

# PHONE POWER

Using high-tech telephones to build high-touch organizations

**I**n network marketing, the first thing you learn is to put yourself second. Your duty is to the people you've recruited: You got them into this business, and you profit from their efforts. The least you can do is nourish their success by building close relationships and consistently playing mentor to them.

And unless you own a private plane, the only way you can keep in touch with your most distant people is by telephone. "I spend most of my time on the phone—five to 10 hours a day. It's how you do this business," says Scott Ohlgren, a top-performing Cell Tech distributor. "That's why it's essential you get very, very good at using the phone."

"Network marketing is all about relationships," says Greg Essayan, a power player with Enrich, "and the only reason I bother to use technology is to strengthen and deepen those relationships."

*Network Marketing* scoured the upper ranks of the industry to find out how top business builders stay in touch with their exploding organizations. We wanted to know which new telecommunication hardware and services they couldn't live without. We got them to tell us how they wield their phone power to keep their downlines coursing with energy, ideas, and sales. Some of their answers may surprise you—and possibly send you out to the telecom shop to make some strategic acquisitions.

**By John Zmirak**

**The Player:** Scott Ohlgren, Durango, Colo.

**The Company:** Cell Tech, Klamath Falls, Ore.

**The Technologies:** V-Tech hands-free cordless phone; three-way calling; Eagle Teleconferencing Services (for conference calls); 800-778-6338

Scott Ohlgren didn't *intend* to make himself a thousand times more productive. The reason he got a hands-free, portable phone was to get rid of a pain in the neck—the crook of the neck, where he'd been cradling his telephone for three to five hours each day as he built his downline for Cell Tech, a company he joined in 1988. "I live in a small ski-resort town and do virtually all my business by telephone," he explains. As his

business grew, Ohlgren's body began to protest. "I developed all sorts of cranial problems. Neck pains that would wake me up in the middle of the night. My head began to feel as if it were detached from my body," says Ohlgren.

A physical therapist steered Ohlgren toward a hands-free phone headset. Ohlgren selected a light, comfortable, 900 megahertz cordless unit from V-Tech (\$150) that allows him to walk around the house, chatting with both hands free. Now he feels like a human being and his organization has exploded to 15,000 people. "I don't understand why anyone who uses the phone wouldn't invest in one of these," Ohlgren says. "I tell all my distributors that addressing your physiology is key to success."

Also key is three-way calling, which Ohlgren uses to

coach distributors as they talk to prospects or confer with business leaders. "Without it, there's no way I would be a millionaire. It's how I teach people to fish," he explains. "I make all my distributors get three-way calling. That way, I can call two, who can both patch in more people; we can get six or seven people on the line talking before the noise level gets unacceptable."

To address more people than that, Ohlgren uses Eagle Teleconferencing Services, which gives him more than 500 lines and an unlimited number of calls for a flat monthly fee of \$50. The best part of this service, Ohlgren says, "is that by using a special PIN, the executives can temporarily mute most of the lines during the call, so we can direct the meeting, then unmute them for the question period. This way, we don't get drowned out by crying babies in people's living rooms."

**The Player:** Chris Tucker, Carbondale, Colo.

**The Company:** FreeLife International, Milford, Conn.

**The Technology:** Electronic Secretarial Administrator (ESA), a virtual office system, from StarTouch; 770-985-7302

**A**fter spending seven years in network marketing, Chris Tucker has been in FreeLife for four months, working hard to generate leads. But as more people responded to his newspaper advertisements, direct mail, and

audiotapes, he found that he had a new problem.

"I began to be overwhelmed with the phone time I had to put in and how much of it was really unproductive," Tucker says. "Some of my callers were well informed and ready to learn what FreeLife has to offer. Those were the people I really wanted to talk to. But others didn't know the first thing about the industry or had all sorts of objections and second-hand horror stories. Bringing them up to speed took a lot of time and didn't bring proportionate results."

What's more, Tucker's prospects could see the toll this wasted time was taking. "I had one man who was really promising. But he works 50- to 70-hour weeks at his other job. When he saw what I was doing, he said he couldn't spare that kind of time," Tucker recalls.

