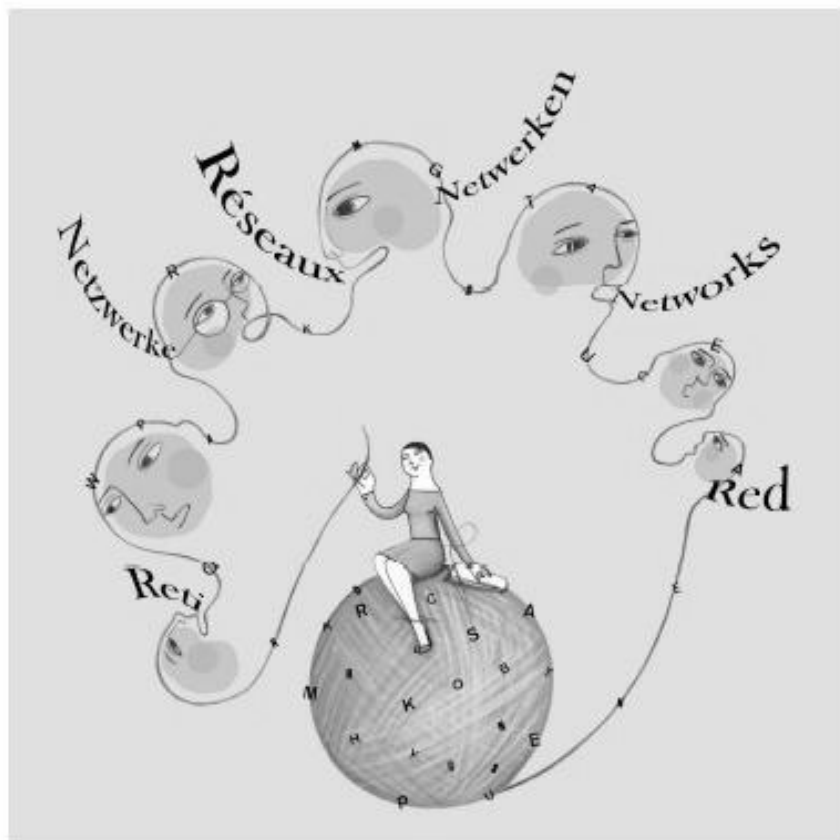


Women@Work No. 10

Networking - the New Ariadne's Thread

Marie-Claude Peyrache
Cécile Demailly



Authors



Marie-Claude Peyrache

Marie-Claude Peyrache is President of European Professional Women Network-Paris and Vice President Corporate Affairs for EuropeanPWN.

She worked for France Telecom where she directed several business divisions, either in France or abroad. She was the first woman to join France Telecom's Executive Committee as Senior VP Communications in 1994.

Before accompanying France Telecom in its first international steps, she began her career by promoting French electronics companies in India. She became the president of the group's first subsidiary in Japan where she spent six years at the beginning of the era of telecoms deregulation. She contributed to the group's «gender diversity» strategy by working on all of its facets and launched 10 years ago the first internal women's network.

With a degree in Economics and an MBA from HEC Montreal, she is a mother of three children.



Cécile Demailly

Cecile Demailly is VP Think Tank Communities for EuropeanPWN. She started her career in IBM where she held different development and management responsibilities, then moved to AT&T where she initially headed the EMEA offer development group before then taking responsibility for technical marketing at a global level, launching the very first virtual private network with broadband services. After a period at GE Healthcare, she recently founded a boutique consultancy, Early Strategies,

to help companies incorporate the new web 2.0/enterprise 2.0 dimensions into their corporate strategies. She joined EuropeanPWN in 2003 and rapidly became involved in marketing and communication for the Paris branch, then for the European federation. In 2004, together with Avivah Wittenberg-Cox and Margaret Milan, she launched the essay collection «Women@Work» and was the publisher of the first seven books. In January 2007, Cécile launched the «Think Tank Groups» initiative to focus on women's career issues, decipher and encourage best practices.

A French, mother of three, she is a graduate of the Institut Supérieur de Gestion and currently following the Consulting and Coaching for Change Executive Masters degree from HEC-Oxford Saïd.

Interviewees

Armelle Carminati

Armelle Carminati is Human Capital & Diversity Managing Director for Accenture globally. In November 2005 Armelle joined the Board of Accenture France as Vice-President for "Engagement & Diversity" while retaining leadership of the France Women initiative of Accenture "Accent sur Elles» and the Chairman of the Accenture Foundation in France. She holds a Master of Engineering from École Centrale de Lyon (France) and Cornell University (USA).

