

Let's Get This Party Started

A complete guide to success
in your home selling business

For Alena and Alex.
Without you, all this would be meaningless.
Love you,
Mum

Anne Howie

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Howie, Anne
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Thanks!

When I first had an idea I wanted to write a book, I actually thought it was as simple as just writing a book and getting a printer to bind it!

Little did I know how involved it was, how many people would be needed and what sort of jobs there would be to do. It feels like it has taken a whole community to come up with one little book! This certainly is not just my book and it feels as if the front cover should list at least a dozen names, not just mine. The amount of effort others have put into getting this book into its final form leaves me feeling I had the easiest job.

I want to thank everyone who helped me get this stage of my dream off the ground.

My dear and long-suffering friend, Anne. Where would I be without you? Your input and importance in my life is without measure. Working with you has been a huge part of my development over the years and much of what I have learned in both party plan and life is thanks to you.

My children, Alena and Alex. At least you can say your lives have not been boring! Thank you for your patience and for allowing me to talk about you and your experiences as party plan children. I love you both more than you can imagine and am so incredibly proud of you.

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Without the support of some incredible people over the years I would never have got this far or have developed the strong vision I have for my life. I am grateful to so many people. In particular I want to thank Clare, Diane, Jackie, Jacky, Jill, Julie, Lance, Leonie, Mahiya, Sheree, Sue, Vanda and Yvonne.

And to all my past consultants, hosts and customers – thank you all, for as you know, without you all, I would not have had a business in the first place!

Foreword

I have never been one to sit back and just let things happen and I don't intend for this book to be any different for you. It is not going to unfold gently, helping you to feel calm and soothed. It is going to give you real ideas, thoughts and advice and sometimes it will challenge you to really think about what you are doing - or not doing. You will need to roll your sleeves up and get to work!

This book is a culmination of more than ten years in party plan – ten years of exhilaration, excitement and growing as well as occasional pain, despair and frustration – none of which I would choose to change if I could.

This business is easy – but for some reason we often feel we have to make it hard. I would love for you to be able to discover just how easy party plan can be, and then for you to enjoy all the success and benefits that are available through it.

This is an important business for women. I know many people who have been timid and lacking in confidence and self-esteem, who through party plan have completely changed (myself included). They are now confident, articulate and much happier people. Their lives are fulfilling, they know what they want, and they know how to get it. They are compassionate and understanding through their dealings with so many different types of people and situations. They have become less ruffled and rigid and can now enjoy a much wider and richer range of life experiences.

Their children have grown up with strong work ethics and great people skills – and often a strength and confidence that will stand them in good stead to live fulfilling lives of their own.

All of that is a pretty huge pay off!

My wish for you is that you discover and enjoy all of this and if I can help you along your journey – no matter how long – then that will be one of the greatest gifts party plan has given me.

All companies operate differently, pay differently and have different expectations from their consultants. I have tried to make what I have written as generic as possible and hope that anything that is not a complete fit can be translated to your own circumstances.

I may have made some suggestions that contradict your company's policy. If this is the case then please remember you must honour the agreement you made with them and follow their guidelines. There are good reasons why your company operates the way it does and you must respect that. If you are not sure about something, please check it out.

Obviously, talking about money and earnings is tricky as every company is so different. I have used very round, arbitrary figures that will be more meaningful when you insert your own averages. The principles discussed work for every company and it is the principles I want to get across.

Well over 90% of the party plan industry consists of women. I recognise that there are men involved as well and if you are one of them please accept my apology for my language being decidedly slanted towards women throughout the book. I know that there are many men who join party plan and I even know some partners who have been known to do parties for their ladies when they are overloaded with party bookings. I want to acknowledge you and explain to you that my choice of language is purely convenience, to satisfy the majority, and to allow reading not to be stilted.

I have included templates and scripts – all you have to do is take the ideas and make them personal to you. Many of the templates are available free of charge, at my website www.thepartyplanexpert.com.

Practice the scripts with another consultant friend. Change them to make them your own. Make them conversational, letting the person you are talking to speak too. The scripts are only a guide to the information you need to convey. As far as possible, they are exactly as I would say it (allowing for breaths every now and then!)

If you are a leader and want some suggestions on how you can help your team with some of the material presented, you will find information for you on my website www.thepartyplanexpert.com available free of charge. My second book, *Let's Get Their Party Started* is written specifically for leaders and will be available in 2009. Check out my website for more information about that.

In short, I have tried to give you some great material to work with that will be easy to use and get you out there doing it, rather than sitting in your office trying to design and invent too many things of your own.

I would love to receive feedback from you and suggestions for improvement. We are all constantly learning how to do things better – and I am no different.

Enjoy, have fun and *Let's Get This Party Started!*

Anne.



Chapter 1

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
and that has made all the difference.*
–Robert Frost

Why I Want to Share Party Plan With You

It's important you know something about me before we get started.

I fell into party plan by accident in 1997, in New Zealand. I had recently arrived home after living for seven years in Singapore with my husband and two children.

I was not a party plan person at all – far from it. I saw party plan as being something for other people to do – not people like me, who had been to University! I felt I should be doing something 'professional' – my arrogance was a force to be reckoned with, and very misguided!

Back in New Zealand our finances were less than ideal, but we had decided it was important I stay home with the children. Our income meant choices were limited. We couldn't afford Montessori school for Alex and we wanted him to have the same start as his sister, Alena. All we needed was an extra \$100 per week, but I didn't want to have a regular job. Here is where party plan came in.

I came across a consultant in a company who was selling aromatherapy and perfume products. She seemed nice and invited me to an evening where someone was going to be presented with a new car. I wasn't all that keen but I needed a night away from the children, so went along (besides, there were free refreshments and wine and our budget didn't allow for too much of that sort of thing).

What I saw that night opened my eyes to a whole new world. This was not just a little hobby to keep bored housewives occupied, as the cynic inside my head was telling me. This was real business!

