



# SA's direct-selling divas



Avon sales leaders recruit at home, work and even in busy shopping centres and malls

**THOUSANDS OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN** have found either part- or full-time employment working as independent sales representatives for predominantly cosmetic and household brands.

Multinational giants such as Avon, Herbalife and Tupperware, for example, have found an increasingly captive market in SA – where millions are starving for any type of work – not only to consume their products, but to sell them within their local communities. Cosmetics group Avon, widely regarded as global leader in direct selling, first entered the South African market in 1996 and says it has seen a sharp increase in the number of its independent representatives in SA over the past five years. The company boasts over 6m active independent representatives worldwide, although it doesn't break the number down by region.

Herbalife, the global wellness company that has been struggling to keep its image clean over the past several months, says it has around 22 000 direct sellers in SA. The home products group Tupperware refused to divulge any information on its local representatives, although we suspect it has a mini army of local women peddling its products. It's difficult to pin down how much SA's legion of direct sellers earn on average, but it appears that many of them are certainly earning more than just petty cash.

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Alice Mthini (left) and Denise Zweirs, Avon's top sales leaders

**R3.3bn**  
shared in earnings from direct-sales products in SA in 2011

“With the support and training provided by Avon, many are able to achieve earnings double or triple their current salaries,” explains Vicky Saunders, public affairs

The most comprehensive numbers come from the Direct Selling Association of South Africa (DSA), which reported in 2012 that the industry provides a sustainable income for 1.3m representatives who shared R3.3bn in earnings from selling R7.8bn worth of products in 2011. ■

manager at Avon.

Lesley-Anne Thornton, country director at Herbalife SA, told *Finweek* that a part-time distributor may make R3 000 a month, “while a full-time distributor who has been working in the business for several years has greater potential.”

