

Creating entrepreneurial culture in AMWAY

Company history

Amway (an acronym for 'American Way' is an American company which was established in 1959 by Jay Van Andel and Richard Devos. The company employs the technique of multi-level marketing to sell a wide variety of products, mainly related to health, beauty and home care markets. A pyramid like distribution structure is used where independent distributors of Amway products receive a compensation based on not only the proportion of the merchandise they sold, but also a percentage of merchandise sold by their recruited distributors.

The company in due course of time also expanded to other locations like Australia (1971), Europe (1973), to several parts in Asia (1974), Japan (1979), Latin America (1985) and India (1998) to name a few. By 2015 they established in many other countries like China, South Korea, US, Taiwan, Malaysia and India, among others.

A new holding company called Alticor was established in 1999 alongside three other companies namely, Quixtar (internet-Access Business group and based company), and Pyxis Innovations which later came to be called as Fulton Innovation. Whereas, Fulton Innovation took care of research and development, Access Business Group was responsible for logistics and manufacturing for Amay, Quixtar and third -party clientele. The main thrust of this model was that all "Independent Business Owners" could directly order from Amway, via the internet to receive their products directly to their homes.

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amway>)

The company employs more than 900 scientists, engineers and technical professionals working in 75 R &D and quality assurance labs, worldwide, supporting product development and creating a culture of scientific excellence. Amway offers consumer products and business



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opportunities augmented ably by a global agri-business, manufacturing and logistics supply chain. The top selling brands of the company include NUTRILITE® vitamin, mineral and dietary supplements, ARTISTRY® skincare and color cosmetics, and eSpring® water treatment systems.

(Accessed on 19.9. 17 in <http://globalnews.amway.com/facts>)

Vision and values of Amway

The vision of the company centres around helping people everywhere by helping them to discover their potential and achievement of their goals, by offering better brands and opportunities for the future and by sharing generously with the global community. Their business is built on six enduring values which are as follows:

- Partnership: Increasing trust and confidence among the founding families, employees and business owners, as part of the long-term commitment towards the partnership that the company considers as its most prized possession.
- Integrity: The company believes in measuring its business success, not just on economic terms, but by the respect, trust and credibility, they earn.
- Personal worth: The company believes in respecting every person and treating them with fairness and providing opportunities to realize their fullest potential.
- Achievement: The company believes in focussing on continuous improvement, progress and achievement of individual and group goals and encouragement of innovation and creativity.
- Personal responsibility: The company believes that each individual should be responsible for achieving 100% of their personal and company goals (corporate or team goals). The company, in addition believes in helping people in realizing their potential and sharing their success. Trying to be good citizens in their workplace and communities is also part of the responsibility charter.
- Free enterprise: The company is a firm believer in doctrines, like, freedom and free enterprise and believe that true human economic advancement can only happen in a free market regime.

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in <http://www.amway.com/about-amway/our-company/heritage/vision-and-values>)

Company products

The company claims that it produces unique, patented and award-winning consumer products of exceptional quality. The product ranges consist of the following:

NUTRIWAY® - NUTRILITE brand (sold locally as NUTRIWAY) is the world's number one selling vitamins and dietary supplements brand (www.euromonitor.com/amway-claims).

ARTISTRY® - ARTISTRY brand is among the world's top five, largest-selling, premium skincare brands(www.euromonitor.com/amway-claims).eSpring™ - The world's largest-selling brand of home water treatment systems, available exclusively from Amway (Based on a Verify Markets study of 2011 global sales).

The company claims that its products are of such high quality, that they come with a backing of their famous 90-day 100% Satisfaction Guarantee, as part of the company policy.

(Accessed on 24.9.17 in <https://www.amway.com.au/en/about-amway/about-amway/our-products/>)

Major competitors of Amway

The top three competitors of Amway are as follows (http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/competition.amway_corp.e6683c59d8048ef5.html, accessed on 11.12.17):

Avon Products – This is the world's top direct seller of cosmetics and beauty-related products. As in the case of Amway, Avon also tries to entice more consumers to buy its products and uses direct selling as its main marketing channel. However, Avon's sales is also generated from catalogs and a website. Its products include cosmetics, fragrances, toiletries, apparel, home furnishings, and so on. Avon has approximately 6 million independent representatives and has sales and distribution operations, in approximately, 75 countries.