When the compensation plan was presented I almost fell off my seat! What they were telling me was that I really could earn what I was worth. If I did more, I would earn more. It was not like a previous job I had where everyone earned the same, regardless of whether they worked hard or just pretended to.

As well as being paid to sell products, I could find others who might like to do this too. If they joined, they would have the same opportunities as me and I would be paid to help them, based on how well they did for themselves – a perfect incentive for me to help them be successful.

As if all this was not enough, at the end of the evening someone was presented with a brand new car!

This was certainly a different kettle of fish to the business I had owned in Singapore – a shop which cost more than \$100,000 to set up and stock, and took two years of virtual slave labour to break even with.

Coming back down to earth the next day I decided to give this party plan thing a go. I did not believe for a second that I was going to make it big. In fact, I didn't want that at all. If I did one average party per week I would have enough to pay for Alex to attend Montessori school and I would be happy with that.

My very first party was terrifying. An ordeal to say the least. I did **not** want to go. I had my entire presentation written out word for word and my plan was to just read it out at the party. I kept losing my place, getting flustered, forgetting words - after more than thirty years of speaking English I suddenly was no longer fluent - and generally suffering horribly.

I was amazed when I actually got some orders that night - \$110 total sales for that party. The average party sales at that time for my company was \$400, so it was not exactly impressive, but I was over the moon! In addition to that I got four future bookings, which I guessed were sympathy bookings, but I didn't care!

Each party after that first one got easier. By the fourth one it suddenly dawned on me that the questions were generally the same and I was managing with bullet points rather than reading screeds of notes. It was not that hard!

I could do this!

Within three months I had earned enough to pay for a full year of Montessori school and started being able to contribute to the family, as well as treat myself to the occasional shopping expedition and manicure.

I was having a ball and earning a better hourly rate than most of my professional friends.

What amazed me the most was to get set up in this business cost less than \$300, and here was I making a profit after only three parties – that was all it took to pay my kit back! I started dreaming of leadership, beautiful brand new cars and five-star travel.

Everything started to flow beautifully, until the day I was asked to speak at an evening our company held monthly, to show potential new consultants our business.

I was to give a testimonial, to tell the audience of approximately fifty people a little about myself and what was happening in my business. I don't know why I agreed to do it, as in the few days leading up to it I must have aged ten years! For two days I didn't sleep, I bit all my nails off; I had stomach cramps and diarrhoea. I was irritable and snappy and just generally very unhappy. I even considered quitting. It was dreadful.

During the meeting I sat waiting for my turn as if awaiting execution. I kept ducking out to the toilet and was sniffing oils of orange (for anxiety) and frankincense (for courage) on a tissue.

Suddenly, the meeting was over and people were thanking me for what I had said. This was surprising, because I had no memory of ever being up the front and speaking at all! The craziest thing about the whole ordeal was how long I was supposed to - and apparently did - speak for: two whole minutes!

Speaking at that meeting was so traumatic I decided that I either had to abandon my dreams of becoming a leader in the company or I had to quit completely. How could you have a manager who falls to pieces at the first sign of having to talk to a group? I was not going to be able to run meetings or train anyone and could not live with the terror I had just been through on a regular basis.

As soon as I made the decision to leave party plan I started feeling unhappy. I knew that giving in now was not the answer and that if I didn't face this challenge now it would only come back and visit me at another time, in another place. I needed to face this fear first and then quit, if I still wanted to, later on.

I joined Toastmasters.

Within three months I was a changed person! More confident, more articulate and far less scared. To say I began to love speaking in public would be an exaggeration but I was not losing sleep over it, feeling nauseous or going through barrel loads of oils any more.

I could do this (again)!

Everything started to move along as wonderfully as it had before. People were joining, my sales were good, I was making money and in no time I became a manager and found I did enjoy my new role.

Then the next challenge appeared before me. Our company opened in Malaysia. So without too much (or any) thought, I hopped on a plane with some other managers and off we went for a month to start our own international businesses! It seemed to be the thing to do at the time.

We had a blast, recruited like crazy and came home, sure of the riches that we believed would follow. Within a few weeks of being back home all the consultants we had sponsored had quit – due to a lack of support and leadership and, I imagine, general feelings of abandonment. We didn't know how to look after and help them. So that was that.

Or was it?

I was in a very interesting position as my husband was Malaysian, so it was possible for me to go there longer term and be legally allowed to work. At this time my husband was working in Thailand while the children and I were in New Zealand. I jumped on a plane with Alena and Alex (8 and 5 years old) and off we went!

It was a good thing I didn't think too hard about it or I wouldn't have gone. I had never actually run a meeting by myself, knew only my sisters-in-law, did not speak any of the local languages and was going to be virtually a single mother in Malaysia!!

Once I got to Kuala Lumpur my first task was to start recruiting. So I started talking to people in the bank and supermarket and on the street. I walked around shopping centres with a basket giving people free samples and getting interest and generally living so far out of my comfort zone that it wasn't funny.

People started to join this crazy Kiwi lady. I was eager to train and support them so I organised training to be held every Monday at 7.30pm. A lot of people said they would come. So every week I would take two trains or a taxi to get there and every week I would sit with the General Manager waiting for all the people to arrive. By 8pm each week we would give up and go home.

I started taking a novel with me to read while I waited.

I'll never forget the panic I felt when eventually someone turned up to the meeting. I hadn't looked at my notes for weeks! We muddled through somehow and as time went on the small meeting room

started to slowly fill. Sales were still low though and money was very tight and after twelve months of battling it was time to make some big decisions about what I was doing. I needed to decide how committed I was, whether I truly believed it would work and whether this was the best thing to do for my children.

Was I committed? Yes, I had put my heart and soul into this business for 12 months. I loved the products, the company and believed in what I was doing. I could see a magnificent 'big picture'.

Did I truly believe the business would work? Yes I did. I felt that I was just missing the key that would unlock everything. Deep in my heart I knew it could work. All I needed was to crack the puzzle.