Diane Morris

A marketing professional, Diane is active in the City of London with the liveries, the Worshipful Company of Marketors and World Traders. A long-time advocate of women's networks, she was President of Foreign Executive Women in Tokyo and Programme Director for PrimeTime Professional and Businesswomen in Singapore. She is a Past President of City Women's Network, London and a past board member of the European Professional Women's Network. Recently, she was the inaugural chair of the Female Alumni Network of the London School of Economics and will become the President of The International Alliance for Women (IIAW) in November 2008.

Margaret Milan

Margaret Milan is head of strategic development at Fnac Éveil & Jeux, a retail, catalogue and internet toy and book business with turnover of 130M€ which she founded with her French husband. She is former President of EuropeanPWN, where she actively promoted women's entrepreneurship and careers.

Contributors

Hilary Ellis

Hilary Ellis began her career in strategic marketing and business development before moving into the field of talent management. Working for international organisations, she has acquired considerable experience in designing and implementing performance management and leadership programmes and in recruiting and developing senior talent. She is Resourcing and Talent Development Manager – Alstom Transport and VP Executive Education and Careers – EuropeanPWN-Paris.

She wrote the article «*Can I ask you for a favour?*» – *Using social networks during career transitions* on page 57 of this book.

Marijo Bos

Marijo Bos founded Bos Advisory in 2004. She designs and facilitates programs around strategic leadership and management skills for global organisations based in Europe and the US. As president of the Madrid EuropeanPWN network, she has a particular interest in leadership programs for women.

She wrote the article *Women's networking relationships across career stages* on page 77 of this book.

Mirella Visser

Mirella Visser is president of the European Professional Women's Network. In her international management career she was on the management board of ING in Hong Kong. Currently she is member of the supervisory board of Royal Swets & Zeitlinger and runs her own company (www.mv-imc.com).

She wrote the article *Building and leveraging your network strategically* on page 69 of this book.

Sandy Beky

Sandy Beky joined Cisco in 1999 where she has held various global positions in e-learning and process management. She received the Diversity Education and Awareness Award in 2007 for her active contribution to diversity and inclusion. Sandy is also a board member of EuropeanPWN Paris.

She wrote the article *Unleash the Power of your Relational Intelligence* on page 63 of this book.

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Forewords

Ariadne, 2nd millennium BC

Daughter of King Minos of Crete and his queen Pasiphaë, Ariadne fell in love with Theseus, who had come to kill the Minotaur held in Knossos labyrinth, which had been built by genius architect and artificer Daedalus. Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of thread given to her by Hephaestus (god of technology, blacksmiths and volcanoes), which allowed him to walk out of the labyrinth once his mission was performed, together with the other unlucky volunteers lost in the maze. Ariadne waited at the door where she had tied the other end of the thread. Theseus, unwillingly, had to leave her behind on the island of Dia, where Dionysus later found her asleep, and asked her to become his wife...

Ariadne, 2008

Our modern Ariadne has a professional destiny and has put her ingenuity to her own good use. She no longer defines herself as « daughter of » or « wife of »; she advances with deliberation to build her own career, which is often akin to walking through ... a glass labyrinth.

Ariadne does not wait at the labyrinth entry: she moves forwards energetically with no fear of losing her way. She shapes her magic thread while learning from her mentors and observing her role-models. The virtual thread that guides her as she progresses links her to all the contacts she established and carefully maintained on her professional path. These contacts form her network: a vital component for professional success.

Introduction

There are more and more women in business and yet their careers always advance more slowly than those of their male colleagues and the highest corporate levels are a male fortress. When she was a recent graduate, Ariadne had no complexes and all doors seemed open to her. Yet after a few years she notices an inexorably growing gap between her and male colleagues with the same diplomas. Ariadne then realises that although she has invested herself in her work, she has not fully understood the professional world and has not put enough time and effort into networking. So women's networks seem to be her last hope.

Overall, what women look for in a network is a key to understanding what it means to be a woman in business; it is to define female leadership to win recognition in a very male-oriented business world and, quite simply, to gain confidence.

“ Networks are both the path and the vehicle by which women increase their power » Avivah Wittenberg-Cox¹ (*Women's forum*)

Networks have supported and fostered the advancement of a generation of Ariadnes although the highest peaks still need to be conquered. By organising and publishing concrete studies backed by real figures, networks challenge what company managers, public opinion or the media consider a status quo. If it is no longer considered normal today for companies to have few women in their management bodies, it is probably thanks to the work of women's networks.