Mary Kay Inc – It is one of the top direct selling American Company with more than 200 products in six categories: body care, color cosmetics, facial skin care, fragrance, nail care, and sun protection. Approximately, 3.5 million independent sales consultants are associated with Mary Kay products in the US and 35 other countries. Similar to Amway, Mary Kay also sells uses its website, for selling its products. The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation funds cancer research and domestic violence programs.

The Procter & Gamble Company (P&G) – This company is the world’s largest maker of consumer packaged goods, along with five global business segments. The product range of P & G consists of hair, skin and personal, oral, family, feminine, and baby care products. Some of the P&G’s brands are billion-dollar sellers, including Always, Braun, Crest, Fusion, Gillette, Head & Shoulders, Mach3, Olay, Oral-B, and Pantene, Bounty, Charmin, Dawn, Downy, Gain, Pampers, and Tide, Febreze, Mr. Clean, Old Spice, and Swiffer.

Business performance of Amway Corporation

Amway sales were down by 7% to \$8.8 billion in 2016 which was a part of three-year low which the company has been facing. Despite the decline in sales, it still continues to have sway in certain markets and still continues to be the biggest player in direct sales industry with sales of nearly \$184 billion in 2015, according to World Federation of Direct Selling Associations.

The breakdown of product-wise sales figures of the Corporation of 2016 show that the company continues to thrive in certain products like, nutritional supplements which made up 49% of sales (up 3% points from 2015); beauty and personal care products continuing its share of 25%, durable products -15% (down 1% point); homecare continuing at 7%; and other products accounting for 4% of sales (down 2% points). Sales in Chinese markets accounts for one-third of its sale, with Asia continuing to be the biggest market for the corporation.

(Accessed on 19.9. 19 in http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2017/02/amway_2016_sales_down_for_thir.html)

The latest thrust of the Amway Corporation in 2017 is to concentrate on the US (North American markets), and expand in this market in a measured way. It has recently opened a location in Los Angeles, after opening up its location in New York, 4 years back. The company recently invested \$ 2.5 million on an 8000-square foot space in Southern California, mainly for Independent Business Owners (IBOs) to create awareness and help them learn about the concept of Direct selling. A retail component has been added here with availability of products like Nutrilite supplements and Artistry cosmetics. The New York Citi Location in Citi Field, since it relaunched in 2015, does brisk business with presence of 500 distributors daily and the Centre selling products worth of nearly \$ 70,000 per day. Product Training is an important part of the selling, since in US, most of the sales happen online and products are delivered by US Postal Service or FedEx, unlike in other countries, where the business centres are part of the supply chain and distribution model.

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2017/05/amway_opens_25m_business_cente.html)

Amway India: A subsidiary

Amway India which is a subsidiary of Amway Corporation (Ada, Michigan) came into existence in 1995 and is the largest Direct selling FMCG company in India with an investment (FDI) of INR 151 crores. The sale proceeds of the outfit stands at around INR 738 crores in 2006. This company manufactures all its products through five different contract manufacturers and INR 17 crores has been invested to upgrade the facilities in these companies for this purpose.

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in <https://business.mapsofindia.com/fmcg/sector/amway-india.html>)

The product ranges available in India through Amway India are as follows:

Amway India products include Home Care, Laundry Care Products, SA8 Gelzyme with Natural Softner, SA8 Delicate, Household Cleaners and Disinfectants, Pursue, Car Wash, Personal Care, Hair Care, Satinique Advanced Dandruff Control Conditioning Shampoo, Oral Care, Persona Toothbrush, Body Care, Persona Talc, G & H Body Shampoo, Male Grooming Products, Dynamite Shaving Foam, Cosmetics, Artistry, Moisture Rich Vitalizing Cleanser, Moisturizers, Body Defining Firming Gel, Nutrition and Wellness, Kids Berry Blast, Salmon Omega 3, Protein Powder, Bone Health with Ipriflavone, Garlic Heart Care, Weight Management Program, Positrim Healthy Living Weight Management Program among the many.

