

## **MARY KAY ASH, THE GREATEST FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND BUSINESS ETHICS**

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**Abstract.** *Lately, feminine entrepreneurship has become a more and more interesting topic for academic, business and at the same time, the political world. This topic has been interesting, on the one hand due to a general interest in entrepreneurship – where woman play an important post – and, on the other hand, admitting the fact that new days, women have a great influence an development of national economy all over the world, creating jobs, wealth and welfare.*

*In our paper present a ethical and successful feminine entrepreneurship also business based on the principles of Christian ethics, respective „Mary Kay Cosmetics”. We try to debate the ethical caryatides of this business. Also, We try to argue the readers, you, of Mary Kay Ash belief, that the slogan „Business is Business” is a cold, selfish and arrogant slogan, and the other hand more truly is Rockefeller’s statement „More than anything else, I value the ability to deal with people”.*

**Keywords:** feminine entrepreneurship; Christian ethics; golden rule; beauty consultant; criticism; praise; discipline, planning.

### **1. Introduction**

Being involved in a project focused on „*Feminine entrepreneurship and equal chances*”, I had to do some research concerning the literature on feminine entrepreneurship worldwide, especially in the developed western countries, and, of course on women’s business opportunities within Romanian economy. This research work has opened me a large and fascinating view on the topic of women in business and management.

One revelation of our research activity was Mary Kay Ash, the founder of an international, well-known cosmetics company „*Mary Kay Cosmetics*”, whose development was based on the principles of Christian ethics.

First of all, we have to point out some features of feminine entrepreneurship. Latterly, feminine entrepreneurship has become a more and more interesting topic for academic, business and at the same time, the political world. This topic has been interesting, on the one hand due to a general interest in entrepreneurship – where women play an important part –, and, on the other hand, admitting the fact that nowadays, women have a great influence on development of national economy all over the world, creating jobs, wealth and welfare (Fiet J.O., 2000). It is enough to

underline one single aspect in order to sustain this idea: the percentage of companies having women owners is between a quarter and a third of the world's business population.

Secondly, women entrepreneurs provide original and new solutions for solving company's issues, at the same time, they tend to be well-trained and experienced as a reaction to „glass ceiling- invisible barriers” and develop carriers in more challenging and non-discriminatory areas, such entrepreneurship. Despite these progresses, feminine entrepreneurship is still under evaluated and even worse, undermined. According to the literature, women entrepreneurs do not value risk and debts, making them vulnerable in their attempt of getting the needed capital for investment, activity specific to each type of entrepreneurship (Carter S., 2005).

Thirdly, a major part of the academic literature claims that women have a different behaviour (compared to men, and thus, this is being reflected in their entrepreneurship. Although, within the academic literature, there have been admitted the valuable contributions women brought to the development of business, providing innovative solutions for the current problems and exploiting new business opportunities. We can find many examples of successful women that may set a real proof of changing the traditional mentality concerning the role of women in our society (Holmquist C. and Sundin E. 1989).

In the fourth, there are only a few studies focused on women business owners. Researching the literature thoroughly, we can say that women entrepreneurship has been neglected both by the academic world and mass media. The research studies underline the fact that entrepreneurship is a masculine activity, and therefore, the entrepreneurship theories are seen as being „designed by men, for men, and implemented by men.” Feminine entrepreneurship has been seen as an interest of a minority, women representing half of the Europe's population. Thus, there is no theory or model of feminine entrepreneurship. (Holmquist C. and Sundin E., 1989).

In the fifth place, despite all these aspects reflecting an ignorance of feminine entrepreneurship, there are also a lot of useful topics on feminine entrepreneurship that might be teaching materials for starting and developing lasting businesses, bringing about welfare, such as: features and motivations of women entrepreneurs; development patterns of businesses owned by women; feminine entrepreneurship pattern under the circumstances of social, cultural and economic barriers; characteristics and patterns of feminine management; characteristics of assessing feminine entrepreneurship and management a.s.o. (Carter M. Nancy, Henry Colette, Barbara O' Cinneide and Johnston Kay, 2007).