Women's networks are also often a source of innovation as regards management and organisation. In many cases, networks have been the driving force that has spurred companies to review their organisation and better adapt to the world of women. Professional equality and parenting charters were all inspired and promoted by women who belonged to networks. Internal or

¹ Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, founder of the EuropeanPWN network and of 20-first, co-author with Alison Maitland of the book *Womonomics*

external corporate networks have often been and continue to be a source of ideas. They make it possible to compare good practices and to provide a source of inspiration for companies that are trying to develop their own gender mix. Some networks, such as the EuropeanPWN, also act as focus groups that conduct studies and offer a broad base of documentation concerning gender balance.

« In an increasingly complex and fast-changing business world, it is vital for all, men and women, to broaden their horizon by participating in both informal and professional networks. For women, there is the additional question of our specific career patterns, particularly in the thirties; networking enables each woman to identify her own trajectory and build a solid support network » *Margaret Milan*

These networks continue to grow in number and to join forces in order to enhance their impact and make women's voices heard. They are still more focused on training and on sharing and less on influence; advocacy is an area that still needs to be developed.

Women's networks intend to pursue their mission of lobbying, reflecting, sharing and raising awareness by adapting their actions to the context of each country. Furthermore, women who have been members of these networks have understood the importance of « networking » and are more inclined to become involved in other professional networks and to fully assume their place in them and even to help them evolve toward action when their membership grows. Women's networks also try to build bridges with the other gender.

Since 2002, we have seen a new form of networking develop: online social networks. They are becoming an inescapable aspect of professional careers. They are a product of the Internet and do not rely on the old models involving influence, cooptation or cliques, but are based on transparency and everyday professional reality. They make it possible to network at any time and as they can be worked into the busiest schedules, many Ariadnes connect through them. They are infiltrating traditional networks: one after

another, they are offering online community platforms with functions that increase the opportunities for member interaction.

How are networks organised? How can a network be created? Who will you meet there? What can you contribute? What is the role of corporations, organisations or the public authorities? What is the role of virtual networks? This book deals with all these questions.

EXCERPTS

I

**Women networking,
women networks**

EXCERPTS

What are women looking for in a women’s network?

When members of a network are asked about their main reasons for joining, the results show that women are first and foremost looking for contacts and value-added:

- As a priority, women come to meet other women to share their experiences and to socialise,
- They are also looking for a place for professional development,
- They are looking for information and/or specific training.

Reasons to be a member

Members survey, EuropeanPWN-Paris 2007

	2007	2006	2005	2004
Professional Contacts / Network	84 %	87%	91%	
Promoting women’s Professional progress	53 %	60%	61%	
Personal Contacts / Network	43 %	47%	50%	33%
Professional Career Development	54 %	47 %	45%	
Other personal workshops	15 %	27 %	8 %	

Women come to share their experiences, their problems, the obstacles they encounter in companies while trying to make a name for themselves, to express their difference and their talents. They also like to meet role models who show that it is possible to combine personal and professional lives.

They come to look for the keys to understanding what it means to be a woman in a corporation and also to draw strength and confidence from these networks. Some learn to enhance their visibility, to negotiate a job or a salary.

They may also come together based on professional affinities and together explore the avenues to greater gender balance. Some start their companies by drawing on the experience of those who have already taken that route and who offer them assistance and support.

Those stereotypes that suggest (more infrequently) that when women get together they tear each other's hair out and are unsupportive are false. So many women have told us that they regretted not having the benefits of networks earlier in their professional lives: they would have experienced a much lesser degree of stress and been more efficient in building their careers.

Even if most of the time network meetings have a spirit of friendliness and even complicity, the predominant focus is most often efficiency and pragmatism: the objective is to juggle time. There is little room for waste. For what does not change for women is how valuable time is: participating in a network may still appear superfluous in a jam-packed day or week.

« I can't do everything, so being in a network is impossible. » This is what many women still think, but when they begin to measure what networks contribute, they realise to what extent their male colleagues have left them behind.

Yet, little by little, the time criterion is being overshadowed by the anticipated benefit. Awareness that being a member of one or more networks is an integral part of managing your career seems to be growing. This criterion changes with age; thirty-year-olds have a harder time finding time, and yet this is often the stage at which their career is decided. It is vital to offer this age group essential services like mentoring, which allows younger women the opportunity to share their needs and expectations with more experienced people.

