwan	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	(*) 3.6
The Philippines	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.4	(*) 3.0
USA	4.3	4.4	3.7	4.3	(*) 4.4
Global Sample	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6

Overall, it may be seen that the ratings are very positive with the highest rating going to 'courtesy and friendliness'. Other variables with particularly high, positive scoring are 'honesty and sincerity', 'professional approach', 'responsiveness', 'knowledge of products' and 'ability to guarantee products'. Gender and age do not appear to have a strong moderating effect.

Selling method of customer's most recent direct selling purchase?

Interviewees were asked if their most recent direct sales purchase took place on a person-to-person basis, or in a group. The following two tables (Tables XXXIII and XXXIV) show the various, sub-sample percentages for each type of direct selling operation -

Table XXXIII

Person–to-person

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	89%	90%	89%	90%	84%
Finland	34%	48%	30%	36%	17%
South Africa	74%	80%	68%	74%	72%
Australia	70%	89%	65%	69%	79%
New Zealand	87%	93%	85%	86%	100%
Taiwan	64%	71%	59%	66%	(*) 30%
The Philippines	77%	76%	78%	77%	(*) 50%
USA	77%	77%	78%	78%	(*) 71%
Global Sample	74%	79%	70%	74%	71%

Table XXXIV

Group/Party

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	11%	10%	11%	10%	16%
Finland	66%	52%	70%	64%	83%
South Africa	26%	20%	32%	26%	28%
Australia	30%	11%	35%	31%	21%
New Zealand	13%	7%	15%	14%	0%
Taiwan	36%	29%	41%	34%	(*) 70%
The Philippines	23%	24%	22%	23%	(*) 50%
USA	23%	23%	22%	22%	(*) 29%
Global Sample	26%	21%	30%	26%	29%

Although there is a variation among the countries, on a global perspective the figures indicate that about 74% of direct sales were made on a 'person-to-person' basis and that 26% took place at a 'group/ party'. On the percentage ratio of 'person-to-person' to 'group/party', the main variations occurred in the United Kingdom at 89/11, New Zealand at 87/13 and Finland at 34/66.

Would customer buy from a direct seller again?

All customers were asked if they would buy again from a direct seller. Table XXXV shows the percentage of the sub-samples that said that they would -

Table XXXV

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	89%	88%	90%	89%	89%
Finland	95%	88%	97%	96%	83%
South Africa	91%	90%	92%	92%	87%
Australia	88%	89%	88%	89%	79%
New Zealand	91%	86%	92%	90%	100%
Taiwan	76%	83%	72%	76%	(*) 80%
The Philippines	87%	81%	89%	87%	(*) 100%
USA	98%	99%	93%	94%	(*) 100%
Global Sample	90%	90%	89%	90%	88%

Globally, the overall attitude of previous customers is very positive with 90% indicating that they would purchase from a direct seller again. It was noted that Taiwan had the lowest figure at 76% and this appears to be strongly moderated by gender in that only 72% of female customers indicated that they would buy again from a direct seller.

Would customer recommend buying from a DSO to family and friends?

Customers were asked if they would recommend buying from a direct selling company to their family and friends. Table XXXVI shows the percentages of the various sub-samples that said that they would –

Table XXXVI

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	81%	82%	80%	82%	79%
Finland	75%	72%	76%	77%	58%
South Africa	88%	88%	89%	88%	89%
Australia	80%	81%	80%	80%	79%
New Zealand	77%	84%	74%	77%	83%
Taiwan	49%	46%	51%	49%	(*) 50%
The Philippines	85%	74%	89%	85%	(*) 100%
USA	94%	95%	90%	94%	(*) 100%
Global Sample	81%	83%	80%	81%	80%

Globally, the attitude of customers is very positive with 81% indicating that they would recommend buying from a DSO to their family and friends. However, the much lower figure of 49% was noted for Taiwan.

Has customer ever been a direct seller?

