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Company Takes Village Approach to Help Women Grow Abundantly

by J.M. Emmert



Joni Rogers-Kante lives an intentional life. Her resolve to do so happened upon her by accident—literally. As a small girl growing up in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, Rogers-Kante's adolescent sense of adventure and lack of regard for boundaries caused her to nearly lose her life. While riding her bicycle in front of her family home, she was struck by a pickup truck. What she remembers of that accident is not an "out-of-body" experience but rather an intense feeling of being enveloped by warm, comforting light and a clear voice telling her that it was not her time to leave—that she had much work yet to do.

"From that moment on, I was aware that I was put on this earth for a specific purpose still unknown," Rogers-Kante says. "I started to live intentionally and took up a sense of fearlessness in everything I set out to do. I knew because I was given that confidence from God that I could—and would—accomplish the feat of which I was destined. I had Him guiding me in everything that I did, and I didn't waste one single day."

Company Profile

Founded: 1999

Headquarters: Irvine, California

Top Executive: Joni Rogers-Kante,
Founder and CEO

Products: Skincare, anti-aging,
cosmetics, body care



Joni Rogers-Kante

Joni Rogers-Kante started SeneGence in 1999 with LipSense® Liquid Lip Color as its leading product. Currently the company has more than 300 products and accessory items in its SeneGence line and primarily operates in the United States, Canada and Australia with



That destiny would slowly reveal itself through direct selling, and today, that fearlessness helps Rogers-Kante lead the beauty and cosmetics company SeneGence International. “I know that it is my purpose in life to offer products and a career that really works to women all over the world, using this mission as a tool to give women confidence, security and abundance for themselves and their loved ones,” says Rogers-Kante. “That sense of purpose and determination has shaped the person I’ve become and also the mission of SeneGence.”

No Limit to Aspirations

What also helped to shape both Rogers-Kante and SeneGence was a relationship with one of direct selling’s icons: Mary Kay Ash. “She was my first business mentor, outside of my family,” says Rogers-Kante. “The way she approached entrepreneurship resonated with me. Mary Kay always looked for the good in people and encouraged her mighty salesforce to do the same, instead of prejudging their limitations.”

This approach was different from what Rogers-Kante had experienced in the corporate world, and because of the insight into the business model from Mary Kay, she realized direct sales was the industry that could actually make a direct impact on the lives of independent contractors. “I found a calling to help teach women how

to run a successful business from home while caring for their family,” she says. “Mary Kay exemplified how a strong and determined woman could lead in a loving way, leaving a positive footprint of changing lives for the betterment of society. I found that to be irresistible.”

Rogers-Kante started SeneGence in 1999 with LipSense® Liquid Lip Color as its leading product. Currently the company has more than 300 products and accessory items in its SeneGence line—SeneDerm® anti-aging skincare, SeneDerm Solutions™ specialized treatment products and SenseCosmetics® patented, long-lasting color cosmetics—and primarily operates in the United States, Canada and Australia with a presence in 13 additional countries.

The growth of the company has shown Rogers-Kante not only that the business model works, but something even more important, and that is that women everywhere have the same desires. “I have been privileged to meet women from all corners of the globe,” she says. “These interactions have, of course, shown me the wide range of beautiful diversity in the world, but, most importantly, have shown me that women around the world aren’t so very different from each other after all. All women want a fulfilling life, whether that means a booming career, a happy and healthy family, a rich social life or all of the above. No matter from which country, women want to feel welcomed and accepted and work in a safe and loving environment where they are free to learn new skills that directly impact the well-being of their family. In this, we all speak the same language.”

SeneGence offers that business opportunity to women regardless of their educational background or their skills. It also offers a work-life balance that Rogers-Kante feels is critically important. “Gone are the days when women have to choose whether to have a successful, active career or a family,” she says. “Today’s woman does not limit her goals or her aspirations. I know she can achieve it all given the right opportunity. With direct sales, her life and her business understand each other, blend together and work hand in hand to accommodate the achievement of her goals. It’s amazing to think the busier a mom and her children are the more successful a woman can be simply because of ‘exposure’ to others that help support local entrepreneurs.”

A Record-Breaking Year

The SeneGence opportunity has touched many across the globe and the company has experienced more than 100 percent sales growth year over year in each of the past three years. In fact, 2015 was a record-breaking year, with positive growth in both sales and sponsoring in all the countries in which it operates.

However, SeneGence has had its share of ups and downs over the years, as all companies do. “Consistency has been one of the biggest contributing factors to our growth,” she says. “We have stayed true to and focused on our vision and mission and have never wavered from the original intention of SeneGence: to make a difference in the lives of women around the world sharing products that really work though a career opportunity that really works.”

To ensure a sustainable and secure financial base, the company has been very conservative in overhead through the years and has accomplished its goals with a skilled and versatile staff of less than 100. This has enabled the company to direct its focus on connecting with the field in the most personal manner possible. “Whether it is a local



training event, a note from me or a phone call, we strive every day to make each distributor, employee, vendor, supplier, service provider, fulfillment worker, manufacturing personnel or anyone who is a part of this company feel appreciated and valued,” says Rogers-Kante.

Of course, growing a company does come with its challenges, and for SeneGence one of the major issues it has faced is its facilities. The company has outgrown its current office, pick and pack, warehouse and manufacturing space and is currently planning on moving into a new—and much larger at 50,000 square feet—space this fall. “This will be our third move to increase footage to date,” says Rogers-Kante. “It’s a daily challenge, from our corporate team doubling up in offices to our warehouse team adding extra shifts. We also had to overcome some out of stock product issues due to our amazing growth in order volume. All the growing pains allow us to constantly learn and find ways to better our branding, our marketing and our product offerings to continue to be a premier global skincare and cosmetics company.”