Was this the best thing I could do for my children? Yes, it was. My husband and I had separated by this stage and it was more important than ever that I earn a good income for the children. They were benefiting from being near their cousins and living in another culture as locals – an opportunity few people ever have and that would not happen again for them.

I sensed I was on the cusp of a breakthrough that would impact the children and myself enormously, so decided to stay a little longer to see if I could turn the business around. What happened next seems almost like a fairy tale. Almost six months to the day I made the decision to stay, I had a business with a turnover of over \$1 million per annum. A couple of months later the turnover had more than doubled to \$2.4 million per annum and I had around 100 people joining my business every month. I had 23 managers; all with their own teams and every week in Kuala Lumpur 70 – 100 people were turning up for Monday night training.

What happened?

We had spent all those months learning, making mistakes and trying new things. I realised that what I was doing was not working and tried to identify the key issues that were stopping the business from

growing. I changed the way I recruited people and brought them on board in a much more energetic and businesslike way. They began to feel success quickly and they repeated the process with their own recruits. In the meantime, I was developing a system that could be duplicated by anyone. I made training manuals and DVDs so that people several levels down from me, who were too far away to get to meetings, could still effectively be trained by me. I even ran meetings for people who didn't speak English, using managers who translated every word as I said it, by way of training them to do it on their own. Suddenly I had a business that was being conducted in English, Malay and Chinese!

I really could do this!

Life was great and I felt I had a train that was rolling with such momentum that it could never be stopped. My self-developed systems were being duplicated, I had senior managers in place and I finally felt I could go home to New Zealand with my head held high and a fantastic international business that was paying me huge rewards.

Today the Malaysian business goes from strength to strength. At the time of writing there are over 300 managers in Malaysia, and still growing every month.

I am no longer personally involved in that business, although I watch its progress with a huge sense of pride and excitement.

My life has continued on a different path, which is exciting and challenging, and one that could never have happened without the abundant gifts that party plan has given me.

I have learned an incredible amount about business, people, party plan and, most importantly, me. It is all this that I am bursting at the seams to share with you. I have huge gratitude for all my experiences – the good and the bad, and have enjoyed sharing my experiences and learning with another company in New Zealand for the past 2 ½ years as their national training manager.

Now it is time for me to touch more people, particularly those in smaller companies, who are just getting going, and those with limited resources and support. I really want this to work for you.

You have the ability in you to be able to have a business as big as you want. Whatever circumstances or challenges you have are immaterial. It is all up to you and what you decide you want.



Chapter 2

Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go and do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

—John Eldredge

The Business of Party Plan

Starting your own business is a big and exciting decision. Congratulations for taking the leap and deciding to give it a go.

People join party plan for many reasons. Some stay weeks, some stay years. Some achieve great success, others enjoy more modest achievements. No matter how the business turns out, in all my years (over a decade) in the business, I can not recall hearing anyone say that they wished they had never joined party plan. Almost everyone who has been part of a reputable party plan company will tell you that they benefited in some way and that they are glad for the experience.

What is party plan all about? Here is a story that describes it perfectly. I do not know where it originated, but whoever wrote it (with tongue firmly in cheek) certainly sums up what we do in a nutshell.

The perfect career

A woman walked into the office of the personnel manager of a large company and said:

"I've decided to come and work for your company, but there are a few things I feel you should be aware of before I start. First of all, I will only be working a couple of days a week and when I do come in, it'll only be for about three hours at a time."

"If I want to make plans to go somewhere with my family during such times as Christmas, New Year, Easter or school holidays I will do so without anyone asking me questions about it and if some family difficulty arises, I will arrange for postponement of my work until I can get back to it."

"As a salesperson for this company, I will do the best job I can, but I expect the company to provide all the incentives and awards needed to encourage my customers to buy our products. Please be sure the incentives and awards are changed on a regular basis to keep up the interest and motivation."

"With regards to compensation, I would like a percentage of everything I sell. Let's say \$30 or more per hour, plus bonuses if I do a better than average job. I also expect you to offer me a variety of awards such as gifts and prizes just for doing my job."

"Oh, and by the way; if I decide to become a manager with your company, I will expect additional bonuses paid to me on my personal sales and the sales of all people connected to me."

By now the personnel manager was in convulsions of laughter but managed to say, *"I don't know where you are from lady, but there is no such job in the world as the one you've just described!"*

"Well, I beg to differ", the woman said, "my friend has just joined party plan and that is exactly the kind of job she has!"



Party plan is fun, exciting, challenging, social, life changing and can be rewarding beyond your wildest dreams – in every part of your life.

Why party plan?

Party plan is not new – we have been buying and selling at parties for over sixty years.

In reality though, ever since women first started communicating, we have been party planning. We are naturals. Women like nothing better than to chat, share and help each other out. We can't help it.

We can't wait to get on the phone to tell everyone about the amazing movie we saw last night, or the fantastic restaurant we dined at or that there is a sale on somewhere or a special offer. It does not cross our minds that the people we are telling might not get excited too and go straight down there themselves. Of course, since they will also end up just as enthusiastic, they will tell everyone they know as well ... and so the bush telegraph works and important news spreads like wildfire.

And that is exactly what party plan is.

The only difference is that when we join a party plan company we actually get paid for something we do already for free!

As if this is not enough, there are even more great things about party plan:

- You own your own business – a conventional business can cost tens of thousands of dollars to set up, it is stressful and you can feel isolated, often only managing to break even financially in two to three years. Your rate of pay can be low or even non-existent in these early years.
- Party plan generally costs a few hundred dollars to get started, and you can start making a profit after only a few parties. Within two to three years you can be making significant income, travelling the world and living the life you love.
- You are the boss. No one tells you when to turn up, when you can eat lunch or whether you can go and watch your child's athletics.

