

About DSEF

The purpose of the Direct Selling Education Foundation is to engage, equip and empower educators to provide students with an accurate understanding of the direct selling industry as a powerful go-to-market strategy, distribution model and entrepreneurial option, and to teach the correct principles of direct selling, with an emphasis on ethical business practices.

DSEF partners with members of the academic community to support research and education programs that expand knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles of direct selling. The Foundation works with professors in a variety of disciplines—including entrepreneurship, marketing, ethics, business and economics—to deliver multi-faceted programming aimed directly at the contemporary issues facing direct selling companies and consumers in a global marketplace. DSEF also sponsors campus programs to help students and faculty better understand direct selling as an industry, a channel of distribution and a pathway to entrepreneurship, and to introduce them to career opportunities at direct selling company corporate headquarters. We also sponsor and support various events, project and initiatives, like campus days, to further support our overall mission: *DSEF engages and educates the public about how direct selling empowers individuals, supports communities and strengthens economies worldwide.*

DSEF Academic Advisory Council (AAC)

DSEF's AAC was formed to strengthen our connection to the academic community and advance the understanding of the direct selling business model, value proposition and the industry's commitment to ethical entrepreneurship.

The ACC advises the DSEF leadership on the development and execution of specific project lists and timelines for studies, white papers, campus events and academic engagement materials and identifying collaborative opportunities with academic institutions, think tanks and organizations.

The Council is comprised of up to 20 academics representing a broad range of academic disciplines, including, but not limited to: Business, Ethics, Marketing, Management, Consumer Studies, Entrepreneurship and Economics.

DSEF Fellows Program

DSEF has long prioritized building productive relationships with leaders in the academic community to support programs that expand knowledge and understanding of business practices in the direct selling business model. By partnering with professors in a variety of disciplines, the Foundation educates academic leaders and influencers, as well as thousands of students about consumer, ethical, and entrepreneurship practices in the various aspects of direct selling business model, including manufacturing, marketing, and distribution. Importantly, this outreach also counters myths and misunderstandings about the direct selling channel of distribution. The 2016 formation of the DSEF Fellows program is an important step to deepen our connection to academic leaders who are committed to working with the Foundation to advance knowledge in their field of study and increase the impact and reach of our academic programs.

Research

Research is a primary vehicle through which DSEF builds relevance and credibility to advance understanding of the direct selling channel. The Foundation's Research Priorities offers numerous opportunities for white papers and other research products, produced by members of the Academic Advisory Council, DSEF Fellows, via consulting firms or independent academics.

Campus Events

DSEF works with participating universities to bring senior executives from a variety of direct selling businesses—including Fortune 500 companies and high-growth start-ups, both privately held and publicly traded—to campuses and classrooms. Direct selling company executives speak to undergraduate and graduate students about their companies, the industry and the important issues and challenges relevant to most businesses. Programs are designed to be interactive and are customized to ensure that they are pertinent to participating students, faculty and institutions.

Key objectives of DSEF's campus events include:

- Helping students better understand direct selling, a global channel of distribution with annual revenues of more than \$180 billion world-wide
- Bringing “real world” examples of marketing, entrepreneurship, research, sales management, ethics, consumer behavior and other aspects of direct selling as applied to the study of business
- Making students aware of a variety of corporate and entrepreneurial opportunities

Executives involved in this program often focus on an aspect of the class curriculum from a direct selling practitioner's perspective, while sharing “real world” experience with students.

Begun in 1989 as part of the DSEF Academic Program, DSEF's Campus Programs have been held at dozens of universities including: The University of Texas at Arlington, The University of Texas at Austin, Baylor University, University of Georgia, San Diego State University, California State University at Los Angeles, California State University at Fullerton, the University of Missouri at Columbia, the University of Alabama, University of Oregon, the University of Florida, the University of Louisville, Texas Christian University, Grand Valley State University, Northeastern University, Brigham Young University, Rollins College, Missouri State University, the University of Tampa, University of South Florida and the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

About Direct Selling

In many ways, direct selling captures the spirit of healthy entrepreneurship like no other business model. Over the decades, there have been misconceptions about direct selling. DSEF's goal is simply to clarify what direct selling is, what it's not and why it's one of the most compelling marketing strategies in today's culture.

At a time when micro-entrepreneurship is being embraced by major business corporations, direct selling is being sought out as a modern distribution model and vibrant go-to-market strategy. The success of companies like Uber and Etsy demonstrate that more people today are looking for flexible entrepreneurial opportunities. Currently, direct selling is a marketing channel that services many industries and product categories, like beauty, health, home goods,

and even services like energy and mobile phone plans. Some of the world's largest retailers—as well as fledgling entrepreneurs—are researching and even launching new companies that leverage direct selling as its primary marketing method.

In addition, direct selling companies offer a business platform that any aspiring entrepreneur can tap into and leverage for themselves. It's a distribution method that is gaining more and more attention from new and established business owners alike. Companies can essentially license their brand and company assets to independent distributors to amplify their own corporate activities across thousands of personal networks. Digital technology and social media enable the entrepreneur to scale at minimal cost, and leverage this business platform in a way that makes sense to them personally. Direct selling has also become a preferred method for startup companies to quickly offer their unique products or services effectively.

And the data backs up these trends, as the direct selling industry overall has experienced impressive long-term and short-term growth. Since 2015, direct selling in the U.S. alone has grown from a \$28 billion dollar industry to a \$36 billion dollar industry. Due to this incredible growth, traditional retailers have begun to look into direct selling in order to expand their market share. As of 2015, more than 20 million Americans are involved in direct selling, and that number grew by 11% from the previous year. And involvement spreads evenly over age range and region.