### **2. Mary Kay Ash, a life dedicated to consumers' welfare**

Mary Kathlyn Wagner was born in a place outside Huston, Hot Wells, Texas, on 12 May 1918. Since a very young age, when she was only seven years old, she had to handle an overwhelming responsibility. She had to take care of his father who was a

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victim of a deadly disease, at that time, tuberculosis, while her mother was busy all day long, managing a small business, a restaurant in order to provide for the family. In 1935 she marries Ben Rogers having three children, Richard Rogers being the one who helps her later to run her own business. Her marriage falls apart at the end of the War, when Ben returns home. At the beginning of 1940s she gets a job as a sales agent for Stanley Home Products, selling household products. She attends yearly seminars held in Dallas, where the top sales agent used to be awarded the title „Sales Queen” and received a crocodile leather handbag. Next year, challenged by the previous year seminar, Ash receives the „Sales Queen” award. But, instead of the handbag, she only gets a „shinny bream”, bait for night fishing

In 1953, she starts working for another direct sales company „World Gifts”, where, she is promoted as National Training Director. In 1963, she quits her job in protest, after watching the man she trained, get promoted above her, earning twice her salary. At the beginning of august 1963, only one month before her company was established „Mary Kay Cosmetics”, her second husband, George Hallenback, died of an unexpected heart attack while he was sitting at the kitchen table.

On 13 September 1963, Mary Ash starts her own business, „Mary Kay Cosmetics”, later called Mary Kay Inc. She has started with an initial investment of 5000 USD, helped by her youngest son, Richard Rogers. She purchased the formula of a skin lotion from the family of J.W. Health, a tanner in Arkansas. In the first year, Mary Kay Cosmetics had nine skin care „beauty consultants” (that was the name for sales agents of the new company) and 20.000 USD profit, operating from a small Dallas shop, of about 180 square meters since the second year she starts holding seminars yearly for her sales agents. At the beginning, 200 sales agents worked for her company. In 1966, she marries Mel Ash, her third husband, who dies in 1980. In 1968, Mary Kay Cosmetics went public, thus the company’s shares were available to public at the Stock Exchange. In 1969 she settles the disagreements she had had with the first employees who claimed their rights on the original skin lotion formula bought from a tanner in Arkansas.

These employees have used this formula to start their own rival company, Beauty Control, which has been sold later to a New Jersey direct sales company. In 1969, she grants the first rewards, prizes, pink Cadillacs to her five top sales agents. In 1971 it opened its first international subsidiary in Australia. In 1976, the company is quoted on the New York Stock Exchange. In 1979, Mary Kay Inc. has more 100 million USD profit and for the first time the money received from beauty consultancy and skin revival system is over 1 million USD. Also, this year witnesses an important advertising event; CBS TV Network allows 60 minutes to show the public a portrait of Mary Kay. During the show, the famous TV star Marley Safer, has asked Mary if she „is using God” in adverting her company. Her reply has been very wise: „I’d like to think that God is using me”. Due to the love and appreciation of her customers, young women within the business world, Mary writes three inspiring books, speaking about

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her own experience in business, all of them becoming bestseller. Thus, in 1981 her first book, an autobiography is published, simply called „*Mary Kay*”, the second one, „*Mary Kay on People Management*” is published in 1984, and, the last one „*Mary Kay: You Can Have it All*” is published in 1995. After a long lasting fight with „Beauty Control”, this company is bought by Richard Heath, a one of Mary Kate Cosmetics’ former employees. Together with his wife Jinger, Heath re-launches this company to compete with Mary Kay Inc.