« In fact, networks today play a dual role: their main role is to provide encouragement, when you decide to devote a few hours to a network meeting you always leave raring to go forwards. You meet other women and share the burden. Networks also provide specific content for women; they become aware of certain facts, their eyes are opened on certain issues that they had never looked at that way before. » *Armelle Carminati*

« I had always thought a lot about how best to manage women's careers, both from the side of the woman (me!) and as an employer of many women – especially since I have two daughters. I became involved in EuropeanPWN because I wanted to develop and diffuse knowledge and best practice on the subject. I had the sense that by sharing thoughts, experiences and ideas with other women, some new innovative and sustainable solutions could emerge. »
Margaret Milan

Networks all operate according to the same principles: to develop contacts, bring people who share common interests together and help them exchange ideas.

Yet women do not place a priority on professional contacts for developing their business network or looking for a new job or career development opportunities.

Why do you practice networking?



5

Women balk or even freeze at managing contacts. Daring to ask is always difficult for them. « Active network management is not yet a common practice for women; women have difficulty accepting the idea; the mental block is a mixture of modesty, repugnance and even arrogance », says *Armelle Carminati*.

Influence networks, without exception, have no female counterpart.

On the other hand, almost all agree that they are ready to help anyone who asks for it or who is looking for information.

Give yes, ask no?

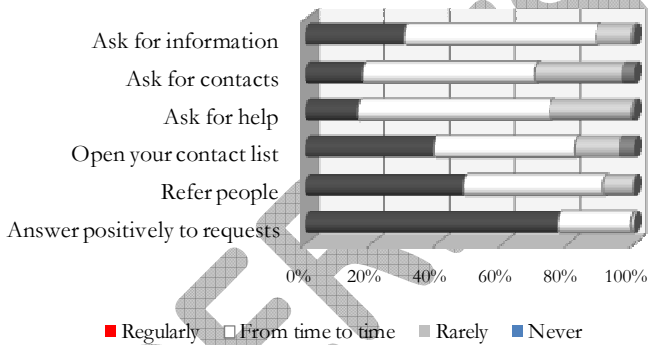
The two are not incompatible, but involve two very different strategies, as *Mirella Visser* explains:

« Personally, I make a distinction between my networking activities according to the result I want to achieve; helping others or helping myself. When I refer a person to someone I know or when I give out information that someone is looking for, I often do not envisage a result for myself other than the gratification of having helped

⁵ Source: EuropeanPWN survey “How do women network?” conducted from April to June 2008, 304 respondents, results published in October 2008, for more information see www.EuropeanPWN.net

someone. But when I develop a personal strategic networking plan to advance my career, there is nothing selfless about it; it is all about me. Developing such a strategic networking plan includes doing market research, about which networks or group or association you want to be part of in order to maximise your chances to get to get to the right information and to the right people for your plan ».

How do you interact with your network?



6

⁶ Ibid. note 5 page 23

How it used to be:

I WISH I COULD
BE PART OF IT !



How it is becoming:

I WISH I COULD
BE PART OF IT !



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powered by:



The advent of virtual networks

In less than a generation, the « net » has become a commercial and cultural environment, with e-mail being the main remote communication mode – over and above snail mail and the telephone – and with newsgroups, forums and platforms making information accessible to everyone. Distance no longer matters, costs continue to drop and communication can be almost instantaneous if your recipient is online.

In the late 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, Internet start-ups competed with each other to attract and keep a loyal public – this led to the birth of free services that were increasingly more fun, rich and complete. These services satisfied a growing need, for Internet users wanted to do more than merely shop or chat on the net; they now want to meet up with people they know, talk with them and even make new friends. Technology and services make new forms of exchange possible. Since the Internet is the new environment for interacting with one's contemporaries, a new social instinct has developed and given rise to virtual groups. Spurred on by a few visionaries, technology took a giant leap forward with the « disruptive innovation » that was the birth of the Web 2.0 with all its collaborative platforms, communities and collective intelligence. **Online social networks emerged between 2002 and 2004 and were phenomenally successful, experiencing triple digit growth.** These are platforms where everyone can introduce themselves by their real name (and not by nicknames as was the case for newsgroups and other forums) and recreate their address books to share more personal, privileged information with their own circle.

Women are present and visible

Since these networks started from scratch there was no tradition to adhere to, no history to carry on: women came into them at

the same time as men through the front door and in large numbers. They are comfortable with this tool, which makes their lives easier, allows them to juggle a routinely heavy schedule and take on numerous professional and family responsibilities with less stress – see our mini-survey « Are you a 2.0 business person yet? » Women’s participation has been considerable from the start, and roughly the same as men’s, 30-60% depending on the platform.

Are you a 2.0 business person yet?

