

# Why a women's networking group?

Men have been formally networking for generations. Unfortunately it can be hard for women to break into these established groups, or Old Boys Networks, for a number of reasons. It may be a cliché but a lot of male networking goes on during a round of golf or at the 19th hole and if a woman does not play golf she cannot use this avenue. And even if she does, due to the burden of childcare and family responsibilities she may find it difficult to play outside of usual office hours.

The good news is that historically women have naturally been networking with each other to great benefit for centuries - it just hasn't been as formalised as it is now becoming. This is largely due to the increased number of women rising up corporate ladders or starting their own businesses.

There are many benefits to networking and over this issue and the next, we shall be looking closely at them to see what joining a networking group can do for you:

Networks run specifically for women, by women, are much more likely to consider the wider demands on a woman's time and speakers are much more likely to be tailored to the needs of women. Women often feel more comfortable to voice issues, concerns and problems in a woman only environment, especially about how to balance the professional and personal elements of their lives.

Whether you work as a solopreneur, run a small business or are a senior woman in the corporate environment, the chance to meet other successful women can help combat a feeling of isolation, and sharing your ideas and experiences with like-minded women who understand the particular challenges of being a successful woman, mother, entrepreneur etc.

In the next issue we will be looking at other benefits of networking, but in the meantime we hope to see you at one of our many monthly events! Now lets hear from one of our fantastic female networkers who could provide you with very useful tips and advice to help you grow your business...



Ann Edwards

Hi, I am Ann Edwards from SPS, what more can I say about networking...other than it works, for me all my clients come from relationships and connections that I have built up over the years...it is still wonderful when you get a call out of the blue from someone who remembers what you have said or did for them sometime ago and they want to talk to you again! One client reminded me the other day that it is just as important to talk to them when times are hard as well as in the good times...a salutary lesson I believe.

So what does my company do...quite simply we are leadership consultants who work with executive teams and individuals to sharpen their competitive edge, to improve their focus and strategic direction which includes raising their self awareness and personal impact...as we can see from the Trouble at the top article on Page 9 the need for this work has never been greater.

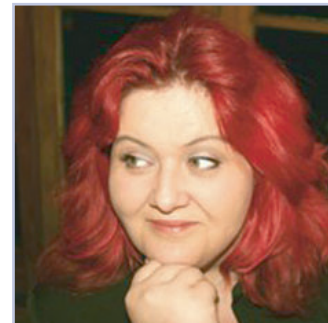
So what are my credentials to do this work

you ask? I am an experienced director and general manager, with particular expertise in leadership and organisational development. I have life coaching tools in my kit bag but do not call myself a life coach. In addition, I have worked internationally in major corporates for over 20 years with senior executives and teams, who have faced both personal and organisational challenges.....and what do they typically do in these times?...they stop talking and shut down their external antennae to focus on themselves rather than thinking perhaps other people may have faced this issue before, or perhaps there may be an opportunity or an introduction which could help me. So, go out there even when you feel less than at your best!

An illustration of this is the fact that I have recently joined SPS, Strategic Planning Solutions, as their first female partner, based in my East Grinstead office (above a lovely coffee shop!) I started talking to my SPS colleagues David Mellor and Paul Chapman who I met through a local network event early last year.

In addition to my leadership consulting skills my role is to establish and develop the SPS functional HR consulting offer or as I say 'it is less about compliance and more about maximising capability' and I am aiming to work particularly with female entrepreneurs and businesses in the technology and media sectors in the Gatwick Diamond.

Visit our website to see what networking events are taking place in your area:  
[www.thewomensnetworkingcompany.com](http://www.thewomensnetworkingcompany.com)



Kelly Stevens



The Womens Networking Company

These are some of the key areas I can help businesses with:

- Building and supporting high performing teams and individuals ready for growth or exit strategies
- Succession planning
- Facilitating top team away days
- Strategic and tactical HR
- Executive due diligence and assessment of high potential
- All encompassing change management.

Part of this work does include working with other local professional services firms (VCs, private equity partners, lawyers and accountants) who want to ensure that the right team is in place to deliver the required ROI.

So my final message: be the best you can, for your company, your staff, your family, your partner and your children, they all need you.

If you want to know more about how I can help you and your business...contact me on  
**T: 01342 325523 M: 07815 883152** for an informal chat, email me on  
[ann.edwards@strategicplanningsolutions.co.uk](mailto:ann.edwards@strategicplanningsolutions.co.uk)  
or visit our web site  
[www.strategicplanningsolutions.com](http://www.strategicplanningsolutions.com)

