

- [Vendor Privacy Program](#)
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[What Is BBB National Programs?](#)

1. [Home](#)
2. [Programs](#)
3. [Advertising Self-Regulation](#)
4. [Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council \(DSSRC\)](#)
5. [Case Decisions](#)
6. [Case 143-2023: Administrative Closure – Traveling Vineyards](#)

Case #143-2023: Administrative Closure – Traveling Vineyards

BBB NATIONAL PROGRAMS

Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council

Case #143-2023: Administrative Closure – Traveling Vineyards

Company Description

Traveling Vineyards (or the “Company”) was a direct selling company based in Ipswich, Massachusetts. The Company was established in 2010 and sells boutique wines.

Basis of Inquiry

The Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council (“DSSRC”) is a national advertising self-regulation program administered by BBB National Programs. This inquiry was commenced by DSSRC pursuant to its ongoing independent monitoring process, which monitors advertising

and marketing claims disseminated by direct selling companies and their salesforce members.

This inquiry concerned 13 earnings claims disseminated on Facebook and Pinterest by Company salesforce members. DSSRC was concerned that the posts communicated non-representative claims regarding the amount of income that the typical company salesforce member could earn from the Company's business opportunity.

- 🙌🙌 I just earned my 10th free trip for Chad and I. We've never been on a cruise together so excited!!

Free trips are definitely a super bonus to being a Wine Guide 🍷

Thank you to my hosts, guests, customers & new team members that helped me earn this awesome incentive 🥰🍷
#freetravel #freecruise"

- "Earn \$500 - \$1200+ a month!...Trip Incentives and more!"
- "side hustle income to help save up for a big purchase, supplement your income and pay down your debt...paid for your sales and can earn additional income"
- "financial rewarding #financialfreedom"
- ⚡ Would an extra \$50/month pay your phone bill?

⚡ Is an extra \$250/month enough to fill your gas tank?

⚡ How about an extra \$500/month towards your car payment or student loans?"

- "You see a bottle of wine. I see...

A family vacation 🏖️

An extra mortgage payment 🏠

Paying off debt 💰 💰

Extra spending money for yourself 🎉"

- "you earn some extra 💰 ...Stop overthinking this.

An extra paycheck could cover...

- Your rent/mortgage
- Your kid's childcare
- Your student loan payment
- Your vacation fund
- Your savings
- Your credit card debit
- Your charitable giving

— any of this could be life-changing. Life-changing means your life is made better, easier, more flexible & perhaps affords you more options."

- "I don't know how we're going to pay for Johnny's hockey."

'My family hasn't taken a vacation in a long time.'

'These student loans are killing us.'

'We need a new car but can't afford it.'

Have you ever heard someone say any of these things? Have you said them yourself?

What about a business that can easily generate \$400-500 in income a month by working just 1 day a week?"

- "you can truly do this as an additional source or income or you main source of income"
 - Image of salesforce members and their individual earnings with copy stating "Team Sales: \$104,00"
- "With this amazingly flexible job, I have the opportunity to save up some money here and there to be able to pay for a quick getaway from the rain and the mud and the winter blues...Do you want to be able to create your 'rainy day' fun fund?...financial freedom..."
- "financial freedom"

- “Home from another Traveling Vineyard incentive trip 🌴 . Missing the sunshine and my tribe today but thankful for the opportunity to earn a free vacation each year with them ✨ ”

Administrative Closure

During the inquiry, Traveling Vineyards informed DSSRC that it had ceased conducting business as a direct selling company and that the Company will continue future operations through direct-to-consumer, wholesale, and affiliate channels.

The Company’s change in its business model was confirmed by DSSRC during following up conversations with Traveling Vineyards’ CEO and verified in a Company press release disseminated on December 18, 2023.

Notwithstanding the Company’s business model transition, it was successful in removing seven of the 13 social media posts that DSSRC brought to its attention. The Company also advised DSSRC that it would make a good faith to continue its attempts to contact the salesforce members responsible for the remaining posts in an effort to have the posts removed. Further, the Company agreed to reach out to Pinterest and Facebook to inform them of the unauthorized posts that remain on the platforms.

As noted in Section III of the DSSRC Policy and Procedures, DSSRC reviews earnings claims and product claims made by any direct selling company (i.e., companies who sell their products and services directly to consumers through an independent salesforce) and/or its salesforce members and evaluates the truthfulness, accuracy, and substantiation of such earnings and product claims. In light of the fact that Traveling Vineyards no longer utilizes a direct selling business model and has demonstrated a good faith effort to remove a majority of the claims that were at issue and agreed to take further steps to effectuate discontinuance of the posts that remain publicly available, DSSRC administratively closed the inquiry.

(Case No. 143-2023 closed on 12/22/23)

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