(Accessed on 24.9.17 in <http://www.amway.in/store/>)

Leadership

There is a three-tier leadership structure in the company which is as follows:

Corporate leadership: at this level we have the Chairman, President, Chief Operating Officer, Regional President - Europe, Africa and India, Regional President - Asia Pacific, Vice President - Supply Chain, Regional President - Greater China, Regional President - The Americas, General Counsel and Secretary, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Sales Officer, Vice Chairman, Chief Human Resource Officer and Chief Information Officer.

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in <http://globalnews.amway.com/executive-bios#/>)

Affiliate Leadership: Managing Director, Amway North America, Chief Marketing Officer for the Americas Region, Country Manager, Amway Canada, Vice President of Sales, Amway North America

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in <http://globalnews.amway.com/executive-bios-north-america#/>)

Founders Council: the Amway Founders Council consists of the highest achieving Independent Business Owners globally. In 2010, there were 84 members from 13 countries. The council meets annually to strategize and celebrate their efforts in Amway Business Opportunity. In addition, they have direct access to top leaders of the business, which helps to learn about future strategies and fine tune the direction of the entire Amway family, while providing them the opportunity to share this with the global distributor family.

(Accessed on 19.9.17 in <http://www.amway.com/about-amway/our-company/leadership/founders-council>)

Human resource management at Amway

Culture at Amway - The company is a firm believer in Employee First policy. The company focuses its attention on employee empowerment and seeks to provide them with necessary support to meet their professional goals and personal fulfilments. The fact that 52% of their Associates have a tenure of more than 5 years, and 23% of Associates have a tenure of more than 10 years show the high level of commitment among the Associates and it proves that their integrated approach towards employee engagement policies have paid off.

Performance management system - The company has a robust performance management system which is value-based and is based on recognizing the major contributions made by their Associates in an objective and transparent way based on demonstrated competency levels by their Associates.

Talent management system - The company has a systematic talent management system in place and is focussed on building a strong Leadership pipeline, so that the business can grow in a chain system by having more and more IBOs in a given chain who can act as Leaders and catalysts in growing the business under them through the inclusion of more and more IBOs.

Pay for performance - The company encourages culture of the pay-for-performance so as to align the employees' goals with the company's business objectives. Additionally, this helps

the employees in remaining engaged and motivated by understanding how their daily business contributions helps the company's business health to remain robust and sustainable.

Employee development - The section on Amway education (see section on Amway education) helps the company to help their associates to grow and develop by a system of integrated learning with modules focussed on covering behavioral and business dimensions.

Besides these, the company also has in place an employee reward and recognition program which focusses on celebrating the success and endeavor of its employees, and the company also conducts engagement surveys to know the opinions of their employees on various issues and policies from time to time. They also have a strong focus on Employee communication to encourage better work-life balance where the families of the associates are also involved as part of employee engagement activities.

(Accessed on 24.9.17 in <http://www.amway.in/store/amway/en/INR/static-pages/lifeAtAmway>)

Amway education: lessons in Amway business ownership

To help their IBOs in setting up their businesses and running them successfully, Amway has started the newly launched program named Amway Education, which offers courses and curriculum based on entrepreneurial experience and expertise. The course coverage includes areas of general business growth, such as, reading body language, communicating across cultures, listening actively and much more.

The main thrust of Amway education is sharing best practices. The whole thrust of these courses are to build the entrepreneurial spirit and hunger in the IBOs , and, therefore, the initial period of three months is crucial for the learners. The company has designed a program named *Pathways to success* wherein the IBOs, are asked to set their course by using various educational tools, which helps them in gaining expertise in the knowledge of the products, growing their businesses and realizing their earning potential and achieving financial incentives – all with built-in encouragement at every step throughout the period of the program.

In addition to this a robust online curriculum consisting of more than 80, courses which are made available in four stages to IBOs in different stages, considered as milestones for their business journey:

- Series one- Get started: content and thrust of these courses are on helping IBOs learn how to calculate and earn a retail margin on the company's products; taking advantage of Amway's Fast Track Incentive Program that rewards new IBOs for making their initial sales; building a compelling product testimonial; following the rules of the road and more.
- Series two-Build your business: this course has 36 courses and the curriculum focusses on developing IBOs and equipping them with key skills and strategies to create sustainable businesses by learning ways of leveraging social media; closing a sale; maximizing customer volume; selling new products and mastering business etiquette.
- Series three-Grow to leadership: this module consists of 13 courses focussing on leadership issues and helping others to create sustainable businesses under the existing IBOs. The coverage includes time management, public speaking skills, ways to read and understand body language and so on.
- Series four-Be a leader: this module consists of the final 11 courses and focusses on inculcating the attitudes and behaviors of proven IBO leaders. The topics include learning how to elevate leadership; expanding one's business internationally; effectively negotiating and managing a dynamic and growing group.

(Accessed on 24.9.17 in <http://www.amwayconnections.com/amway/how-amway-education-can-help-you-succeed/>)

Corporate social responsibility: strategy and initiatives

When a company survives the ups and downs of economic tremors globally, it means that the company has been able to build a sustainable business model where it has a dedicated lot of employees who are willing to stick on with the company even in hard times, and at the same time, it also shows the ability of the company to retain its customer base and markets, even in turbulent times.

From the outset, Amway set out some clear objectives for its strategy. These were to:

- build loyalty and pride among IBOs and employees
- enhance Amway's reputation as a caring organisation
- make a real difference to human lives.

(<http://businesscasestudies.co.uk/amway/corporate-social-responsibility/developing-a-strategy.html>, accessed on 11.12.2017)

Amway, which is a global company with its direct selling model has shown its resilience to survive even through hard times. This is because, at the heart of the company's values lies its commitment to have a strong policy of corporate social responsibility, which is aligned with the vision and mission of the company. This business strategy is also instrumental and serves as the basis for the decisions and choices made every day by their executives, managers, employees and business partners when they also the company's broad engage with the society at large. The company's broad framework covers how Amway lives & practices its values through its behavior: in manufacturing its products, the way it treats its employees, in providing and ensuring a sustainable work environment.

(Accessed on 24.9.17 in <http://www.amway.in/store/amway/en/INR/static-pages/amwayCSRHomePage>)

Amway has joined hands with UNICEF, in demonstrating the 'caring' approach of the company's philosophy. Employees and IBOs across the hierarchical levels contribute towards such a strategy, in association and discussion with the decision-makers. Amway's Global Cause strategy is flexible and pre-dominantly based on the data, revealed from the researches, conducted for global causes. This may be illustrated though an association of Amway with UNICEF's 'Immunisation Plus' programme for children.

(<http://businesscasestudies.co.uk/amway/corporate-social-responsibility/developing-a-strategy.html>, accessed on 11.12.2017)

The CSR vision statement of the company is as follows:

- Enabling the less privileged section of the society, especially children, to lead a better life
- Helping people live better lives

The key focus areas of CSR Initiatives at Amway India (CSR Projects) are as follows:

Education, Health and Hygiene- The company through its project Sunrise will identify intervention areas and promote and contribute in education, health and hygiene of underprivileged children. The company has tied up with around 40 NGOs to do the needful in these areas.

Livelihood Enhancement - Through its National Project for Visually Challenged the company will work to provide skill development and champion the cause of building capacity in visually challenged Individuals. The company has set up sixteen fully-equipped computer centres for this purpose to provide computer training & IT job - related skills to enable these individuals to help them become economically independent in future. It has also made provisions for braille textbooks project in various states across India aims to provide primary education for bettering the lives of visually challenged children and make them capable for further academic pursuits.

Heath & medical care- For providing health care facilities to the underprivileged, initiatives taken were as follows: -

- Organizing free/subsidized health camps,
- Providing subsidized/free medical treatment, etc.

Childhood malnutrition - In this field, the company through its Nutrilite Power of 5 Campaign has done the following:

- Concentrated on solving issues faced by malnourished children (below 5 years of age)
- Will focus on projects not only on providing nutrition to malnourished children, but also on creating awareness on child malnutrition.

