



LIFE of the PARTY

According to Managing Director Stephen Beddoe, Tupperware isn't just about selling innovative, high-quality products—it's about changing people's lives.

Images by Paolo Benini

Tupperware. It's so well known that nine out of 10 homes in Australia have at least one piece in their cupboards.

Introduced to Australia in 1961, sales have been booming ever since. Tupperware is so confident in its product that it even offers a lifetime guarantee, something incredibly rare in the retail world. It was Tupperware that invented the concept, now used by many other brands, of using at-home parties to sell its products rather than selling in stores.

Tupperware is a company that is not only passionate about its diverse product line and offerings, but also for its commitment to its sales force and employees. As Managing Director Stephen Beddoe explains, the company actually cares extraordinarily about

its staff. "When people ask me what makes you get out of bed in the morning, it's because I truly believe that this organisation is about changing and empowering women and changing people's lives—predominately women, but men too. I am a living example of someone whom they took on and whose life they extraordinarily transformed."

Stephen is extremely grateful for Tupperware and the opportunities it has given him. Born in India, he worked internationally for American giant Amway before returning to his homeland as COO of the company's Indian branch for 11 years. In early 2009, however, Stephen and his family decided to move to Melbourne as his sons wanted to study in Australia. For the first year, Stephen worked as an energy assessor, visiting

people's homes and installing energy-efficient light bulbs and showerheads.

This, he says, was a great introduction to Australia and prepared him well for his roles at Tupperware. "As a new, unemployed immigrant coming into the country, [the job] gave me a really good insight into understanding the Australian consumer in their home. I visited probably about 2,000 homes across Melbourne that year. I met people from all demographics, all walks of life, all levels of society. It was wonderful because people were welcoming me into their home, and then after I had provided the service, we would sit and chat and have a cup of tea. I was able to better understand what gave them meaning in their lives and >

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what they were looking for and what they did.”

After a year, Stephen got a job in junior management at Tupperware. Barely settled into his new position, Stephen was asked to run the strategic planning and operations branch and be a part of the leadership team. Six months later, he was promoted again to become the national sales director of the company, as well as continuing to run the other two branches. After a couple of years of running these three areas, Stephen was promoted to managing director of the company and hasn't looked back since. “Tupperware is a company where we talk about changing lives. What other organisation would take in a brand-new immigrant, give them an opportunity, and then move them up through the organisation based purely on merit?”

Not content with merely running a company, Stephen is also completing a part-time PhD with

Monash University. “I am researching and studying women's empowerment and entrepreneurship, and trying to get a deeper insight into the things that trigger this entrepreneurial mindset—what happens and what causes it to happen.”

This interest in empowering women, especially the untapped resource of women who stay at home with their children, is key to Tupperware's company culture. Tupperware's party consultants are mostly women, with an average age of around 32, and who have two children under the age of five. According to Stephen, a third of the company's consultants already work full time when they start doing Tupperware, a third work part time, and a third are stay-at-home parents. What Stephen believes is great about Tupperware is that the company fits into the varying lifestyles of many while empowering these women and enabling financial independence, which he says is

good not only for them but for the whole community.

“I personally believe that when you empower women, you help change society,” Stephen says. “When you educate a man, you educate an individual; but when you empower a woman, you have changed an entire family, you have changed an entire societal group. That is the way things work. Men tend to be very insular—they absorb knowledge, apply it, go and find a job where they make money, and it sort of stays with them—they become the sole provider—and that's the role that men tend to undertake.

“Women are more networked, and because they tend to spend more time in a social setting whether it's with family, friends, or otherwise, this entrepreneurial mindset actually begins to infect all their relationships. There are enough studies to support that. So my personal belief is when you empower women, you actually help

transform, change, and improve society. If you wanted to get rid of all of the poverty and all the wars and all the other conflicts that we have and all the other nasty stuff in the world, put women in charge. Women are far better at leading and managing and directing than a lot of men.”

What makes it easier for its consultants, Stephen says, is that Tupperware is so well known for its quality products and unique selling method. “Tupperware is an iconic brand. There are very few households in the country across Australia and New Zealand that wouldn't have at least one or more pieces of Tupperware in their pantry or in their fridge or freezer. It's supported by a lifetime warranty—and we mean 'lifetime'.

“The other thing is that the selling model we have is unique. Tupperware developed the entire concept of party-plan selling where you get a group of friends together in a social setting, a Tupperware consultant is invited to the home and they then demonstrate the products and explain the benefits of including these products into your lifestyle. It's done in an environment that is fun, entertaining, educational, and the people who come to our Tupperware parties go away not only enriched in terms of knowledge and experience but hopefully they have purchased a piece of Tupperware to add to their collection. We have some serious ‘Tupperholics’ out there; there's no doubt about it. There is no such thing as having enough Tupperware.”

Stephen and his team also care deeply about their relationships with suppliers. Tupperware has formed long-term relationships with many local and international



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- Stephen Beddoe

suppliers and partners. “We have been in Australia for over 54 years, and 42 years in New Zealand,” Stephen explains. “Our relationships with our suppliers go back decades; we are now dealing with the second generation of some suppliers. The original owners have now handed over their businesses to their children, with whom we have continued to deal. That's pretty normal for us. We do believe that relationships are important, and we usually tend to try to use the same suppliers on an ongoing basis. When it comes to product supply, we source most of our products out of Europe from our manufacturing plants there. But if I put that aside and I looked at the suppliers that we have who are non-product related, then our relationships go back for decades.

“If I picked two relationships that I think stand out, one is the longstanding relationship we have with TNT; the other is a new relationship with BMW. We made a strategic decision that we needed to have a different look and feel and to position our consultants as strong, successful female entrepreneurs. The change that I made which is now slowly rolling

out across the country is to change the company cars they drive from the station wagons that we had to a sexy MINI Cooper. And as they step up through their career levels and become more and more successful in their Tupperware businesses, the next level up is a BMW 2 Series, X3 and the X4. We chose BMW MINI because of their amazing products, their commitment, and the time and effort that they invested in creating this new partnership.”

Stephen is extremely happy with the work he has done so far, and has big plans for the future of Tupperware. He wants to double the number of consultants Tupperware has, and through that to continue to empower even more women. “Our business is about empowering women and changing their lives through opportunity, support, and relationships. This is at the core of what we do as a company and has had a tremendous impact on our success. My goal moving forward is to double the number of women's lives that we can impact with our amazing opportunity, because we know that this will help bring about more positive change and influence in society.” •

“Tupperware is the most inspiring organisation I have worked with. The consultants are enthusiastic, excited, and passionate about their company and products. The management team is equally committed to their consultants: valuing, empowering, and rewarding their workforce at every opportunity. An impressive organisation!” - Carolyn Brunskill, Corporate Account Manager, BMW Group

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