Tucker found a solution: StarTouch's Electronic Secretarial Administrator (ESA), a virtual office system that is itself being sold through network marketing. When a caller dials Tucker's toll-free number, he is presented with a menu of different options. One option is an audio message that explains the basics of network marketing and then describes FreeLife. A caller can request more information by fax-on-demand, leave a message on voice mail, or ask the system to page Tucker wherever he is. Tucker can then screen calls, deciding which to pick up right away and which to dispatch into voice mail.

The system also lets Tucker offer informational voice messages on a variety of subjects, from which callers can

choose using a voice menu. Likewise, he can offer them up to 999 different fax messages of up to 10 pages each.

Many of the novices who call Tucker listen to his messages or read his faxes and disqualify themselves without eating up his valuable time. "I save from five to 10 hours a week of useless phone calls," he says. "And over 50 percent of the people who listen to the voice message and then read a fax before talking to me actually become my distributors." Tucker can tally the statistics precisely because ESA sends him a daily report on who called him, giving their phone numbers and which menu options they chose.

One more result: That busy businessman Tucker was trying to

## Telephone Techniques

### *How to Give a Back Rub by Phone*

**Okay, not literally.** The point is that you can manage someone else's state of mind just by the way you conduct yourself on the phone, as Scott Ohlgren has learned over the years. "However good your technology, the real key is your set of inner skills, which allow you to keep control of a conversation with a prospect or distributor." To this end, Ohlgren has developed a series of turning-point questions that can redirect a dialogue that has become negative.

■ "John, it sounds like you have a lot of objections to the network marketing industry. I used to share a lot of them. Let me just ask you, what was it that originally intrigued you enough to contact me?"

■ "I see you've heard from some people who got burned in the industry. If I'd heard the same things at the very outset, I might never have gotten involved. Let me ask you what it is that attracted you to the industry, because I have a feeling it was the same thing that intrigued me, back when I was broke."

■ "Mary, it sounds as if you're very discouraged, even a little depressed. I bet you're slumped in your chair—I can almost hear it. Would you do me a favor? Get up and walk around while we're talking. That always energizes me and helps me think. I'll do it with you."

■ "Cari, do you remember how you felt at your first meeting? How you were standing, what you were thinking about? Was it that Dodge Viper you were hoping to buy? Why don't you tell me about your aspirations again."

The key, according to Ohlgren, is to move people into a resourceful state, where their mental energy is directed toward overcoming problems, rather than fighting to defend their objections and negative thoughts.

—J.Z.

recruit saw how much time he would save using ESA and decided to sign up with Tucker's FreeLife organization. He is now a successful distributor. Meanwhile, Tucker has joined with StarTouch and distributes the ESA system on the side.

Denver Broncos defensive back Tim McKyer of Denver, Colo., is a distributor for StarTouch itself. His downline still numbers fewer than a dozen teammates and other athletic contacts. Mainly, he uses the system to manage messages that come from large numbers of fans and friends by phone, fax, or e-mail. "ESA gives me an e-mail address that I can use without a computer," McKyer said. "When people send me e-mails, I can check them, right along with calls and faxes, over the phone. The

system reads them to me and lets me respond, either by dictating a computer voice file or a fax." While McKyer was playing in the last Super Bowl, he got more than 70 messages, which he played back after the game. "They really poured in after I recovered that fumble," he says.

The cost for ESA is \$30 per month, plus 9.9 cents per minute for each call, billed in six-second increments.

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**The Player:** Greg Essayan, White Plains, N.Y.

**The Company:** Enrich, Orem, Utah

**The Technologies:** Web-based databases, pocket-size Motorola StarTac 6000E cell phone, Hewlett-Packard 620LX palmtop

**G**reg Essayan believes in building relationships and thinks that technology exists only to strengthen them. To build better connections between him and the thousands of distributors who have put him among Enrich's top 20 earners, Essayan pays strategic attention to their performance.