I am on at least one business network (LinkedIn, Spoke, Viadeo...)	74%
My MySpace or FaceBook profile includes business relatives	27%
I chat for business everyday (ICQ, Jabber, SameTime, Skype, MSN...)	27%
I participate in professional forums online	23%
I do Wiki	15%
I maintain my address book with a web service (Plaxo, Yahoo, GooSync...)	15%
I participate in Think Tank Groups online	11%
I do business blog (under my company's blog or my own)	6%
None of that, I value my privacy	5%
I visit Second Life business events	5%
None of that, I'm not a geek	1%
None of that, it's a waste of time	0%

www.EuropeanPWN.net January '08; 81 respondents.

Networking online means being free, » a participant told recently during a workshop. Free from stereotypes: here is a mixed gender environment with less pressure than face-to-face meetings,

II

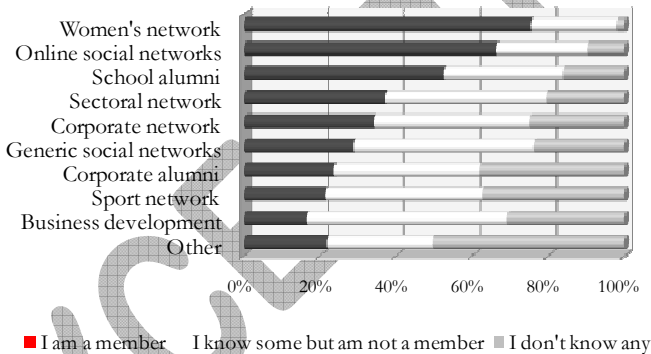
The variety of networks

EXCERPTS

Ariadnes unite

Whether networks are corporate, sectoral or general, they all have a common objective: making more room for women in economic life and allowing them to be more visible and make their voices heard.

What kind of networks (clubs) do you know? (that can be useful for business/professionally)



8

Many companies include women's networks; some encourage them and listen to them. These networks can act only if they are recognised and supported at the company's highest levels. When these networks organise outside events, CEOs are becoming less reluctant to be involved, and now participate openly.

We now see networks organised by industry or by sector or that more generally bring together women from all professional and cultural backgrounds. Most if not all of them work on specific issues, reflect on women's place in business, develop women's talents and female leadership and offer their members a place to

⁸⁸ Ibid. note 5 page 23

share good practices and gain awareness. They even provide training, while enabling members to broaden their range of professional contacts.

Over 10 years after they first became popular, women's networks have reached a professional state. They have matured, shown their substance and are now taken with due seriousness and respect both in the workplace and by the media.

*Véronique Préaux-Cobti*⁹ : « Networks are no longer a career option but are an integral part of any career strategy; they generally have an immediate effect on self-confidence and ensure visibility »

⁹ Véronique Préaux Cobti directs the diversity consulting firm Diafora and is president of GEF – Grandes Ecoles au Féminin network

A women's network open to its clients: the example of Accenture with « Accent sur Elles »

Origins of the network

Since 1999 Accenture has been conducting initiatives worldwide to promote the career advancement of women. In France, the Accent sur Elles program began in 2000. The program's activities were exclusively in-house for the first four years, particularly with « women's coaching » for high potential candidates together with the opportunity for all the women in the company to share their experience with one another and to meet with experts from all fields to discuss the major professional issues affecting them. In 2001, Accent sur Elles organised an annual event to celebrate International Women's Day and extended an invitation to their clients. Very quickly, this meeting became a popular annual event fired by an enthusiastic response from the outside « audience » (clients and media), which showed that the problems the women in the company were dealing with also struck a chord with their female colleagues outside the company.

This coincided with the maturity of the in-house program and the desire of the women at Accenture to open up the network (openness is, after all, the very nature of their consulting business).

It also corroborated an internal finding that has since become a general truth: women's rise to positions of responsibility depends on their visibility (and not only on their talent), that is, in part on their participation in professional networks and their opportunities to share their experience inside and outside their company. Many women, however, still had a negative image of networks (patronage, forced dependency, waste of time, modesty, etc.) and a clear lack of motivation (or direction?) for developing their own.

In the early 2000s there were very few women's networks in France. So in April 2004, after four years of in-house existence, the Accent sur Elles network was officially « opened » in Paris in the presence of the French Minister of Parity and Professional Equality.