In 1985, 17 years later the company went public, a group of investors lead by Ash and her son Richard Rogers, bought back almost all stocks, the company becoming a private family business again. In 1987, Mary Kay Ash became Chairman Emeritus of Mary Kay Cosmetics, which meant her retirement, and her son Richard Rogers became Chairman. In 1992, becomes a *Fortune* 500 company. In the following year another international subsidiary is opened in Russia. In 1993, to provide a full image of her company, she established a museum of her company, displaying all important events and stories connected to all top salespersons that brought their contribution to the company’s growth. Due to Mary Kay Inc. entrepreneurship philosophy, the company has expanded on 22 markets including, Japan, Argentina, and Canada. Her devotion and care for her customers, especially for women, made her establish Mary Kay Charitable Foundation, in 1994. This foundation supports cancer research, and four years later she dedicates her efforts to end and help the victims of domestic violence. This is the period when, for the first time she suffers a stroke, but the company expands into Ukraine, Czech Republic and Dominican Republic. In 2000, the company opened subsidiaries in Kazakhstan, Slovakia and Philippines. During 2000-2002, the concern is on redesigning and using new technologies, redesigning the package and finding a new skin cream formula and new products. Richard Rogers is still the CEO of the company. In 2001, on Thanksgiving Day (maybe it was not a coincidence), Mary Kay Ash dies at the age of 83. One year later, in 2003 CBS shows for the first time, a film called „*The Battle of Mary Kay*” whose topic was the rivalry between Mary Kay Ash and Jinger Health, the co-founder of Beauty Control Cosmetics. In 2004 Mary Kay Inc. has been one of the top skin care cosmetics distributors, dealing with 200 products, having an impressive sales force, 1.1 million sales persons (also known as beauty consultants) worldwide, on over 30 markets. The wholesale sales of 2003 got to a record figure: 1.8 billion USD. Also, in 2003, Mary Kay’s grandson, Ryan Rogers, according to his confession in the preface of the latest edition of „*Mary Kay Way*” (2008), was honored to accept his grandmother’s award „The Greatest Female Entrepreneur in American History. This award has been granted as a follow-up of a research conducted by a team of academics from Baylor University, whose purpose was to find out who were the USA’s greatest entrepreneurs. Alongside with Mary Kay Ash, there also have awarded Henry Ford’s grandson and John H. Johnson the prize, the former, „The Greatest Male Entrepreneur

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in American History”, and the latter, „The Greatest Minority Entrepreneur in American History” (Mary Kay Ash, 2008).

### **3. Christian Ethics and the principles of business pattern promoted by Mary Kay Ash**

From the very beginning we have to present the mission of Mary Kay Cosmetics as it was established and expressed by Mary Ash, as a philosophy: „It’s all part of the Mary Kay philosophy – a philosophy based on the golden rule, a spirit of sharing and caring where people give cheerfully of their time, knowledge and experience.” We can easily notice that the mission itself expresses the essence of Christian moral „concern/care for the others”.

Mary Kay has dedicated all her books to those who believe that „man” and „pride” (the success, according to protestant moral) are two relevant assets for setting up and developing a successful business. At the same time, she dedicated her books to all those employees and to the famous sales force she has created, -characterized by a strong sense of pride- who lead the company to success, and to millions of worldwide SMEs.

Her son, Richard Rogers, Chairman of the company, underlines another aspect of Mary Kay’s business philosophy that is: „Most companies create work force to increase the sales of their products”. „On the other hand, Mary Kay has created a product to increase the work force to sell it.”

A usual question may arise: How could Mary Kay, at the age of 45, with only 5000 USD, manage to motivate her work force, mostly women, who haven’t been employed before or just for a short time, for three decades?

It is interesting the fact that, Mary Kay did not encourage bonuses, the right to buy shares or other financial incentives, as all the other corporations used to do. Instead, Mary Kay offered her „beauty consultants”, the name of her sales agents, smaller or bigger gifts. Constantly she was an honest supporter and encouraged them. In her autobiography, „Mary Kay: You Can Have It All” she wrote: „Mary Kay Cosmetics is famous for valuing successful people”, showing that: We see that, this appreciation, so important, we rely our entire marketing plan on it.” She underlines that: „Women need to be appreciated.” As far as I have experienced, I know that a woman usually works for being appreciated, when she doesn’t work for money. In 1980s Mary Kay was the leader of a sales force sharing the philosophy „leaders make leaders.” The basis of this philosophy was a careful choice of career and its evolution starting with sales director, then independent sales director, national independent sales director, position obtained only by 300 women within company’s history till 2004.