- You do not need a medical certificate if you are ill and if you want to go shopping or to a movie in the daytime you can. You do not have to work 40 hours a week but can if you want.
- There is no financial or personal risk. At the very worst you will do a few parties, decide it is not your thing, have paid for your kit, have a bit of extra money in your pocket and still keep all your products. There is no way you can lose! It is important you start with the intention of giving it your best shot, not giving up at the first hurdle, but really testing party plan out – then if it is not your thing (I didn't think it was mine!) you can say at least you tried and you know that for sure!
- You are not alone. There are people ready and willing to help and support you, who have done exactly what you are doing themselves.
- It is not a job – a job means you trade hours for money. One hour, one unit of money. You can not earn more than that unless you give more hours. Party planners earn great hourly rates and when you look after your customers well you will be paid again and again in reorders and word of mouth advertising.
- You will experience personal development like you won't believe! Successful party planners are ravenous when it comes to growing and improving. We are addicts! Most of us started off quiet, shy and lacking in confidence and through party plan have learned to confront fear, conquer procrastination and to set and achieve goals. This growth will spread and soon your family and friends will see you as more positive, happier and someone who is fun to be around. It can not help but rub off – especially on your children! Party planners' kids are often confident, positive and caring, with great work ethics.
- Travel the world – many party plan companies offer incentives to travel locally and internationally. These trips are always fantastic and you are always treated like royalty. Some companies allow you to take your family as well. Instead of saving and working overtime

to be able to afford a holiday in modest accommodation, returning to do more overtime to pay off the credit card, how about you do this: do some extra parties to achieve sales targets, put the extra money you have earned on your credit card (being in credit on your credit card is an interesting concept, isn't it?) and enjoy a free, five-star holiday spending some of your well earned money on things you really want.

- You get to use products you love at much lower prices than everyone else. You are encouraged to use the **whole** range.
- You get to give others a chance to change their life and enjoy all these benefits too. As women we get satisfaction from doing this anyway – but in party plan we even get paid for it! And in many companies, the more you help and support the people you are introducing, the more successful they will be and the more you will earn as a result.
- Meet new people and socialise. If you have been at home all day long with small children, putting some lipstick on and talking to adults for a change is a very attractive idea. Even if you haven't been deprived of adult company, meeting different people and widening your circle of friends is a real plus. Talking to strangers is also a great way to increase your confidence and social skills.
- Most companies offer generous and valuable host rewards at little cost to consultants. Learn to use this to maximum advantage and you will have a business that is permanently ongoing and thriving.

Why do parties?

Selling by party plan is many times more powerful than selling to individuals. Let's compare the two:

Individuals	Groups
It takes 30–45 minutes to present your product.	It takes 30–45 minutes to present your product (no longer – please!)
You are seen as a salesperson – there is a good chance of resistance and mistrust unless the customer already knows you personally.	The fact that you are a salesperson is no longer a hindrance. The group will trust you because the host or a friend in the group trusts you. Happy customers love being 'experts' and in a group will do the selling for you. Resistance is less and sales go up.
The customer may have trouble making a decision and want to talk to a friend/partner or think about it. Most of the time this results in no sale.	The customers can talk to each other and will be influenced by what they think. Women do this all the time – go shopping for clothes alone and you will come home with very little, go with a friend and you will return laden with shopping bags (and very happy with what you bought).
Can be stressful (for both of you) - they are worried that they will feel obligated to buy, and you might worry about that or whether you are investing your time wisely in spending it with them.	It is fun! Hosts and guests become long-term customers through getting to know you in a fun, non-threatening environment.

A lot of questions and objections are likely – these can make you feel defensive.

If you have created the right environment, people will help each other out with questions – you will also get to identify those people who might be great future consultants.

Will spend nothing or maybe just the average spend (let's say \$100 for argument's sake).

More likely to spend in a group, and spend more (think about the clothes shopping – you spend more when you are with someone). Even if half the people do not buy and there are ten people there, that is at least \$500 worth of sales.

There is a limited chance of on-going business from this appointment.

Others will want to have you show their friends your products and achieve the host gifts for themselves – bookings will provide ongoing business for you.



Chapter 3

The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather in a lack of will.

-Vincent T. Lombardi

How is Your Head?

You have signed up and sent away for your kit. It has cost you only a few hundred dollars, and in return you may be receiving over \$1,000 worth of product. Your new business is about to start.

What are you thinking right now?

"This is so exciting, I can't wait to get started."

"If it doesn't work out, it doesn't matter – I still get to keep all these products. I'll just try my best and see how it goes."

"I don't know if I can really do this. I am no good at selling, I can't do business. What was I thinking?"

"What will my friends say?"

"I am scared."

Whatever is in your head is really important if you want to make a success of this (and so far I am yet to meet anyone who started a party plan business to be a failure!). You must do whatever you need to do, to be able to change this to,

"I am so excited – I can't wait to get started."

Let me give you some help with this by looking at each thought separately with a plan to get to "I'm so excited". You will need a notebook to write in. You might want to jump to the thought that fits you best, or there might be parts in each that are helpful to you.



Writing things down helps you think more clearly. It takes the thoughts that are going around in your head and puts them on paper so you can look at them with less emotion. It is amazing how just by writing you can find out exactly what it is you are thinking, find some peace of mind and solve all sorts of problems. You may also find when you write that problems that seem daunting at first actually are not all that bad once you see them in black and white. It is a great habit to get into.

If you are thinking...

"If it doesn't work out it doesn't matter – I still get to keep all these products. I'll just try my best and see how it goes."

You need to work on your belief in yourself. Maybe you have been squashed and not given proper encouragement or support in things you have tried or wanted to do in the past. You are probably secretly hoping this actually will work, but you don't want to proclaim this to the world. You are pre-empting your friends' reactions and have your apology ready for when they say, "What on earth are you doing?"

When you say you will 'try' your best, you have no such plan. You will go through the motions and if it works out you will conceal your surprise and go with it. If it doesn't work you will say you only wanted the kit, or you only wanted it to be a hobby in the first place.