« The opening of this business women's network was an act of non-mercantilist generosity: in one week the members had opened their address books and provided 350 names; it was unhoped for. This initiative created a positive buzz around the brand name Accenture and the consultants continue to add contacts. » *Armelle Carminati*

Network members

This network is for women and not for companies. It is resolutely focused on women who mirror the women at Accenture: talented executives in positions of responsibility in large corporations in France, whatever their business sector. These women in management positions and with successful track records of 10 years or more typically wish to strengthen their convictions and situation by joining a close network and by meeting female colleagues they recognise as peers (an important basis for open exchange.). The Accent sur Elles network provides the opportunity to meet regularly and discuss management issues and the advancement of women's careers for women with similar concerns and career paths of all kinds. This network is therefore deliberately not intended solely for senior executives (this type of « VIP » club already exists) but also for women who are currently in the anteroom of corporate power, at an age that is a turning point when solidarity, examples of various career paths and exchange of expertise is essential.

The Accent sur Elles network now has over 600 members, two-thirds of whom are not employees of Accenture. Network membership includes Directors of Human Resources, Directors of Information Systems, functional or business directors, partners, CEOs or marketing directors. All business sectors are represented and about 280 companies.

III

**How to build your professional
network?**

EXCERPTS

«Can I ask you for a favour?» – Using social networks during career transitions

By Hilary Ellis

The career landscape has changed dramatically over the last decade, with the notion of a job for life being replaced by a series of career transitions. These might include a variety of long- or short-term roles at home or abroad in different divisions of a large organisation, periods of unemployment or of self-employment, phases of retraining or of pursuing further education. All of these transitions can provide valuable opportunities to learn new skills and build on our competencies, to take the plunge and try something new or to improve our work-life balance.

Importance of Social Networks

The ability to build and manage relationships with others who could potentially support your career development is widely held to be a key factor in making the demanding transitions which successful, fulfilling careers require. According to Arthur, Claman and DePhillippi¹², «intelligent careers» are based on three types of knowledge:

- ‘Knowing-why’ – your personal motivations, attitudes and choices,
- ‘Knowing-how’ – your career-relevant knowledge, skills and experiences and
- ‘Knowing-who’ – your social networks that can provide career support

(EuropeanPWN-Paris runs ‘Career reinvention’ workshops based on this approach).

¹² Arthur, M.B., Claman, P.H. and DeFillippi, R.J.(1995) Intelligent enterprise, intelligent career. *Academy of Management Executive*, 9 (4), pp 7-20.

Unleash the power of your relational intelligence

By Sandy Beky

As surprising as it may seem, there is no definition of « relational intelligence » in Wikipedia. For the last 10 years, the concept of relational intelligence has slowly emerged and taken shape to become nowadays a must have in everyone's array of skills and competences. Relational intelligence is the ability to create and establish connections and has truly become the 21st century differentiating factor to achieve professional success in a more and more competitive and diverse business world.

A shift of paradigm

The new century has witnessed the proliferation of physical or virtual communities, networks, hubs, resource groups, blogs, etc. which have become part of the social fabric and part of who we are and how we are perceived. The first step in relational intelligence is understanding and leveraging that shift of paradigm. In a recruitment process, showing that you are a « networker » and have mastered that form of socialisation is almost as important as your work experience and your technical skills. Even early in my career, I realised that emphasising values such as collaboration, teamwork and relationship building was the one thing that could get me the job and keep me on a fast career track. Years later, while navigating through the corporate world and building my career, relational intelligence still remains a strong ally. It is common knowledge that spending your entire time in the office glued to your desk in front of a computer and working very hard to be noticed will not be a career booster. Climbing the career ladder has turned out to be growing your circle of influence. That's where the second step of relational intelligence comes into play.

Building and leveraging your network strategically

By Mirella Visser

Combining work and other (family) responsibilities on a daily basis often leads us to focus on ‘getting the job done’ instead of ‘networking for career advancement’. This article provides readers with tips on how to build and leverage your valuable connections as part of a strategic plan for advancement of your career.

Building your strategic social capital

Deciding on investing time in networking activities starts with deciding on where you want to go.

Step 1: Set the stage

Where do I want to be in my career in five years time?

And what (education, experience) and who (connections) do I need to get there?

Take enough time to contemplate and discuss these questions with trusted people in your environment (family, friends, mentors or professional coaches) before you embark upon strategic networking.

Let's assume you aspire to a board position in five years time. Various ways lead to being approached for such a position; directly by the company itself or indirectly (through executive search, industry clubs, personal connections, labour unions, works councils, circles of philanthropy, associations of directors, other intermediaries). « Cold calling » does not happen in these cases, so your credentials need to be known by those who propose and decide on candidates. Not being known at all is probably as unproductive as being known for the wrong things (that is, for things that do not relate to the aspired position).