Growing the Distributor Base

Steady growth also has occurred in the number of independent distributors who have joined the company. With distributors already totaling tens of thousands, SeneGence has been successful in attracting new distributors through social media and the old-fashioned way—face to face.

“We have a wonderful ‘Wowing’ technique that our distributors have perfected, called showing their ‘stripes,’” says Rogers-Kante. “This is where they paint a line of our waterproof LipSense long-wearing color on their hands and then go about their day, constantly attracting attention and inquiries as to what is on their hand. When a distributor shows the interested party that the product does not budge when

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rubbing her hand, invariably the interested party says ‘Wow,’ no matter what language.”

While the “Wowing” technique has opened many doors to conversations about SeneGence’s products and career opportunity, the company also has started visiting areas where the growth has occurred to further increase distributor interest. “We study our demographic trends across the countries and take corporate-sponsored events or training to where they are needed most,” Rogers-Kante says. “This allows us to touch many new distributors and engage them in a way that is enduring. As well, our fabulous team of field leaders has organized a well-thought-out plan of informative and motivational training to support ongoing growth throughout each country.”

That training includes weekly interactive webinars hosted by an executive team member or a field leader distributor, as well as regular regional trainings and corporate-sponsored quarterly events, and each focuses on a different facet of business, from cosmetics application to social media, branding, managing people, and even etiquette training and public speaking. “We think it’s important to offer training in a wide variety of areas so that each leader feels more confident as her role in a leadership position takes on more notoriety and responsibilities that



Joni Rogers-Kante hands out treats and toys to excited school children living on the islands of Vanuatu, where SeneGence sources ingredients for its products. The Make Sense Foundation is actively helping to rebuild their schoolhouse, which was destroyed by Cyclone Pam in 2015.

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come with that,” says Rogers-Kante. “We always include recognition anywhere we can, as we believe that is a vital element to both our success and the individual distributor’s success.”

Respect for the Global Community

In addition to supporting distributors to achieve financial success, SeneGence also has a mission to support the global community at large. Community responsibility is one of the core foundations of SeneGence and an integral part of the corporate culture. The sense of responsibility and care for others is reflected in the support given to charities in the distributors’ local communities as well as the international communities in which the company operates or gathers its natural ingredients.

Rogers-Kante founded the Make Sense Foundation™ (MSF) in 2002 to assist women and children in need, and the Foundation’s giving has expanded to include the American Breast Cancer Foundation, Oklahoma Tornado Relief, American Red Cross, CASA, CHOC, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Working Wardrobes, Laura’s House, Christopher’s Clubhouse, Walter Hoving Home and many more. The Foundation also held its first fundraising drive for a college scholarship for young women entering higher education this year. The goal was \$10,000 and more than \$25,000 was raised, allowing the Foundation to share the funds among multiple well-deserving young women in need, all of whom will attend college this fall through support from MSF.

Tiana B., this year’s first place recipient of a MSF scholarship, says that by receiving the financial assistance, she was motivated even further to reach for her own personal goals, no matter life’s challenges. “As an African-American woman who comes from a low socio-economic area, entering college with the intentions of attaining a mechanical engineering degree, it moves me greatly to know that I have selfless, caring women who support my dreams and aspirations.”

Rogers-Kante adds, “Over the years, through distributor and employee donations and fundraisers, the MSF has been able to give to dozens of charities around the country, many of which were nominated by our distributors. It has been amazing watching our distributors give back to their communities and seeing the way real change is effected through their efforts with the MSF.”

Additionally, the company’s Partner-for-Profits program offers opportunities for distributors to raise even more money for charities. As they take orders, their “partner” in the order (business manager, hostess, or other figure coordinating a group) can then earn a portion of the order total back in profit, in free product or as a donation to the charity of their choice.

While local and national support is a priority, SeneGence also assists the international community. One example of the company’s worldwide efforts is in the Vanuatu string of islands in the South Pacific, where SeneGence responsibly gathers many beneficial botanicals and minerals for its SeneDerm SkinCare. The MSF has come to the aid of islanders several times over the past few years, including fundraising efforts to help with the aftereffects of Cyclone Pam, which devastated the area last year. “It is a precious place to us, and the people who call it home are even more precious to us,” says Rogers-Kante. “Throughout the years, Vanuatu has experienced some natural disasters that have left its people in need. Through the MSF, we have been able to help rebuild village schoolhouses and donate goods to support our Vanuatuan friends.”

Living and Working Intentionally

Leading a growing company and supporting numerous charities can—and is—a full-time challenge. If you are going to remain sane and maintain a happy family while operating a successful business, says Rogers-Kante, the key is to master the skill of carefully planning personal and business time. She does this by blocking her time in a balanced manner and then respecting and following through with the commitments she makes at work and at home. “The real key for me and my family is to include them in business activities whenever possible,” she says. “That way we work, play and travel together.”

True to those early years when she promised herself to live intentionally, Rogers-Kante makes the most out of every second in the day. Whether it is play dates with her youngest son, William, or quality time spent with her oldest, Alan, or when riding in the car to a distributor training event, she takes advantage of every bit of time to make calls, scan social media channels, talk to the product development team, attend to emails or read the next book during flights.

“One thing I know to be absolutely true is that it takes a village, both at home and in business,” she says. “My hardworking, amazingly versatile, responsible, talented and dedicated staff and incredibly supportive family keep the wheels turning.” **DSN**

For more information, please contact: