

“Tupperware-style” retail makes a comeback with 27% growth

By Elias Jahshan – August 8, 2019

Social shopping retail is making a comeback since its heyday of the 1960s. (Supplied image)

// UK turnover for “Tupperware-style” retail increased by an estimated 27% to £2.67bn in 2018

// Direct Selling Association survey also shows strong start to 2019 in this direct-to-consumer channel

// Growth in social shopping has boosted the success of household names such as The Body Shop

Tupperware-style social shopping is making a comeback, with new research indicating its turnover grew by more than quarter last year.

According to a survey conducted by the Direct Selling Association (DSA), the social shopping retail sector grew by an estimated 27 per cent in 2018.

The DSA said this meant that this direct-to-consumer channel of retail, which was once popular in the 1960s, was now worth £2.67 billion.

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Through its survey of 21 chief executives from across its 57 member companies, the DSA found that 67 per cent of respondents also reported a “strong start” to 2019.

A further 92 per cent stated that they expect to see further growth over the coming quarter.

Meanwhile, 31 per cent of survey respondents said 2018 had been a “record year” performance-wise for their companies.

“Direct selling is seeing a revival, with modern-day versions of the classic ‘Tupperware-style’ parties of the 1960s making a come-back,” DSA director general Susannah Schofield said.

She added: “The current uncertainty on the high street is creating opportunities in other areas of the retail industry, and I predict that we’re set to see major disruption to the status quo.

“Direct-to-consumer retail is perfectly positioned to take advantage of this disruption, because not only does this style of shopping fulfil consumer demands for more personalised buying, but the sector’s self-employed salesforces are also being boosted by a new generation looking for more flexible, entrepreneurial ways of working.”

The Body Shop’s social shopping division, The Body Shop at Home, reported one of the strongest performances, with growth of over 70 per cent during 2018.

This was attributed to the doubling in the size of its independent consultant salesforce in the UK over the last 12 months to almost 16,000 people.

“One of the key reasons for growth has been the increasing appetite for side hustles and more entrepreneurial styles of working,” The Body Shop at Home global director Peter Kropp said.

He added: “The Body Shop at Home occupies a unique space as a direct sales channel within an omnichannel environment comprised of retail, ecommerce and the direct sales channel.

“Following the acquisition of The Body Shop by Natura [in 2017], there has been a significant focus on developing the training and leadership skills of our independent sales consultants, and this has been a clear driver of our current success.

“Trends look to be sustained through 2019 and into 2020 despite challenging economic headwinds.”

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