Women's networking relationships across career stages

By Marijo Bos

Networks of relationships must complement the dynamic, borderless and demanding careers of women today. How do you build, nurture and calibrate a network of relationships which will contribute to your success through all of life's transitions? Women seeking professional happiness and success are increasingly finding themselves managing *kaleidoscope careers*²⁰ rather than taking the traditional corporate path.

As with each turn of a kaleidoscope, the entry into and exit from different life stages results in the need to create a new sense of balance, symmetry, harmony, and life patterns. This requires women to frequently reflect upon and adjust their personal and work life in order to find sufficient challenge, recognition, balance and authenticity. More and more, women are taking control of their careers whether they are traditional corporate careers or kaleidoscope careers. This control requires a new mindset to evaluate and build networks of professional relationships which is what I will explore in this article.

A strong professional network is most often credited for finding the next big job: a network that is carefully nurtured over the life of your career is one of your most valuable assets as you transition in and out of the multiple life-career stages and as you rise to the top of your profession. In this article I will highlight four broad career stages²¹ that are made up of numerous phases in one's

²⁰ Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the "opt-out" resolution, Academy of Management Executive 2005, Vol. 19. No. 1 Lisa A. Mainiero and Sherry E. Sullivan ,

²¹ Adapted from the book, *Get Your Career on the Fast Track: A Modern Navigational Guide for Managers*, Michelle L. Casto. Ph.D.

IV

How to optimise your network capital?

EXCERPTS

Basic concepts

When talking about networking, it is interesting to be familiar with the following concepts and to have fun recognising them in your own experiences.

Six degrees of separation

This theory²⁷ presented in 1929 states that a person can be connected to another person anywhere on the planet through a chain of five acquaintances at most. Numerous empirical studies have confirmed the theory, playfully illustrated by the game « six degrees of Kevin Bacon »²⁸. In this game, the connections are films or actors who have worked together: For example, Uma Thurman is two degrees from Juliette Binoche (Uma Thurman was in *The Producers* with Rick Kain, who appeared in *Bee Season* with Juliette Binoche). Several online business networks are based on this theory: for example Xing shows all the chains that connect you to another member and allows you to introduce a remote contact to one of your direct contacts in a single click; LinkedIn only shows you the first link and sends your messages from link to link until it reaches the desired contact, once the chain of links exists.

In everyday life, this theory gets pragmatic practice, especially with your network-minded contacts: this happens when you talk to people about your current objectives and someone says « I know someone who might be able to provide you with information / direct you / who you can contact using my name / who you

²⁷ Frigyes Karinthy, a Hungarian writer, expanded the six degrees of separation in his short story “Chains” in 1929. This theory was picked up by a number of researchers including Stanley Milgram, an American psychosociologist, in his study *The Small World Experiment* in 1967, as well as Eric Horvitz and Jure Leskovec, Microsoft researchers, for their analysis of Windows Live Messenger chats in 2008.

²⁸ www.oracleofbacon.org

Clichés: true or false?

Stereotypes are dangerous for the most part because they give a simplistic, often based on a bygone view of reality and tend to make us act without thinking; it is important to track them down and dismantle them. And many preconceived ideas or clichés are as entrenched as myths; some have their good points, others are as harmful as stereotypes.

Networking is pulling strings: *false*

An Ariadne who has never networked may think that networks are for opportunists and people who are good at «pulling strings,» although this negative concept of networks seems less widespread in English-speaking countries. «Pulling strings» implies taking advantage of your contacts to get a job without necessarily having the required skills and being considered ahead of people who are potentially more capable but do not have support or know the right people. The questionable part of pulling strings is when it is rife among certain graduates of Ivy League-type colleges who form cliques at the head of a handful of companies, or perhaps less offensively when a job is found for the son or daughter of a friend. Networking on the other hand means weaving links of common acquaintances, sharing information and exchanging services; it could lead to pointing someone toward a new job or doing business with the people in your network because you trust them, you have seen them in action, you have common references and you value them from a professional standpoint. We are referring not to preferential treatment but to constructive relationships.

Never eat alone: *true and false*

When we asked our members how much time they devote to business networking, most say up to three hours a week; the

Do's and don'ts

Do you want to take a shortcut to building and strengthening your network? Then read these dos and don'ts that are based on our experience and reading.

