

# *Network* **YOUR WAY UP THE CAREER LADDER**

Great networking can lead to all sorts of career boosts so grab your favourite heels, a glass of wine and get chatting.





**N**etworking needn't be as scary or as boring as it sounds. Yes, chatting to people you don't know about what they do for a living sounds daunting but it could be just what you need to get ahead in your career. Effective networking can lead to you making new contacts that might just have that career move you've been looking for. And now it's not all about bad wine and stale cheese in church halls – networking is cool and fashionable with members clubs all over the country opening it's doors to a new generation of female networkers.

So you've decided to take that first step to becoming a networking expert – how do you find the right group for you? Elizabeth Kuhnke, MD and Founder of Kuhnke Communications and author of bestseller *Body Language for Dummies* says, "Find out what the network's objective is and ensure that it fits with yours. Find out how many people it attracts and what type of people attend. If you're new to networking, perhaps start with a more structured and small group to build your confidence, if you're

more confident, then a larger and more informal setting might be more appropriate. Talk to other people who go networking and ask their advice – seasoned networkers will be able to point you in the right direction. If you know people in complementary businesses, ask where they recommend. If you're not in direct competition, they might be willing to offer advice about appropriate groups for you."

Okay, you've found the perfect network, but how do you get over that initial shyness of navigating a room full of people you don't know? Elizabeth Kuhnke says shake off the fear! "Shyness comes from fear. People who are fearful usually have concerns around being judged, ridiculed or rejected."

#### TO OVERCOME FEAR AT A NETWORKING EVENT, FOLLOW THIS SIX-POINT PLAN:

- 1** Set a networking goal, do your homework and plan your preferred outcome.
- 2** Acknowledge your resistance and its power over you.
- 3** Realise the cost of resistance. Inaction,

stagnation, doubt and fear are roadblocks. Take the focus off yourself and consider how you are able to help others.

**4** Imagine taking the action without the fear – if you didn't have the fear, what would it be like?

**5** Make a plan and take it one step at a time, go for the doable.

**6** Share with others – your confidence will grow and your fear subsides which will lead to success.

So you've conquered the shyness – now for some of Elizabeth Kuhnke's essential dos and don'ts of networking to ensure guaranteed success. "Networking is about building long term relationships with other people and making connections. Great networkers know that exchanging information, making new introductions, sharing contacts, giving referrals and promoting goodwill demonstrates sincerity and leads to new relationships, new opportunities and greater accomplishments."

#### HERE'S HOW TO NETWORK SUCCESSFULLY:

**SMILE** – look approachable and people will be drawn to you.

**KNOW WHAT YOU WANT FROM THE EVENT** – what do you hope to gain?

**SURROUND YOURSELF WITH...**

sustainers, believers and champions.

#### TALK TO PEOPLE

– be genuine and show interest in other people by asking questions.

**BRING TWO PEOPLE TOGETHER** at every opportunity.

"Meet Dan. He's a marketing genius; you need to talk with him."

#### ACT LIKE A HOST.

Rescue a wallflower. Include people who are on the sidelines or left out of the mealtime conversations.

**PASS ON SOME INFORMATION** or a contact name that would help someone in their endeavours.

**TELL SOMEONE ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE** if you believe it can be of use to them.

## FIND THE BEST NETWORK FOR YOU!

### THE CITY WOMEN'S NETWORK (CWN)

is a network of over 200 professional women. It is made up of managing directors, partners, non-executive directors, trustees, members of Livery companies, entrepreneurs and women in the management ranks of corporate and public sector companies. You have to be selected by a panel to join and once you make it you pay £130 joining fee and £130 annual membership.

**BEST FOR:** City high flyers in law or banking.

**GO TO:** [www.citywomen.org](http://www.citywomen.org)

**EVERYWOMAN** is a network of over 40,000 women in business all across the UK. Founded in 1999, it aims to bring entrepreneurs and business owners together to clarify their goals, ensure they have the right mindsets to realise them, gain skills to generate long-term success and are recognised for their achievements. They have events held up and down the country, the website is free to join and gives you instant access to the other members on there.

**BEST FOR:** Entrepreneurs and female business owners.

**GO TO:** [www.everywoman.com](http://www.everywoman.com)

**GLUG** is a regular after work drinks and networking event for men and women held in London, Nottingham and Brighton, for an eclectic mix of creative people, from graphic designers to those in advertising, fashion and architecture. Started in an east London pub two years ago, it now has over 3,500 members and has talks, live art installations and film previews. To join, sign up on MeetUp for free!

**BEST FOR:** All you creative types out there.

**GO TO:** [www.gluglondon.com](http://www.gluglondon.com)