All customers were asked if they had, at any time, been a direct seller. Table XXXVII shows the percentages of the various sub-samples that said that they had been -

Table XXXVII

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	12%	15%	10%	13%	8%
Finland	20%	24%	19%	21%	8%
South Africa	37%	34%	40%	39%	22%
Australia	21%	22%	21%	20%	32%
New Zealand	18%	11%	21%	19%	8%
Taiwan	19%	15%	21%	19%	(*) 10%
The Philippines	46%	46%	47%	47%	(*) 0%
USA	46%	48%	39%	46%	(*) 43%
Global Sample	31%	33%	29%	32%	17%

Globally, 31% of the customers, or just over 13% of the total sample, claim to have been, or still are, direct sellers. However, these figures are influenced by the particularly high figures for The Philippines, United States and South Africa.

Would customer recommend becoming a direct seller to family or friends?

Lastly, customers were asked if they would recommend becoming a direct seller to their family or friends. Table XXXVIII shows the percentages of the various sub-samples that said they would -

Table XXXVIII

	All	Male	Female	Aged 16-64	Aged 65 and over
United Kingdom	45%	49%	43%	46%	42%
Finland	32%	36%	31%	34%	17%
South Africa	65%	64%	67%	67%	52%
Australia	45%	25%	49%	43%	58%
New Zealand	36%	41%	34%	36%	33%
Taiwan	19%	14%	22%	19%	(*) 20%
The Philippines	62%	52%	66%	62%	(*) 0%
USA	45%	45%	46%	45%	(*) 43%
Global Sample	48%	46%	49%	48%	42%

Globally, although only 31% of customers have actual experience as a direct seller, 48% of customers would recommend a direct selling activity to their family or friends. The 65% for South Africa and the 62% for The Philippines are in marked contrast to the 19% figure for Taiwan.

Global Comments

On a global perspective, from all the observations, 76% (46% of 4,263 plus 59% of 2,165) of the total sample have either bought, or would consider buying in the future, from a direct seller. Thus, it could be argued, a majority of people has a positive perception of direct selling. This is reinforced by the 90% of previous customers who would use this channel of distribution again. The 24% of people with a less positive perception and who are less prepared to buy from a direct seller may well be those who do not like to be disturbed by 'strangers' in their private environment. In particular, those over 65 may be afraid of letting people into their houses. This may explain why, globally, 58% of all respondents have bought from family and friends, rather than a stranger. Comparing this 58% to the percentage relationship of total acquaintances and total population, it may also be argued that direct sellers have a certain resistance to contacting complete strangers and choose easier options of existing relationships.

The data show that goods and services are mainly purchased in the direct selling environment because of the 'product need and appeal', 'convenience', and 'value for money' and these variables considerably outweigh the other attributes. Virtually all customers are highly perceptive of the products sold by direct selling.

Recommendations for the direct selling industry

In simple terms, people who have already had dealings with direct sellers have very positive perceptions regarding direct selling. Thus, overall, the positive perceptions of direct selling by 76% of the population are good, but still allow for considerable improvement. Improving the positive nature of the perceptions of the other 24% of the public could lead to greater success within the whole industry, since 'buying behaviour' and 'decision making' are highly dependent on a person's perception. Effectively, the industry needs to 'touch' these people just once, for it may be argued that, once they have been customers, they become more positive in their perception of direct selling and their willingness to proselytise on behalf of the industry. It is important to highlight that the whole industry would be affected by an improved situation.

Thus, the DSOs should consider concentrating part of their efforts on a broader 'industry' base, rather than just on their own company and its products. On a world-wide and individual country basis, the WFDSA and local DSAs appear to be the ideal instrument to implement a strategy for improving public perceptions. Using the DSA logo as a sign of fair trading, companies could consider participating in a scheme where stronger generic advertising and public relations programmes, publicising the trustworthiness, honesty and sincerity of direct sellers, representing an organisation which is a member of the DSA, strictly follows the law and guarantees the implementation of the industry codes, are developed. As Brodie (1995) proposed, the messages that still need to be communicated are:

(1) the direct seller is a valued member of your community;
(2) the convenience of the goods and services being brought to you by direct selling; and
(3) you can trust and depend on your direct seller and the company with which he/she is associated.

Further research

The current data are open to further multi-variate analyses by looking in more detail at the gender/age groups sub-samples and also at the potential links between different variables. Additionally, working with individual DSAs, a more comprehensive study could be undertaken with a larger quota sample (n=2,000) in any one country using, for example, socio-economic groupings, education and regional and national variations, as additional variables.