After presenting all these aspects on business philosophy, we shall analyze in details all 23 principles used in managing her business „Mary Kay Cosmetics” pointing out the Christian protestant moral and culture.

The first principle is „**Golden Rule Leadership**”. According to woman and entrepreneur, Mary Kay, Golden Rule is one of the oldest philosophical principles or behaviour norm; unfortunately it is usually ignored by the business world. Mary Kay is a businesswoman who strongly proves that this principle is as meaningful and productive today as ever, in this extremely puzzling, knowledge-based world. In the Book of Mathew (7:12) we can find this golden rule: „Do onto others as we would have others do onto us”.

Luther thinks the best way to serve and praise God is by fulfilling your professional duties the best way possible. Also he thinks that giving up your own duties is just a sign of selfishness, and, on the contrary working in the name of a vocation shows God our love. Finally, according to Protestant Lutheran moral, the usefulness of a job and God’s appreciation is measured according to morality and the importance of the products manufactured for the community.

The Golden Rule can be noticed in a Christian moral behaviour and also in developing a Christian moral culture. Thus, we can exemplify the faith and activities Mary Kay and her company promoted. There are two important beliefs, known as fundamental rules. First of all, Mary Kay had many unpleasant experiences in her previous career: unkind behaviour, seminars where people were treated as if they did not exist, long, tiresome round trip buses, being hurt and offended by her superiors. All these bad experiences made her draw the conclusion that such treatment and organizational behaviour cannot engender enthusiasm among employees. Thus, starting from the Golden Rule she believes that every leader should ask himself the question: „If I were this person, how would I want to be treated?” Accordingly, within the independent sales force created by Mary Kay, each person can expand and progress independently, without moving up a traditional corporate ladder, because millions of „beauty consultants”/sales persons operate independent retail business dealing directly with their consumers. Hence, each „beauty consultant” sets his/her own goals, productivity and rewards. Maybe the best example of „golden rule” involvement in Mary Kay’s business is the „adoptee program”. As a result of the bad experience she had with the companies she worked for, when she was 45 years old, Mary Kay wanted to eliminate assigned territories. She successfully did that and, her current system is not practiced by any other retailer. This problem used to create frustrations and complaint. With the new rule, based on the „golden rule”, Mary Kay Cosmetics did not and do not have any assigned territories, thus an independent sales director who lives in New York can go on holiday in Florida or take part in a family event in Chicago and, there s/he can get a new team member. No matter where s/he lives in the USA, she will always draw a commission from the company on the retail sales s/he made. An independent sales director in Chicago will take the new beauty consultant under his/her wing and train her/him. The new beauty consultant will attend the unit meetings in Chicago, and take part in local sales contents. Although the Chicago sales director will devote a lot of time and effort to the new beauty

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consultant, the New York sales director will be paid the commission. This is what Mary Kate has called „adoptee program”.

Although it may seem unusual, the company has thousands of directors, most of them educating and motivating their unit people in other cities. Some have beauty consultants in a dozen or more states. Most of the professionals in retail said that this program cannot work, but despite their opinion it has been working for more decades. Each sales director gets the benefits from her/his unit member in other cities and helps other units' members, in return. By putting into practice this principle, Mary Kay Inc. looks like a big, but extremely united family.

The second principle is „**You Build with People**”. According to Mary Kay, leaders are dependant on the performances of their people, and so is the company's success. Thus, we can draw the conclusion, that to Mary Kay, people are a company's most important asset. People are more important than any strategy, or plan, no matter how brilliant it may be.

Christianity was spread by the apostles, they were not scholars or priests, but handworkers, just like Jesus Christ. The Christian religion has been built for and by working people. According to protestant ethics , people are equal no matter what their occupation or job is, there is no better job or occupation, in God's will. Luther was the one who fixed the breakage between priests, considered divinely instituted and the other, normal occupations; which are appreciated equally by God. Accordingly, Mary Kay stated that a company is as good as its people are. She wanted her company's message to be: „We are the apostles of our company.”

Creating and increasing an excellent sales force cannot be achieved by developing vertically, going up, but by extending a business horizontally. This provides the independent sales force a deep feeling on personal value. Each member of sales force knows s/he is not competing with the others. Thus, each of them brings an equal contribution. According to Mary Kay's philosophy assets are important to developing and growing of a company, but people are the business itself.