Imagine this for a minute. You are on a plane, coming in to land and the captain says,

"Ladies and gentlemen we are coming in to Sydney Airport. Shortly I will try to land this plane."

Would you be tightening your seat belt and saying your prayers? I would. 'Try' does not mean anything other than,

"I think I might fail, so I better put in a disclaimer so I don't look too confident in myself and people think I am silly if I do fail."

Here is your action plan to get closer to "I am so excited"

Get a notebook and write down exactly what you are thinking.

Think about what you would really (no one is looking, remember) like to happen with your business. Would you like to:

- Help pay some bills
- Go shopping for yourself with your own money
- Fund a trip/holiday
- Pay for singing lessons, a sky dive
- Buy orthodontics for your child
- Take your family to visit relatives

Make a list. Remember no one will see this list – this is all about you. Pick the most important one and work out how much money you need. (Do not make it one of the very expensive goals – we will get to them – for now I just want you start to feel success.) Why do you want this? Do the 5 Whys (see p47).

Close your eyes and imagine how you will feel once you have achieved this for yourself.

When you open your eyes write down how you feel in your notebook.

- When do you want it? Write this date.
- How many parties do you need to get it by then? Work it out using your company's average party sales – less if you want to allow for being a beginner. It is important you feel you are being realistic.

Use the chart below.

My goal (A)		\$
Average sales per party are		\$
My commission from that will be (B)		\$
My costs will be	Host Gift	\$
	Literature	\$
	Other	\$
	Total (C)	\$
Per party net profit (B-C=D)		\$
Set up costs	Price of Kit	\$
	Extras	\$
	Total (E)	\$
Total money I need to earn to pay back investment costs and achieve my first goal (A+E=F)		\$
Number of parties I need to do (F÷D=G)		
Weeks until my goal date (H)		_____ weeks
Parties needed per week (G÷H)		



Go to www.thepartyplanexpert.com to find a *New Consultant Goal Spreadsheet*, which will help you work this out without needing to do it by hand. You will also find some other handy goal calculators on the website. Once you import these into your own computer you will be able to change them to suit yourself.

Is this do-able? Do you need to change the date? Make a commitment to not stop this business until you have achieved this goal. Then, if you feel party plan is not your thing or you do not want to continue, you can leave and your main benefit will be a greatly increased belief in yourself. Not a bad worst case scenario!

Incidentally, in case of low sales for your first parties – keep on going! Every party that doesn't turn out the way you want is a free class in 'Party Plan University'. It is only ever a waste if you have not learnt from it.

If you are thinking...

"I don't know if I can really do this. I am no good at selling, I can't do business. What was I thinking?"

It is easy to forget that this is not all about you! You may be embarrassed that you will be doing this for money, and you don't want people to think you are out to rip them off! If you were selling an inferior product you felt was not worth buying then you would definitely have cause to feel like this. There are hundreds, maybe thousands of party plan companies out there – you could have chosen any of them – but you chose this one. Why was that? I am betting it was because you fell in love with the products.

Don't forget – we do this stuff for free all the time! Remember telling everyone about the last great movie you saw or restaurant you went to?

Here is your action plan to get closer to "I am so excited"

Get a notebook and write down exactly what you are thinking right now about whether you can sell things. What evidence do you have to prove this?

Then write why this may not be true - our minds are the biggest tricksters we are likely to run into in our lives and we need to get to the truth of things. Do not believe a word your mind is telling you without checking it out!

Write about times you were scared to do something and did it anyway. How did it feel?

Write about times you recommended a restaurant or movie (or something else) to a friend – and how you felt once they went and enjoyed the experience as well.

You were selling without 'selling'!

Now think about the products you will be showing and recommending and write in your notebook:

- Why do you love them?
- Why should others have them?
- How did your life change because of these products?
- How will you feel if you can help someone else experience this type of change?
- Will everyone need or want this product? Does it matter if they don't?

You see? It has very little to do with you – and a lot to do with everyone else! And when you focus on them, instead of yourself, watch your fears melt away.

As far as the "I can't do business" bit goes – you have discovered a brilliant business – you are not alone! People will help you – I will help you! You do not have to be a business genius – you just have to love your product and enjoy people!

If you were starting a conventional business, this would be much scarier – it is unlikely many people would try to help you. In party plan people who are successful have learned from a lot of mistakes and failures and they are more than willing to help you.

If you are thinking...

"What will my friends say?"

This is the great dream stealer syndrome, and one that pulls everyone down.

Some of your friends may well tell you you will fail, that you should get a real job and that they are telling you this because they love you.

Here are the facts as I see them:

They do love you and do not want to see you hurt but somehow they might not stop to consider you may be outrageously successful. You cannot blame them for this – we even bring our kids up the same way!

“Hey Johnny, don’t climb that tree, you might hurt yourself.”

I will never forget the day I was talking to my daughter, Alena, about her goals. She announced that when she grows up she wants to be New Zealand Idol. Even I, who should have known better, started trying to lower her expectations – because I love her and don’t want her to get hurt if she doesn’t get there. I started trying to get her to be more realistic – until I realised what I was doing. I was stealing my own daughter’s dream! What right did I have to do that? I have never done that again. Not with her, or anyone else.

But most people **do** it (and I am guessing you might at times too). When this happens to you, you need to be strong and know why you are starting your own business, and in particular **this** business.

I am so fortunate I caught myself before I crushed Alena’s dream. Now she is a beautiful young woman and no longer aspires to be New Zealand Idol – but having that goal in the first place may have helped her with her interest in music and singing. She has taken risks in performances she may well not have taken without it. The fact that her goals have changed is immaterial – they have enriched her life in a way that would never have happened had I tried to keep her safe from her ‘unrealistic’ dreams.

It is really very simple. Think about what sorts of jobs or lives your friends have. Is that what you want? If yes, then do what they do.

But if you want something different, you will have to do something different. When you do choose to be different, people often don’t like it – it threatens their comfort zone. Then, if it does not work out the way you want it to, they will commiserate with you, while secretly being quite relieved at being ‘right’.

If you are successful though, it often gives them a respect for you that may not have been there, and your courage in forging ahead may

just be what they need to take a risk in their own lives. You can affect people’s lives in a way that would have been impossible if you had not ventured out.

Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you... as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.
–Marianne Williamson

Many cultures have a word or a story about the behaviour that keeps people pushed down. This dreadful habit can infect sports, businesses, school, everything! Let’s stamp it out. Here are some attitudes found around the world – I suggest you read about them by searching on Google.

In New Zealand and Australia: Tall poppy syndrome.

In Hawaii: Crab mentality or Alamihi syndrome.

In Scotland: Kent yer faither syndrome.

In Scandinavia: Jante law.

In Japan: The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.



Here is your action plan to get close to “I am so excited”

Get a notebook and write about how you are feeling.

- What do you imagine people might say?
- Why do you think they might say it?
- Is it about them or about you? (Often it is them playing their own fears out through you.)
- Will you give up your dreams because of a little discomfort now?
- What will happen if you persevere?
- How do you want your life to look?
- Is that how your friend’s lives look now?
- Can you have that life by continuing to live and behave as you have been?
- When you come across a dream stealer how will you counter their comments? (Don’t forget, the chances are that they really do believe they are telling you something for your own good).

Here are some handy phrases for those ‘dream stealer moments’.

“You may well be right, but I want to give it a go and see for myself.”

“Thank you for caring, but I have decided that I’m going to go for it. Anyway what’s the worst that can happen?”

Do not enter into a discussion or debate and don’t get upset or angry. Expect this and everyone’s advice, no matter how misguided. If you feel people’s comments are starting to get to you, go back and read about the life you plan to create that is in your notebook!

Read about some people who did not listen to dream stealers, some good people to start with (Google them):

- Thomas Edison – inventor who is responsible for the light bulb amongst many other things.
- Nelson Mandela – was jailed for 27 years for his beliefs and went on to become the president of South Africa.
- Oprah Winfrey – one of the most influential and respected people in USA who has fought and worked hard for everything she has achieved.

- Richard Branson – entrepreneur and philanthropist who founded Virgin Airlines.
- J.K. Rowling – author of the Harry Potter children’s books which she wrote when broke and living on a single parent benefit from the government.

Do not live to look back and wonder what might have been.

If you are thinking...

“I am scared.”

Welcome to Club Normal! Anything new is scary and until you hold your breath and jump in you will be held captive by it.

Susan Jeffers wrote a brilliant book on fear that has helped me (and continues to do so as I face new and scary things) and countless other people.

Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway teaches you “How to turn your fear and indecision into confidence and action.”

I can not recommend this book highly enough. If you want to improve how you see yourself, learn to trust yourself, be able to make tough decisions that will improve your life immeasurably and allow you to move forward, then this is definitely the book for you.

Susan gives us five truths of fear:

1. The fear will never go away as long as we continue to grow.
2. The only way to get rid of the fear of doing something is to go out... and do it.
3. The only way to feel better about yourself is to go out... and do it.
4. Not only are you going to experience fear whenever you’re on unfamiliar territory, but so is everyone else.
5. Pushing through fear is less frightening than living with the underlying fear that comes from a feeling of helplessness.

Most excuses not to get started or to get started half-heartedly all boil down to fear. By avoiding facing fear you are only delaying it – eventually it will come back to get you and will keep on coming back until you deal with it.

Here is your action plan to get closer to “I am so excited”

Get a notebook and write down exactly what you are feeling.

- Why are you scared? What are you scared of?
- What is the worst thing that can happen? If that happens, can you handle it?
- If you allow the fear to win, how will it affect your life? How will it affect the lives of those close to you?
- If you conquer the fear, how will this make you feel? How will it affect your life? How will it affect the lives of those close to you?

Get a copy of Susan Jeffers *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* and read it. Highlight the bits that are really talking to you. If you want even more help get her second book *Feel the Fear and Beyond*.

When you learn to confront your fears you will find that you will change and stretch in a way that will be permanent. A bit like underwear elastic, really!

Are we there yet?

If you were not in the “*I am so excited, I can’t wait to get started*” zone to start with, it does take some work to get there. If you are still not there, please do whatever you can to change it. Anything less and you may be cheating yourself out of something that could be the best thing that ever happened to you and your family.

Having a good state of mind is essential if you are to build a successful business. You have to work on it constantly and see it as a life-long project. The rewards are immeasurable and will impact not only your business, but your health, lifestyle, relationships, family and income.

Learn how to stop saying “*What if it doesn’t work?*”, and learn to say “*What if it **does** work?*”

Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.
–George Bernard Shaw

Staying positive

This business is just like any other business, job or, for that matter, life! There are ups and downs, sometimes everything seems to go your way, and sometimes it feels like everything is against you.

Most people wade through their lives remembering and collecting all the bad things that have happened to them. For some reason it seems to be our default setting and we live our lives looking through glasses that let us see the world and everything in it conspiring to do us ill. With that outlook, we constantly gather ‘evidence’ which continues to prove us right. It is a crazy world where we can be affected by something bad that happened last month and not even remember something good that happened last week!

Do you have such a collection in your head? Can you remember times when people said or did something mean or unfair to you? Times when you were disappointed or even devastated by something? If you were to list the things that come to the top of your mind, how long would that list be?

Now, if you would write a list of all the evidence supporting the opposite – that the world and everything in it are conspiring to do you good, how long would that list be?

If your good list is longer than your bad – congratulations! Give yourself a pat on the back, skip the rest of this chapter, and go and pour some bubbles to celebrate. You are not like the majority and, as you well know, great things just keep happening to you. Some people will believe you are charmed, lucky or even magic. But we know otherwise, don’t we?

You get what you focus on and believe in. Believe in and focus on bad things and you will receive them in abundance! Try the opposite and the opposite is what you will get!