Web-sites, References and Bibliography

World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA)
www.wfdsa.org

Federation of European Direct Selling Associations (FEDSA)
www.fedsa.be

Direct Selling Association (DSA) - United Kingdom
www.dsa.org.uk

Finnish Direct Marketing Association
www.ssml.fi

Direct Selling Association of South Africa
www.dsasa.co.za

Direct Selling Association of Australia
www.dsaa.asn.au

Direct Selling Association of New Zealand
www.dsanz.co.nz

Taiwan ROC Direct Selling Association
www.dsa.org.tw

Direct Selling Association of The Philippines
www.dsap.ph

Direct Selling Association (DSA) – United States
www.dsa.org

Census 2001 (2001), National Statistics, Registrars General for England and Wales, for Scotland and for Northern Ireland

Bartlett, R. (1994), The Direct Option, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, Texas

Berry, R. (1997), Direct Selling: from door to door to network marketing, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford

Brodie, A.S. (1995), Sales Force Turnover in Direct Selling Organisations in the United Kingdom and France, University of Keele (MA Dissertation)

Churchill, G.A. (1996), Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations, The Dryden Press, Fod Worth, Texas

(DSA) Direct Selling Association (2004), The Direct Selling of Consumer Goods in the United Kingdom: Annual Survey, London

Stanworth, J., Brodie, S., Berry, R. and Kleger, A. (1998), Public Perceptions of Direct Selling in the United Kingdom, Research Report No. 2, University of Westminster

Wirthlin Worldwide (1996), Survey of Attitudes towards Direct Selling, Commissioned by US Direct Selling Association, Washington DC

Appendix A

Creation of Sample

All data taken from UK Census (2001) – some figures rounded to 100%

Total UK population	58.8 million	100%	Sample (n=500)
Total males	28.6 million	48.6%	243
Total females	30.2 million	51.4%	257
Total		100.0%	500

Males - aged	%	% adjusted	No. of interviews
Under 16	21.3%	-	-
16 – 34	25.7%	32.6%	79
35 – 54	28.7%	36.4%	89
55 – 64	10.7%	13.6%	33
65 and over	13.7%	17.4%	42
Total	100.0%	100.0%	243

Females - aged	%	% adjusted	No. of interviews
Under 16	19.2%	-	-
16 – 34	24.7%	30.5%	79
35 – 54	27.7%	34.2%	88
55 – 64	10.5%	13.0%	33
65 and over	18.0%	22.3%	57
Total	100.0%	100.0%	257

Appendix B

Questionnaire Protocol - given to the students participating as interviewers

1. Is the interviewee –

- Male
- Female

2. Into which of these age groups do you belong? *(Show Card 1*) –

Card 1

- 16 – 34
- 35 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 and over

3. During the last 12 months, have you purchased any of these products? *(Show Card 2)* -

- Yes
- No (if 'No', end interview)

Card 2

- Cosmetics, skincare
- Jewellery
- Ladies' and children's clothes
- Frozen food
- Nutritional supplements / diet plans
- Car cleaning products
- Kitchen-, table-, housewares
- Books, toys, games, videos

4. Do you recognise any of these company names? *(Show Card 3)* -

- Yes
- No (if 'No', prompt 'These are direct selling companies'- Explain)

Card 3

- Avon Cosmetics
- Amway
- Ann Summers
- Betterware
- Herbalife
- Kleen-e-ze
- Nu-Skin
- Tupperware
- Weekenders

5. During the **last 12 months**, have you purchased from any direct selling company? -

- Yes (if 'Yes', go to Question 7 and continue to complete questionnaire)
- No (if 'No', ask Questions 6 to 11, then terminate interview after Question 11)

6. Would you ever consider buying from this type of company? -

- Yes
- No

7 - 11. Please rate your perception of the following points from '1' (Very poor/low) to '5' (Very good/ high) - *(Show Card 4)* –

Card 4

- Image of Direct Selling
- Image of Direct Sellers
- Value for money of products
- Convenience of Direct Selling
- Pressure to buy

12. Thinking of your **last purchase** from a direct seller, please select THREE main reasons for your purchase *(Show Card 5)* -