Mary Kay proves this principle with her own experience or, her lack of experience with cosmetics industry, at 45 years old. Still, she was aware of the fact that the power should rely on recruiting and training sales agents. Similarly she has thought that, after getting the skin cream formula, she should find the best, the most famous cosmetic producer. Following her belief to make her customers happy, she wanted her company not only to manufacture quality cosmetics, but also to be valued by those institutions that checked the manufacturers' quality and ethics. Mary Kay was aware of what an unethical behaviour meant, „to bypass”, that is a total failure. She strongly supported consumers' rights. Thus, she has never improvised; she was always looking for people with the necessary skills and qualification to enhance the company's performances and liability. She wanted the best qualified people in the accounting, retail, legal department or technology. It is also interesting her view on the marketing department, which, in her opinion, was the most important one. She

admitted people working in this area should have additional skills and natural talent. In order to be able to successfully implement this philosophy, she realized that, she should provide top salaries for top employees. At the same time, she was aware that getting the best qualified people to work for your company, paying them well and training, keeping them, are two different things. It is well-known, that Mary Kay offers a new employee special concern and recognition. Thus, it is frustrating for any employer, who has provided training and trust in an employee, to lose him after a while. Accordingly, Mary Kay Inc. takes all the necessary steps to keep its employees for the longest period possible. Certainly, the principle „Build with people” is a deep ethical one, having its origins in Christianity, in monasteries in general and in the Benedictine ones in particular. In the latter, due to a clear division of work, all the activities were so simple, that no monk could complain of not being able to do them. All monks took part in accomplishing the tasks, setting an example for the neighbouring communities.

The following principle is „**The Invisible Sign**”. Mary Kay truly believed that each person is special, that all of us would like to think that we are good people, but it is important to let the others feel the same. This principle originates in the predestination doctrine of Jean Calvin; we all have a hidden talent, which we have to make use of. If we discover it and become successful, we can be saved. Otherwise, we might not be saved. As Mary Kay states in her book: „Every time I meet somebody, I pretend there is an invisible sign hanging from his or her neck, saying «Make me feel important.»” Mary immediately replies and this works out wonderfully. The policy of Mary Kay Inc. was the Christian principle that each person is a human being and has to be treated accordingly; each person is special, with particular feelings and abilities. Every one of us wears the invisible sign, that is, each of us is one of a kind. Mary Kay claims that every leader should be aware of the fact that God planted the seeds of greatness within all human being. All of us are important, and a good leader can develop our qualities. Unfortunately, most of us go through life upset, without using our „gifts”, without „playing the music God gave us”. Mary Kay believes that we only use 10 percent of the gifts God gave us; the other 90 percent are never used. In order to emphasize this Christian principle, Mary Kay reminds us of Grandma Moses, who has started painting at the age of 75, becoming a worldwide artist; but she must have had this talent from the beginning. „Wouldn’t it have been a pity if Grandma Moses hadn’t fulfilled the artistic calling God gave her?” wonders Mary Kay.

Mary Kay, the woman who has created a business empire, rejects the cold, selfish and arrogant slogan „Business is Business”, supported by all businessmen, justifying that it is not their business to make people feel important. She believes that this slogan and the attitude created by it is not a good one and, accordingly leaders should pay special attention to „making people feel important”. To support this belief, she relies on Rockefeller’s statement: „More than anything else, I value the ability to deal with people.” Obviously, this statement is deeply ethical and an important factor

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in the increase of productivity, that is why the manager should always try to make each employee feel important within the organization. Based on her previous experience both as an employee and businesswoman, Mary Kay believes that employees „do what we, the managers, expect them to do.” If we expect them to fulfill their tasks correctly, they will do so, and vice-versa. Mary Kay is convinced that, people should be granted responsibility and power so that they feel important and not alter their self-esteem. In this case, an employee really feels important, and will direct all his efforts and skills towards the welfare of the company. Obviously, the principle of „The Invisible Sign” reflects the Christian doctrine.