A book that many have found very helpful is *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne. If you are feeling like you need a boost, this book (or the DVD) may be just what you need.

Keys to a positive mind

🔑 Focus on the positive

Keep a success journal and record even the small, seemingly insignificant events. When you are having a below average day, which makes it difficult to keep a grip on your positivity, get your success journal out and read it.

🔑 Deal with and discard the negatives

If it needs to be dealt with, do it and move on. Dwelling on it is non productive. If you can do something about it, do it. If you are unable to or you can not be bothered then don't give it any energy. You have better things to do!

🔑 Resign from the 'Coffee Clutch Club'

Don't hang around anyone who brings you down. Let them have their own pity party. Why should they get in the way of your great life?

Have you seen *The Four Yorkshire Men* – a skit by Monty Python? Four men sit around having a pointless competition about who has had the worst life. Each one is more ridiculous than the one before. You can watch this skit on *YouTube*. Bear in mind when you watch it that it is hilarious only because we can recognise parts of ourselves in it.

The Coffee Clutch Club consists of us sitting around the table clutching our coffees, moaning and whining about our terrible lives. Often it turns into some kind of macabre competition. Imagine feeling satisfied to be the 'winner' – the one with the most miserable life!

🔑 When you are down, try to remember you are learning

(And yes, I do know this is hard!)

When everything is going fantastically and you are on top of the world, how much learning do you do? Absolutely none. How much improving do you do? Very little.

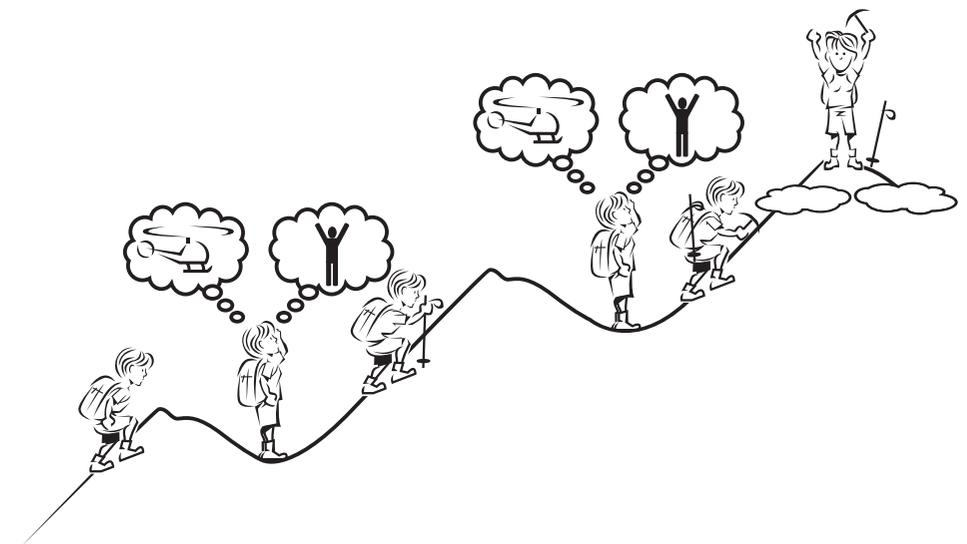
When everything is fantastic enjoy the breather, appreciate the 'view from the top', but never forget this is a cycle. Without the cycle you would not, and could not, grow. It's only when times are challenging that we truly make the effort to learn and improve. The 'down' times are crucial to our development.

🔑 It's like climbing mountains

Imagine you are a mountaineer. You start off with small mountains and little experience or equipment. With each climb you do, you pick up more tools, more experience and can climb higher.

If the climb gets too hard you could always call in the helicopter to take you home. But if you do that you will never experience what it's like to stand on the summit.

When things seem tough you normally have a couple of choices in your business. You can quit, or you can try and work out what it is you need to learn to be able to climb the next mountain. If you choose to learn, your next high will be higher than the last time. You will have grown and changed and those mountains that seemed so big before will suddenly look much smaller. You will reminisce at the days you thought they looked hard.



Sort out how to talk to yourself

How do you talk to yourself? When something goes well or you have a success, what do you say?

- a) *"That was lucky!"*
- b) *"I was just in the right place at the right time."*
- c) *"I worked hard for that, I deserved it."*
- d) *"I am good at this."*

What about when something does not work out? What do you tell yourself then?

- a) *"I knew I couldn't do it."*
- b) *"I am useless."*
- c) *"Well, it didn't work out this time – what can I learn from this for next time?"*
- d) *"Obviously there is something I need to learn, and then I will get it right."*

If you chose either of the a) or b) options, you need to think about how you look at yourself.

Those comments confirm that basically you are no good, possibly quite useless and either your success was an accident or your failure was unavoidable.

Either of the c) and d) options confirm your self-belief and self-esteem, give you credit for your own success and do not detract from it in the slightest.

Be honest, tell yourself the truth - and the truth is always in the c) and d) options.

Read!

Yes, I know you are too busy and have no time. So put some books in the bathroom, if you have to, and read on the toilet! Read about successful people. I can guarantee every single one of them has struggled. Read personal development material and uplifting, funny stories. You will find references to great books throughout this book. It is important to feed your mind with good material and for you to get your own challenges in perspective.

And yes, buying books is expensive (although there are always loads of personal development books in second hand shops), but how much do you spend on your appearance – clothes, make-up, beautician, and jewellers? Do you not think your inside is as important as your outside?

Is this a business or a hobby?

Some people (including myself in another life – long, long ago) view party plan as a little 'housewifely' activity. Something to keep you occupied while you bring up the children. People can be arrogant and very high and mighty. How do you see it?

Are you embarrassed about it? Would you rather work for \$15 per hour in a shop all day, because it seems more acceptable? Or do you really understand how awesome this business is – even if not everyone is on the same page as you.

If it is a hobby

You might genuinely want to do this business as a hobby rather than a full-on business and, if that is what you want, there is absolutely nothing wrong with it.