The Basics

- ☺ Follow-up and feedback: an acquaintance gives you information, advice or directs you to another person. This help is valuable. Don't delay in using it and keep your source informed about the process (follow-up) and result (feedback). This is especially important if you are directed to a new contact: firstly, this will allow the person who sent you to get news of his or her network and give you something to talk about at a subsequent meeting; secondly, you will reassure him/her about how you are using his or her contacts.
- ☺ Respond positively and «return the favour»: any reasonable request made of you is an opportunity to «make the network work» – and if you cannot satisfy the request, offer some advice that will help. Often the women who are most in the public eye are assailed by more or less disguised requests for jobs, meetings or contacts, and they cannot respond. As a result, they hesitate to appear at events – which is a shame because they are needed as role models. Why not a simple refusal accompanied by a piece of advice or encouragement?
- ☺ Dare to ask: in her book *Women don't Ask*, Linda Babcock examines women's behaviour during negotiations in great detail with surveys and figures to back up her findings. The fact is: asking really helps get the best jobs and better pay. Women are reticent to do this, even if times are changing and the current attitude when negotiating is win-win rather than fierce competition. So, no more hesitation! And be sure to give your counterpart a chance, don't make impossible

The elevator pitch

Chance encounters that change the course of a career... they happen.

In 1994, *Barnett Helzberg* was managing his family's chain of 143 jewellery stores and was in New York to meet with his financial advisors: he was looking for a way to spark a new growth phase for his company while at the same time protecting its spirit. He wanted to continue to be able to call the managers of his stores by their first name while avoiding the pressures experienced by companies that go public. By pure chance, he noticed *Warren Buffett* on the street, at the time the second wealthiest man in the United States and head of the investment firm Berkshire Hathaway, and decided to approach him. «Hello,» he said, shaking his hand, «I'm Barnett Helzberg of Helzberg Diamond in Kansas City.» Not seeing any sign of recognition on Warren Buffett's face, he repeated «Hello» and launched into: «I think our company meets your investment criteria.» «Send me the information» Warren Buffett replied. This conversation, which lasted less than thirty seconds and which he recounts in his book⁴³, would lead to the chain's purchase one year later.

Here's another instructive example: the meeting of *Rachida Dati*⁴⁴, now France's Minister of Justice and Attorney General, with *Albin Chalandon*, her predecessor, during a reception at the Algerian Embassy: She was only 22. She approached him and convinced him to become her professional and political mentor. He opened the doors of Paris' elite to her and introduced her to *Jean-Luc Lagardère*, a major French businessman who gave her a job at

⁴³ *What I Learned Before I Sold to Warren Buffett: An Entrepreneur's Guide to Developing a Highly Successful Company* by Barnett C., Jr. Helzberg, published by Wiley, 2003 (English)

⁴⁴ *Je vous fais juge* by Rachida Dati and Claude Askolovitch, Editions Grasset, 2007 (French)

Making the connection: networking questions

How many women have found themselves at a colloquium, a meeting, a cocktail party or a forum without knowing how to approach those around her? What should I say? What should I ask? What should my approach be?

Some women are more naturally comfortable approaching someone, striking up a conversation and learning everything or almost everything about them in a few minutes; others have to make more of an effort to make the first step. In her book *The ultimate guide to successful networking*, Carole Stone, considered the queen of networking in Great Britain, offers tons of advice for establishing and making a lasting initial contact but also for dealing with all kinds of situations such as forgetting the name of the person you are talking with.

Often a simple idea can facilitate making that initial contact, like for one particular young woman at a conference who was racking her brains to find the right way to approach a famous professor in her field and who finally offered him a cup of tea, which no one had thought of doing. He appreciated this and continued talking to her.

It is vital, of course, to speak with the maximum number of people without pestering those who are the most popular, for whom it is wise to wait for the right moment.

The initial questions may be very practical in nature:

- Where are you from?
- Are you a regular at these conferences? What drew you to this lecture?
- Which presentations did you like the most?
- What do you think of the organisation?



Can one succeed in business (professionally) without networking? To make diversity and parity a reality, women need to practice and master this art.

Networking – the New Ariadne's Thread, explores the long and rich history of women's networks, presents women's unique way to network and compiles a must-have set of advice on how to network and set-up a networking organisation.

EuropeanPWN is a pan-European cross-sectoral networking and training platform for executive and professional women with an international outlook. Our association's objective is to promote the professional progress of women and give them the tools, networks and training they need to assume leadership. Today, we represent over 3500 members of 90 different nationalities in 17 cities.

All proceeds of this book go to support the EuropeanPWN network and our research.

A EuropeanPWN publication
www.EuropeanPWN.net

Our publication partner



ISBN 978-2-9522703-8-0

15 €

9 782952 270380

Cover image: © Caterina Zandonella
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