The fourth principle **„Praise People to Success”** is also inspired by the Christian ethics, particularly the predestination doctrine; the successful ones are God’s-chosen ones and deserve to be fully appreciated for their struggle. It also originates in Jesus Christ’s advice „Love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Mary Kay thinks that recognition is the most powerful of all motivating techniques. This belief became an important part of the marketing philosophy. The integration of this principle starts when a „recruit” becomes a „beauty consultant”. During the beauty care seminar, after a woman got a skin treatment, the beauty consultant asks the other guests to bring their own contributions. Women change not only their physical appearance, looking better, but also their emotional state. When women feel more confident about themselves, they also might be interested in buying other products, but, at the same time, in becoming a beauty consultant. This is a new and rewarding experience for most women. After becoming a beauty consultant and providing her first skin care treatment, her sales director will recognize and appreciate her good work. Regardless how many mistakes are made during this first seminar, the new beauty consultant will only be appreciated for her good job. Even if she wants to find out her mistakes, her sales director will kindly tell her: „Let’s talk about what you have done right.” It is well-known that we ask about our mistakes, but, in fact, we want to be appreciated. Only after the new beauty consultant was praised for her strengths, the sales director will criticise her in a gentle manner, the Mary Kay Ash way, that is „sandwich every bit of criticism between two heavy layers of praise”.

The way in which Mary Kay sees recognition is very interesting, not in an inappropriate way, but truly and honestly, involving ethical principles.

Thus, Mary Kay says: „I honestly believe that a 40-cent present and a 100 USD virtual recognition is a lot more worthy than a 100 USD present and a 40-cent virtual recognition. Nevertheless, Mary Kay Inc. is famous for granting important material rewards. Besides offering pink Cadillacs, the company also offers luxury articles such as diamond rings and trips to exotic locations. One of the latest symbols of recognition is „the Diamond Bumble-bee”. This is regarded as the “Crown Jewel” and the person who gets it, is appreciated as royalty. The award ceremony is similar to the Miss America beauty contest.

The Mary Kay worldwide corporate culture not only promotes true recognition and appreciation, but also goes beyond words. Liliya Shereshnva from Ukraine confesses: „Mary Kay’s principles help me discover and make use of my talent, to offer people trust in their potential. They help me love people the way they are.” This confession of a beauty consultant, coming from an ex-communist country, is extremely relevant for the essence of Mary Kay organizational culture, from Christian ethics view.

The next principle is: „**The Art of Listening**”. According to this principle, successful managers and leaders are good listeners. According to basic logic, God endowed us with 2 ears and 1 mouth, that is why, we should listen twice as much as we speak. From a managerial view, while listening, the benefit is twofold: first of all, we get the necessary information, and then, most importantly, we make our interlocutor feel important and be aware of our honest appreciation. Regarding this aspect, Mary Kay Ash notices an important and severe aspect, which is the fact that we are taught to read, write and speak, but not to listen. To illustrate this principle, Mary Kay, uses a type of „parable of the ignorant good listener”. She met one of the most successful leaders, who was a very good listener. He worked as a sales manager for a big corporation, without knowing anything about this business. Every time a sales manager approached him with a problem, he didn’t have any answer, because he didn’t have the necessary qualification for the job, but he was mainly a good listener. Thus, no matter what he was asked, he had the same reply: „What do you think you should do?” Then, his interlocutors came up with suitable answers, he agreed with them, they left content, but paradoxically, they thought their boss was great.

Listening is a well-known and appreciated art at Mary Kay Inc., through which we express our appreciation for the human being who shares with us his/her concerns regarding his/her life, organization and society. The first and the most important habit of the art of listening is to grant the interlocutor your full attention. Nothing should distract our attention while listening.

While listening, we have to take into consideration 2 aspects as results or consequences: the first one is the fact that our employees are a valuable and continuous source of ideas, if we pay them the necessary attention and encourage them to tell them what their opinion is on different topics. This is how we can get many useful ideas and recommendations. The second one is encouraging feed-back and handling it carefully: we should listen to the information received from our employees, confirm receiving their correspondence and read it, validate useful suggestions.