Many people join party plan as a way to meet other people, escape from the children for a few hours or just to enjoy some social time. Making money is not always top of the list.

If you want to do this as a hobby though, please do not expect to make money. Do not go back to your recruiter and tell them it is not working. Remember what you wanted in the first place.

Hobbies cost money, they rarely make you money – and if this does give you an income, it is because you have started treating your hobby as a business.

When your recruiter explained how much money you could make, it was based on doing a certain number of parties per week. If you are doing less than that, you will be earning less than that.

I have often had people in my business tell me they are not making any money. When we sat down to look at what was happening, they were invariably doing maybe four to six parties or even less in a month.

When I first spoke to them about the business, I spoke about three parties per week – that is twelve per month. Of course their bank accounts were not looking healthy!

If it is a business

Treating this as a business is quite a different kettle of fish and that is what this book is about.

You can earn unbelievable amounts of money and experience incredible rewards, if you treat this as a serious business.

There are several questions you need to ponder:

- How much money do I want to make?
- How much time will I spend on my business per week?
- Do the hours and money match?

If you want to earn \$2,000 per week and are only prepared to work five hours per week, then I'm afraid that is not a match. You will either need to review your expectations or your commitment. Money and time need to be in realistic proportions and, like any business in the beginning, it will take more time for less money while you get your business off the ground.

There is a parable that tells the story of the woman who faithfully tends her bamboo plant. Although to begin with there was nothing showing above the ground the woman watered it every single day. She did this for five years! Suddenly it did sprout, and within thirty days it grew an impressive five feet.

Her neighbours saw how much it had grown in thirty days and the plant was the talk of the town. It was a 'miracle'!

The woman understood that it had really taken five years and thirty days. For five years the woman had faith that something was happening – and it was. The bamboo plant had spent five years developing a strong root system below the surface. When it was finally ready to develop above the ground, it grew fast and very strong.

Your business is like a bamboo plant. Put in the ground work now and have faith that, even if you don't see huge rewards in the beginning, your root system is being developed and you will eventually reap a

harvest that will blow your mind, not to mention everyone else's! Just don't give up – even if you feel you are not getting anywhere.

A note about husbands and partners

Many people who get involved in party plan are lucky to have supportive partners who are happy about what they are doing. Sometimes though, if routines have become too changed, some friction can develop.

Even a man who is supportive can fall off the rails at times. It can be hard to understand and we might say things like,

"Surely he is glad I am contributing?"

"Can't he see I am so much happier?"

I think it is important to try to understand things from their point of view. Let's go on a little history lesson.

Men and women have always been great team members.

From caveman days the man's job was to hunt, gather and provide and the woman's was to take care of the children and the home. This went on right up to very recently. That is thousands of years of conditioning that we expect to change virtually overnight!

Some of us have been brought up to 'marry well', meaning 'finding someone to take care of us'. Maybe, when we were younger, we did find that person and happily fulfilled the traditional role of being solely a home maker – but now we want to change the rules and develop a career of our own. **Of course** this causes tension! This wasn't **his** vision or choice. It was not the deal **he** signed up for.

If you think about it, the man's world has completely been turned upside down. Even men who are all for equality can struggle at times.

The change has all taken place within the last fifty years.

Even the younger men, who are more liberated, still have a battle going on inside them. Parents, who almost certainly stuck to traditional roles, have brought them up.

Now, here we are, expecting them to be happy for us and supportive in our ambitions and goals, and to be accepted as an equal teammate – as we race out the door expecting them to fix their own dinner, clean up and put the kids to bed.

The definition of teamwork has changed. And we are the ones who changed it. Now it consists of sharing household tasks, child rearing etc. In many homes men have not been expected to do this before.

It is important or at least helpful to realise that the challenges we are going through are probably going to change with each generation. For one generation of women the challenge was to win the right to vote. Our challenge is different.

As generations are parented differently, each one will experience difficulties and challenges as they play their part in evolving roles between men and women. This is part of our experience, whether we like it or not.

We can either say it's not fair, or we can accept that this is the deal and work out how we can make the most of it, still retaining relationships with the people we love in our lives.

As much as we can joke about the male ego and men in general, many of them really try to adjust. It is hard for the majority of men to cope with their wife/partner earning more than them. It takes a very well adjusted male with high self-esteem to cope. There is a possibility this will happen with your party plan business, if you really get it going.

Some men are threatened by their partner's success and it takes a really strong man to be able to realise that her success does not diminish his and does not make him less of a man.

We can get a lot of mixed messages from our partners. When your business is not going well (as we know, there is a cycle!), they can be unhappy with the hours for little or no return. *"It's a waste of time,"*

they say. But then when you are doing well they may have even more of a problem with it. *"You are never here"*, they may say – even though it is not the case as far as you are concerned.

Happy marriages do not just happen. It takes hard work and understanding from us – remember we are the ones who want the change, not them. So it is up to **us** to make it work, if we want it to.

If you married when you were already independent and living the life you wanted, you would be less likely to have these struggles, as someone who now wants to change the rules, would.

Of course, both partners need to put in their share of the work for a happy marriage, but we can not escape the fact that if it is us who wants to change, we have to put in a lot of it. Always remember that it is you who wants to develop and grow, not necessarily him. He is quite happy with things the way they are.

Causing a minimum of disruption or change in routine is important. At the very least, try to understand how things might be for him.

If it has always been his expectation to have a hot meal on the table at 6pm and you have always done it happily and without question, then it is no wonder he resents what you are doing when you suddenly stop!

Do whatever you can to minimise disruption. Cook at 10am and get the children to help if you have to – think outside the square. Cook more and freeze it. With a few changes to your routine, peace can be maintained.

Be appreciative of whatever he does to help. Tell him how much you appreciate it and why. It can be hard to get the words out if you are not used to showing appreciation – especially when it is something you feel he 'should' be doing anyway, so take this as part of your own development and work towards a happy marriage.