

Their clients are friends of friends of friends of friends



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Penny Conn (at right) converts one of the rooms in her home into a showroom for the Doncaster collection of fashions she and her partner Carolyn Spangenberg show to friends twice a year. Clients

choose the style from the clothes on display but can order the piece to be delivered in any one of many colors and fabrics.

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

Leisurely paced occupations that bring additional income, allow for flexible hours and independence have appealed to women for years — or ever since the Avon Lady first came calling. Linda Kurz, who heads up the women's division in the U.S. Small Business Administration's Detroit office, said she didn't have any statistics as to how many women are working from their homes these days. But the number is increasing, she said.

when the economy goes down, and the number of companies that opt to sell through home distributions seems to keep growing," she said.

The home distributors' clients are "friends of friends of friends of friends," in the words of Carolyn Spangenberg, who talked her across-the-street neighbor into showing Doncaster clothes from their homes for both fun and profit.

"There's a lot of money to be made if you are organized and pursue it in a businesslike way," said June Kenny, who is a distributor for Jafra Cosmetics.

"I've never been happier," said Lillian

an Zebly, who color codes her clients, in a method she took from Carole Jackson's book, "Color Me Beautiful." "After having someone else plan my days for 19 years, now I'm planning my own."

All of the women we talked to said they are making enough money to make it worth their while. None of them are pressured by their company to make a minimum amount in sales for any given period. The original investment for them to go into business for themselves ran from nothing to less than \$100.

"IT'S A GOOD way to make pin money, if you can squeeze some time in for selling around taking care of the kids," said Susan Davis, who is a member of the newly formed Michigan Chapter of National Alliance of Home Based Business Women.

"But it's not a part-time job for anybody who thinks they're going to make it big, particularly if you're connected with any of the multi-level businesses," she said, naming companies such as Amway, Shakely, Mary Kay Cosmetics and The Cambridge Diet.

"I quit selling (for a multi-level company) because my income was contingent on somebody else's motivation. I was responsible for teaching my salespeople how to sell and keeping them fired up. That requires much more time than a 40-hour-a-week job," she said.

"In back of all the big money-makers you hear about you're going to find a real dynamo, and there aren't that many around," Davis said.

"I'd guess that to be about 2 or 3 percent of any of the people who work from their home. And the turnover is pretty heavy."

June Kenny (at left) freshens her makeup during the day by removing oil from her face without removing the makeup. Below she shows the display potential clients see when they are invited to a class for a free facial. She took extensive training in skin care before she became a distributor for Jafra.

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National Alliance of Home Based Business Women

CAROLYN SPANGENBERG and Penny Conn open their homes twice a year to show Doncaster clothes to clients who come by invitation only.

The invitation list started with friends from the neighborhood, the local swim and country club. And though it keeps growing, it is pretty well confined to the busy woman who has the

money to spend on quality clothes but not the time it takes to put together a well-planned wardrobe.

Their clients respond to the invitation by making an appointment "which can be 30 minutes or all day" to choose from the current exclusive New York designer collection, Conn said.

"The beauty of it is that the custom-

er selects the style but also can select the fabric and the color of her choice. What you get is practically an original," she said.

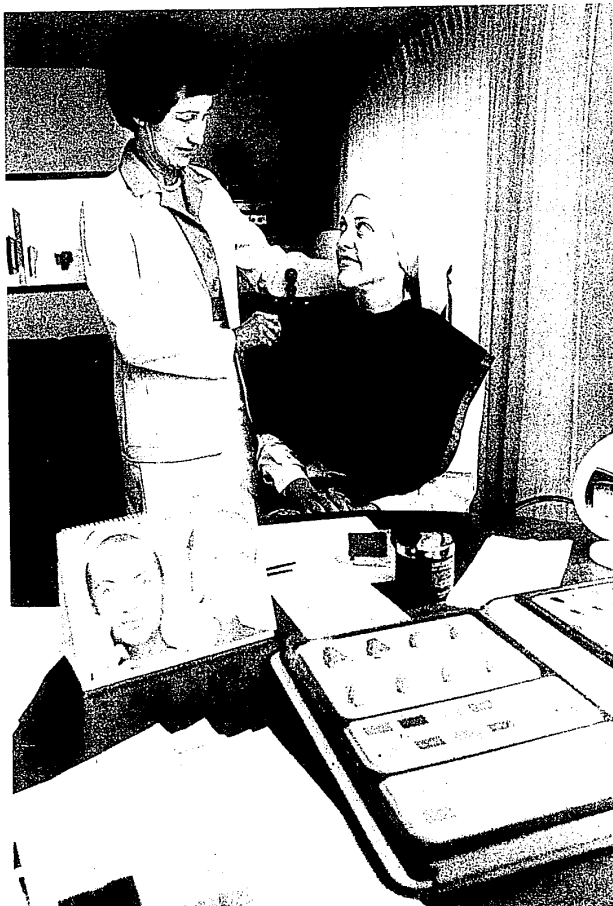
The North Carolina-based company is a division of Tanner, concerned with quality workmanship that can easily be spotted in the special custom touches, the handsewn buttons, lace hem tape, lingerie straps and generous seams.

The Farmington Hills partnership is one of 19 Doncaster distributors in the Detroit area.

The collection they show is passed from one to another for the season. A part of their job is to see "that every snap is in place, that every piece is in perfect condition when it's passed on," Conn said.

THE DONCASTER saleswomen are both fashion-conscious women who are intrigued both by the quality of the clothes they show as well as the con-

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Lillian Zebly (at left) tells her client Laurie Blake to by-pass fad colors and stick to her season. The colorist takes her cues from Carole Jackson's

book, "Color Me Beautiful," and sells the appropriately color-coded cosmetics manufactured by Amway.