When Essayan wants to know how a certain distributor is doing, he doesn't need to ask or to wait for monthly printouts to come from company headquarters. Instead, he reaches into Enrich's Web site. Using a PIN number, he logs onto a secure server, where he can see how much any of his distributors sold (up to the minute), which products, and to whom. Says Essayan. "It helps me to help the people under me."

Top performers who need to be thanked, struggling newcomers, steady salesmen who have hit a slump—Essayan can analyze his entire downline quickly and decide whom to contact. "Frequently it's a person who has never heard of me, who is 20 or 30 relationships removed," Essayan says. "Invariably, he will be excited to hear from me, and sometimes he'll be shocked at how much I know about his business. I explain how he can use the Web site in the same way for his own recruits."

The best part about using a Web-based resource, according to Essayan, is that you can use it anywhere phone lines reach or cellular services cover. "I use a Motorola analog cell phone that's the size of a small pager. To complement it, I carry an \$800 Hewlett-Packard palmtop that fits in my shirt pocket. If I want to, I can connect the two and access the Web site from anywhere—in the mountains, on a boat, on the road. This technology delivers the kind of freedom that network marketing has always promised. Now I can fit my entire business in my pockets."

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**The Player:** Johnny Keller, Virginia Beach, Va.  
**The Company:** Royal Body Care, Dallas, Texas  
**The Technology:** "Smart" voice mail through ATG Technologies; 800-775-7790

**J**ohnny Keller has spent his adult life in network marketing, starting at 18 years old with Amway. Keller came to Royal Body Care when it acquired Kalo-Vita, the business begun by Baptist preacher Pat Robertson. "To succeed, network marketing companies must learn how to grow from the big

## Good Manners, Good Profits

*Ditch "Call Waiting"—It's Bad for Your Business*

**Remember the world before call-waiting?** Try to visualize the vanished era when a business conversation could go on for minutes at a time without interruption by another—probably trivial—phone call coming in, breaking the flow of conversation, leaving your prospect on hold.

"At first, call-waiting was cool. Now it's just plain rude," Scott Ohlgren says. He flies 80,000 miles a year, conducting workshops for his Cell Tech business. The first thing he always tells the assembled distributors is to abandon call-waiting and "treat every caller like the most important person in the world at that moment. Which is what he is." The usual response is "waves of applause," according to Ohlgren. "It's something most of those people have sensed. I give them permission to think about it."

Of course, it's equally important that no one ever get a busy signal, Ohlgren hastens to add. To avoid this, Ohlgren recommends voice mail, which never misses a caller and is easy to check remotely. "It gives a special dial tone when you have messages, so you know right away," he explains. "Just make sure to return calls very promptly. Stay on top of your messages, and nothing is lost without call-waiting."  
—J.Z.

churches," he explains. "The ones that endure are those that create lots of local cells. Our companies have to work the same way."

Keller has found a good way to spread Royal Body Care's system and teach people to duplicate its success: a voice-mail system that dispenses a vast array of recorded marketing advice on demand, with updates from the field. Each week, Keller scours his organization for distributors who have learned to promote a particular product or solve a thorny problem. "Then I call them up and find out how they did it. I tape the interview and post it on our voice-mail system as the Tip of the Week," he says.

One popular interview Keller conducted was with top performer Kay Clark, who had achieved an 83 percent success rate when it came to convincing callers to purchase the company's \$105 starter kit. How did she do it? "My approach is very simple," she explained in her Tip of the Week. "I'm a woman, so I guess that's why I love to shop. And I love a bargain. I explain to people the different options they have: to buy our headline product retail for \$46, to pay \$15 to join our wholesale club, then get the product plus a membership for \$55, or to buy the starter kit for \$105 and receive four additional products. Then I talk about the other products and point out what they've done for me and what a value this is. It usually doesn't take people very long to decide on the starter pack." She admits to being unstoppable. After an auto accident, she even tried to recruit the man who had hit her. "He said he was in a lot of pain, and I told him he had to go get some antioxidants," she said. ■

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