Environment sustainability : Amway India has decided to take initiatives to conserve the natural resources of water and soil in partnership with various NGOs/Government etc. with the main focus on rain water harvesting and tree plantation, for promoting environmental sustainability, ecological balance and so on. The harvested water can be used for multiple purposes, such as drinking water, for storage and irrigation.

Response to humanitarian disaster: Amway will extend its help in aiding communities faced with natural disasters through various ways depending on the demand of the situation.

The mode of implementation of the program will involve multiple bodies such as Governments and Government bodies, Government schools and colleges, training institutes, NGOs, business partners, registered societies etc., who will closely work with Amway Opportunity Foundation and these partners would be chosen through an appropriate due diligence process. The company will also use the services of internal teams, expert agencies, consultancy firms, etc.,

on a need basis for carrying out base line surveys, guidance on project design and implementation, due diligence of implementation partners, impact assessment surveys, etc. The company will call upon its employees and its distributors for volunteering in community service.

A Board level CSR Committee which will consist of all the Directors shall be responsible for overseeing these activities under the Registered Amway Opportunity Foundation. The responsibilities, monitoring and budgetary rules are all in place for these initiatives at Amway. The Board of Director will report CSR performance in its annual reports as per structure and format prescribed in notified CSR rules.

(Accessed on 24.9.17 in www.amway.in/store/amway/en/INR/static-pages/amwayPdfLink/Amway%20India%20CSRpolicyfinal)

Business strategy of Amway

An important aspect that needs to be understood in this context is the business strategy followed by Amway. Also, relevant to the context is the understanding about how it differentiated itself from its competitors and what kind of market and customer-oriented strategies it uses to grow its business. An important aspect of this lies in the way its uses its marketing strategies in reaching out to its potential customers. Relevant to the context is also the understanding of how the concept of multi-level marketing (also known as chain marketing) is used to by the company as a business strategy to not only grow its business successfully, globally, but alongside nurture the culture of entrepreneurship among its IBOs and employees who act as important links in the development and growth of the business model of Amway.

Concept of Ansoff's product/market matrix may be useful in explaining Amway's above philosophy. According to the matrix, organizations may follow four types of strategies, which are as follows:

Selling existing products to existing markets – Here, organizations make an attempt to enhance the market penetration and increase the market share. Amway tried to enhance the market penetration through direct selling, which is an immediate channel to the marketplace. Special incentives enable IBOs and end consumers to take advantage of particular offers at certain times of the year and these incentives have also helped to increase market penetration. There are also special events such as, Leadership Training Seminars. These enable IBOs to

spend time with others involved in the business and to learn about 'best practice' from each other, whilst also sharing ideas.

Introducing new products into its existing markets – Here, organizations try to gain competitive advantage over the rivals through product improvement. Amway currently holds more than 380 patents internationally and has approximately 430 patents pending.

Developing new market development – Here, organizations try to market their existing products into completely new markets. By 2015, Amway established in many countries like China, South Korea, US, Taiwan, Malaysia and India among others.

Diversification – Here, organizations promote new products in new markets, which may involve a shift from core activities into some other form of related activity. Amway's technical team effectively uses feedback and ideas from the customers to develop and test new product ideas. Amway has diversified its activities through creating an on-line business opportunity called 'AMIVO', with the objective of providing support to its traditional business. For example, The European platform of AMIVO was first launched within the UK to provide a one-stop office for IBOs. IBOs can use AMIVO for:

- a means for Amway to communicate with IBOs quickly
- ordering products from their home 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- a communication tool to promote their business
- keeping track of their business status
- a reference resource
- a medium to recognise IBO business achievement.

(<http://businesscasestudies.co.uk/amway/developing-competitive-marketing-strategies/ansoffs-productmarket-matrix.html>, accessed on 11.12.17)

Multi-level marketing strategy adopted by Amway

Multi-level marketing or network or Referral Marketing is a process through which companies sell the goods and services through partners and promoters. The products are sold through promotional marketing schemes. The salespeople sell products straight out to as retail distributors and also recruit newer dispensers down the hierarchy to expand the network by

the day. Either they themselves sell the concerned products or sponsor its sale by someone else.