By listening to our employees, we can develop products according to consumers’ needs, designed by them. Mary Kay shows that the inability to listen to people means a serious sign of ignorance shown by managers. She is very straightforward claiming that, fortunately, once we are aware of the importance of listening, it is not difficult to put in into practice. Our employees will let us know what

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is happening with our business, if they know they are carefully listened to. Regarding this principle, Judy Kawecki, a beauty consultant, says: “this overwhelming company was built on a great love for Mary Kay products and on the art of listening to the consumers’ needs. When they are “pampered”, they learn to use the product, to build trust and thus, out of a strong sense of loyalty, they may become not only a consumer, but also a beauty consultant.” This principle also illustrates clearly the love for our neighbour, a Christian doctrine.

The sixth principle of Mary Kay Inc. is „**Sandwich every bit of criticism between two heavy layers of praise**”. According to Mary Kay’s corporate culture, one should direct his/her criticism at the act, not the person. Sometimes it is necessary for a manager to let the other know that he/she is unhappy with his/her performance, aiming the criticism at the mistake, not the person making it. It is important to express our feelings of discontent, we have to be tactful, otherwise our criticism can be unproductive. It is important to criticize effectively, in a positive way, so that you don’t destroy the employee’s self-esteem, Mary Kay states. Considering this principle, it is productive to create a warm environment, where there should be relationships similar to family links between the employer and the employees. At the same time, Mary Kay Inc. corporate culture encourages a manager to be on the one hand understanding, and on the other hand strict. A cold and formal relationship between employer and employees cannot be very productive. A clear separation between managers and the other employees makes it impossible for work relationships to function, especially when it comes to having an open and sincere talk “from heart to heart”.

At the same time, as shown before, Mary Kay Inc. corporate culture claims managers should be powerful and straightforward. Thus, as a manager, if we are not happy with somebody’s performance, we should not avoid telling him/her that, but express the way we think about the matter.

An important rule is that we should never criticize without appreciating. No matter what the criticism might be, the manager should find something positive to say before and after criticizing, this is in fact the sandwich-technique. It is important to remember the fact that one should direct his/her criticism at the act, not the person. At the same time, the critic has to end in a positive note, not in a malicious, accusing one.

Another important aspect underlines that there is no excuse for a manager to criticize and severely punish an employee when other people are present. Mary Kay believes that it is inconceivable for a manager to criticize only one person out of an entire team. This is counterproductive, not only for the person, but also for the whole team. Nothing is more damaging for somebody’s ego than being criticized in front of the whole team; Mary Kay calls it „an act of unforgivable cruelty”. Christian moral also blames this practice, reminding us of how Jesus Christ treated his apostles with love and forgiveness, so that they could spread a healthy religion focused on love and appreciation.

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The next principle is „**Be a follow-through person**”. A leader and an employee should be the kind of person who can always be counted on and always do what they say they will. According to this principle, we should always keep our word and be a man of honour. Unfortunately, only a small percent of people have this quality and that is why we should appreciate them. This is a very important quality in building trust; people should know they can rely on us. Ideas are very important, but people who create them are priceless. Based on our every-day experience, we notice that there are a lot of people with brilliant ideas, having the best intentions, but we are deeply disappointed the most of them will never be able to put them into practice. Such people are weak managers, according to Mary Kay’s corporate culture.

It is important to do what you say you will do and not postpone it. Nothing is more unethical and disappointing than „postponing what we promised to do.” The second rule states that we should never promise to do something, we are unable to do. This type of behaviour is considered ethical and trustworthy. The next rule is discipline and planning. Business letter writing is a very problematic issue. Most managers reject the idea of writing and avoid doing what they dislike. We have to consider the other’s feelings as they may be offended and irritated when they do not get our reply. Undoubtedly this behaviour is unethical and may ruin the relationship with the customers. In order to avoid this, according to Mary Kay, we have to encourage discipline and planning and we will be regarded as reliable and trustworthy businesspeople, without risking our business relationships. It is important to remember that this principle is one of the 3 principles of Pre-Christian morale developed by Socrates.

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