Card 5

- Company image
- Sales person image
- Product need and appeal
- Value for money
- Social obligation
- Convenience
- Service provided

13. What was you relationship to the direct seller?

- Family
- Friend
- Stranger

14-21. Thinking of your last purchase and the direct seller involved, please rate him/her on the following points from '1' (Very poor/low) to '5' (Very good/high) - *(Show Card 6)* -

Card 6

- Courtesy and friendliness
- Honesty and sincerity
- Professional approach
- Pressure to buy
- Interest in your specific needs
- Responsiveness
- Knowledge of products
- Ability to guarantee products

22. Did the sale take place on a 'person-to-person' basis, or in a group?

- Person-to-Person
- Group/Party

23. Would you buy from a direct seller again?

- Yes
- No

24. Would you recommend buying from a direct selling company to your family and friends?

- Yes
- No

25. Have you ever been a direct seller yourself?

- Yes
- No

26. Would you recommend becoming a direct seller to your family and friends?

- Yes
- No

Note to Interviewer: Please remember to thank the interviewee, on behalf of the University of Westminster, for participating in the study.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

*Researcher:*_______________ *Interview No:* ____

Public Perceptions of Direct Selling: An International Perspective

1. What is the gender of the respondent?

1 | Male
2 | Female

2. (Show Card 1) - Into which of these age groups do you belong?-

1 | 16 - 34
2 | 35 - 54
3 | 55 - 64
4 | 65 and over

3. (Show Card 2) - During the last 12 months, have you purchased any of these products?

1 | Yes
2 | No

(If 'No', terminate interview)

4. (Show Card 3) - Do you recognise any of these company names? (Prompt: 'These are all 'direct selling companies' whose products are sold by direct sellers in the home and office rather than in shops.'

1 | Yes
2 | No

5. During the last 12 months, have you purchased from any direct selling company?

1 | Yes
2 | No

(If 'Yes', omit Question 6, go to Question 7 (*) and continue to complete questionnaire)
(If 'No', ask Questions 6 to 11 then terminate interview after Question 11)

6. Would you ever consider buying from this type of company?

1 | Yes
2 | No

(*) (Show Card 4) - Please rate your perception of the following points from '1' (Very poor/low) to '5' (Very good/high) -

	1	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
7. Image of Direct Selling					
8. Image of Direct Sellers					
9. Value for money of products					
10. Convenience of direct selling					
11. Pressure to buy					

(Terminate interview here if a 'No' response to Question 5)

12. (Show Card 5) - Thinking of your last purchase from a direct seller, please select up to THREE main reasons for your purchase

1 | **Company Image**
2 | **Sales Person Image**
3 | **Product need and appeal**
4 | **Value for money**
5 | **Social obligation**
6 | **Convenience**
7 | **Service provided**

13. What was your relationship to the direct salesperson?

1 | Family
2 | Friend
3 | Stranger

(Show Card 6) - Thinking of your last purchase and the direct seller involved, please rate him/her on the following points from '1' (very poor/low) to '5' (very good/high) -

	1	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
14. Courtesy and friendliness					
15. Honesty and sincerity					
16. Professional approach					
17. Pressure to buy					
18. Interest in your specific needs					
19. Responsiveness					
20. Knowledge of products					
21. Ability to guarantee products					

22. Did the sale take place on a person-to-person basis, or in a group?

1 | Person-to-person
2 | Group/party

23. Would you buy from a direct seller again?

1 | Yes
2 | No

24. Would you recommend buying from a direct selling company to your family and friends?

1 | Yes
2 | No

25. Have you ever been a direct seller yourself?

1 | Yes
2 | No

26. Lastly, would you recommend becoming a direct seller to family and friends?

1 | Yes
2 | No

Please remember to thank the respondent on behalf of the University of Westminster!

Further information

For further information about direct selling research at the University of Westminster contact:

Dr. Stewart BRODIE,	Direct Tel:	+44-(0)20-8868.3051
Westminster Business School,	University Fax:	+44-(0)20-7911.5059
University of Westminster,	University Tel:	+44-(0)20-7911.5000 Ext. 3036
35, Marylebone Road,		
London, NW1 5LS	e-mail:	brodies@westminster.ac.uk