The Amway Business Model adopts a similar fashion. The IBOs are recruited by distributors, who in turn, act as distributors, and sell the company's products and get more people on board in order to earn profits. The profits are earned as commissions and bonus. According to the Amway Business Model, the income of the distributors is directly proportional to their sale charts.

For Amway, apart from the retail end customer, the very salespersons recruited or sponsored by the ones higher up in the network also act as end-user retail customers, where they also need to pay an entry fee to join the Amway network.

(<https://www.feedough.com/amway-business-model/>, accessed on 11.12.17)

SWOT analysis of Amway

The SWOT analysis of Amway may be summarized as follows (<https://www.marketing91.com/swot-analysis-amway/>, accessed on 11.12.17):

Strengths

- Strong Global Presence in over 80 countries with over 3 million business owners/agents
- Recipient of awards like Asia Pacific Frost & Sullivan Filtration company of the year Award, LEED gold certification etc.
- Wide Product range with 115 products
- Wide Range of consumers

Weaknesses

- Products are only available through business owners/agents
- Declining sales
- Products are relatively costly
- Dependency on word of mouth publicity
- Multi-level marketing is risky and chain can collapse at any time when a top player leaves or creates any other issue.

Opportunities

- Amway should increase the availability of its products
- Should invest in publicity, marketing and advertising, internationally
- Exploring the possibility of tie-ups with salons and health experts

Threats

- Increasing competition
- Low brand loyalty

Marketing mix adopted by Amway

The '**marketing mix** (also known as the **4 Ps**) is a foundation model in marketing. The marketing mix has been defined as the "*set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target*" (Kotler, 2000).

The marketing mix adopted by Amway, may be stated in the following way (<https://www.marketing91.com/marketing-mix-amway/>, accessed on 11.12.17):

Product – Products of Amway are of premium quality with a portfolio of products in personal care, nutrition, home care, jewellery, air purifiers, water purifier, dietary supplements, insurance and cosmetics, antioxidants, weight management, supplements, wellness pack and fortified beverages. Most of Amway's products are suitable for adult, children and older generation.

Place - Amway follows direct selling strategy. At the beginning, its business operations were restricted to US. However, now it's network spreads over 97 countries.

Price - Amway follows premium pricing policy for its products.

Promotion - Regular customers get special discounts. various schemes are also offered to attract new customers. It also provides warranty for every product for a definite time period.

Authors' remarks

This company case study shows, that, while some companies create employment for people in society, some go beyond this level, in order to create an entrepreneurial culture in society.

Amway has been able to do just that, and in doing so, have turned the lives of many people around the globe. It has helped in creating the culture of self-sustaining business owners who have made it big on their own and not chosen the life of a 9-5 office goer, who help organizations to grow and become big only. Here is a self-sustaining business model which not only has helped the company to grow, but, the people to grow, and become independent business owners, under the banner of a larger brand name. This model ensured the simultaneous growth of both the business-owners and the company, thereby, prompting a culture of self-growth, and a networked organization with dedicated and committed individuals, who stand steadfast and resilient, even in turbulent times, and not give up in times of crises. This is a truly a remarkable story of a company where people grow and help the company to also grow in the process, thereby, demonstrating the true value of a strategic business partnership, which can be mutually beneficial for all stakeholders involved in the process of growing businesses in a sustainable way.

Based on the above, following questions may be discussed, in relation to Amway case narrative:

1. Discussion on how chain marketing helps build entrepreneurial culture as demonstrated by Amway
2. The manner in which Amway used the Ansoff marketing strategy to grow its business can be a good pointer of concept application for students of both marketing and strategy classes
3. How the company build its ethical organizational framework by aligning the UN framework in both its corporate governance structure and CSR activities, can be a point of discussion for students.
4. Whether companies like Amway build / promote entrepreneurial culture or helps in breeding a culture of deception and taking its stakeholders for a ride by creating clever business models and strategies enticing people to join and grow its business model.

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