

## **Open House Ideas** by Executive Senior Sales Director Natalie Reed - (Thanks Natalie!)

**When:** Hold your Open House in early November or very early in December (or both) - don't wait till the middle of December - for one the order form ends on December 15<sup>th</sup> and most of the Holiday items are sold out by then. A lot of MK consultants hold theirs on the weekend after thanksgiving (after all it is the biggest shopping day of the year!) If you are busy that weekend - you can hold it the week before thanksgiving! If you wait - a lot of people will have already bought their holiday items.

Don't do a marathon Open House - 1-2 days max. I normally do mine in my home on the first Friday and Saturday of November. My hours are 9:30AM till 7:00 PM on Friday and 9:30 AM till 2:00 PM on Saturday. I have tried it from 9am-9pm and you spend your time sitting around waiting for people to arrive - the longer the Open House I - the more waiting you will be doing. If you are new in the business - say less than 50 customers - I would just do it ONE DAY, but keep your items up if you have the room and make private appointments with others that cannot come on your scheduled days. I sell more many times after the scheduled Open House.

**Invitations:** Send invitation out one to two weeks in advance. I normally send postcards but I also have a flyer that I start putting in the customer's packages in September. If they will RSVP, I give them a gift determined by the amount they spent that last year. This can only be redeemed at the Open House. I have a basket of past PCP items and after they spend over \$50 they get to pick anyone they want. I also include in my invitation that if they cannot come, they can call to set a private appointment.

Call all of your invites a couple of days before to confirm if your numbers are not too big. During DEAD TIME, pick up the phone and start calling to remind them. This really works. If they cannot attend on your dates then set another private appointment with them.

Food should be easy to eat and to make. I put out Tuna salad and bread so they can make small sandwiches. I have hot cider cooking, chips and dips, nuts, crackers and cheese. Holiday cookies and M&M's all over the tables for them to pick up and eat while they shop. Don't cook for weeks to get ready - they need to be more interested in your products - not your food - nor your house decorations, but that certainly gets them there once they have attended before. They can come during lunchtime, eat and shop.

Speaking of house decorations - You can get the gold or glitter poinsettias to pop in all around the area you will be in. I use dark green Holiday damask cloths on the tables rather than Christmassy ones. It will seem more elegant and your products will stand out more. Lots of Christmas decorations will make your tables seem too cluttered. Have Holiday CDs playing softly in the background and have a couple of spice candles lit to create the holiday buying mood! This is so important.

**Product displays** - One trick to highlight your products is to put shoe boxes on other boxes underneath your table cloth - in 2 or 3 places - then place basket on top. You can also make them look like steps and place items on different levels. A totally FLAT display is not nearly as attractive. Remember the eye buys! Don't go cheap on your bows. 2 pieces of curling ribbon tied in a little bow on the top of a large basket cheapens it. No bow is better than a cheap one. Buy the pull-bows that are quick and easy. Put basket in cello Bags. They will look sharp and clean especially with a great bow on top. Have some of your MK gift bags ready and tissue or go buy Holiday tote bags and give them with purchase. You can just stick to these bags (the small and large) to do all of your gift bags - except for maybe having a few larger one for things that won't fit. I normally offer FREE gift bags with purchase.

Group things together - skin care - supplements on one table - Color products on another - Holiday Limited Editions on another - Fragrances & Spa on another and Men's on another table. If you don't have extra tables - just group them in sections of your dining room table or around the room. I had the product out of the box and then the extra boxes of products sitting behind - so they could just pick them up and put them in a bag as they shopped. You will also want to have a table of gift under \$10- \$15 - Hand Cream in a mug, body lotion, all colorfully wrapped for easy purchase. These make great Teacher's gifts, gifts for drop by friends, and people they may have forgotten.

Have one table with a mirror, tray and some samples - I have had several of my customers sit down and try some new colors - or bring their daughter or a friend for a quickie makeover. You might want to place in front of each product a sample of that product especially perfumes and spa sets, easy way for them to smell without spraying up the entire room.

Have a Sales Ticket, Look Book, Business card, a Wish List and list of special together to give to each customer. Have a sign in sheet - ask for their email address and home address just to check your records.

Specials - Make this simple and don't give away your shirt - as Mary Kay would say! Never discount basic products unless they are on the way out. They are always going to purchase this anyway - there is no need to discount it. Put your biggest discount on items that you may not sell a lot of or items being discontinued. You can do creative specials. Buy 2 and get one free or buy one and get one at half price. You could even do the balloon specials - insert the amount of discount on a piece of paper - slip it in a balloon and then pop a balloon to see what kind of discount they get. Have plenty of 10%, 15%, a few 20% & 25% and then maybe 1 or 2 at 30% and 40%. This makes it fun!

If you are low on inventory, you will have to take orders and then deliver later. Let them know the day you will be placing your order and tell them it will be a week from then that you will deliver. I would collect all of your money up front. That way you have the cash to do your order. The less inventory you have, the sooner you will want to schedule your Open house. During the Holiday season - UPS is slower and of course the "good stuff" sells out quickly. Don't let your people be disappointed. If you make baskets, let them know if they are one of a kind.

When you do Holiday coffees at either your house or the house of a hostess, you would really do all of the above on a smaller scale. If you can get the hostess to bring her guests to your house, you can always do a better display and have more products available. If this will not work then select what to bring according to the numbers attending and the people and their needs.

Finally, look at your displays. Look at your food and your specials. Would it impress you? BRAND NEW? Buddy up with a sister consultant. Do one at her house and one at yours on a different month! Invite your new recruits to come and help you that week. You can train her when no one is there. Last piece of advice. CALL CALL CALL. Do not depend on your invitations alone. Start telling everyone NOW!