

# Online value-adds direct selling biz

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DC | BENGALURU

**June 29:** The Rs 3,500 crore direct selling industry in India has quietly gone online. And the medium is doing more than just furthering revenue growth. The Internet has made life much easier for its 15 lakh distributors, even.

Amway India established the first phase of its online presence in 2006 and launched its completely revamped e-commerce site [www.amway.in](http://www.amway.in) in September 2008.

The first phase of the company's e-commerce initiative allowed its distributors/business owners to log in and keep track of business transacted for a particular month or months.

The second phase allowed distributors to order products online when their stocks were depleted. The third phase included a website makeover that made it more consumer-friendly allowing prospective consumers to browse through product catalogues and even place orders online.

The actual sale and delivery, though, is routed through an Amway distributor, in keeping with the direct selling business model.

That's not all. Distributors can now sign up new people who want to be Amway business owners entirely online, saving a lot of time. Another online initiative was Amway's gift-giving season catalogue, introduced recently. It offered a wide choice from ties, olive oil, bed and bath linen, premium tea to Disney toys.

"Our online business has grown five times since its relaunch in September last year," managing director and CEO of Amway India William S Pinckney says.

The Internet may also help the company in training, going ahead.

Online training for its active distributor base of 5 lakh can supplement its offline programmes.

Other companies such as Avon, which has completed 13 years in India, has also launched its online channel



[www.in.avon.com](http://www.in.avon.com).

One can of course go through its latest brochures and check out products from categories spanning skincare, personal care, fashion accessories, and fragrances among others.

"An interesting feature we have introduced is virtual makeup on an online model, which makes it easier for consumers to pick a colour of their choice of lipstick, eyeliner or mascara," MD of Avon Beauty Products India Sebastian Bako says.

The next phase of the company's online site will allow its sales force to place their orders online.

While there are 15 registered members of the Indian Direct Selling Association, most of them with attractive, information-intensive, web-

sites, players such as Amway and Avon have evidently gone beyond just listing events and conferences, product promotions, star performers and new initiatives.

Amway has committed an investment of Rs 100 crore to the India market over the next two years to set up Avon Beauty Zones, the first of which opened in Bengaluru on Sunday.

The direct selling industry is expected to touch Rs 15,000 crore by 2012 and is growing at 25 per cent per annum.

The sector, which operates with close to 15 lakh distributors, selling agents or representatives, also provides full time employment to over 35,000 people around the country.

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