



## Delegates Experience Value of Network in Action

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The “Value of the Network.” As CREW Network members we promote it, we believe in it and President Jane Snoddy Smith is making sure we all live it!

CREW Network President Smith, a partner with Fulbright & Jaworski LLP in Austin, Texas, has declared 2009 the Year of the Member and, as such, has challenged CREW Network board members, staff and chapter leaders to create enhanced membership value that supports the current needs of members throughout every CREW Network program, service and event delivered. From start to finish during the recent Spring Leadership & Council Meeting held June 4-6 in St. Louis, Missouri, delegates and chapter leaders were immersed in discussions, programs and events that demonstrated the value of the Network. From the networking receptions and board hosted dine arounds, organizational progress reports presented at the council meeting and the outstanding professional development sessions delivered, delegates and chapter leaders truly lived the *Value of the Network*.

President Smith reported several exciting accomplishments already taking place at the national level. Among efforts to facilitate global connectivity within the Network, members of the board have planned 19 chapter visits for the year and started a new practice called “By-the-Way-Visits” whereby board members will connect with local chapters every time they travel for business. These visits enable the board to update chapters on what’s happening at the national level and within other chapters throughout the Network – keeping the circle of communication tight, boards informed and best practices circulating. This board has also been on the road presenting at such high-profile industry events as the 2009 RECon event – spreading knowledge and awareness of the good works of this organization. Through these efforts and more, word of CREW Network’s membership value is now spreading internationally with interest building in Asia and Europe to bring on at-large members from those areas – opening doors for major business opportunities for CREW Network members everywhere.

The 2009 Board Hosted Best Practices Calls, held monthly and presented by board members, have already engaged more than 50 percent of all CREW Network chapters – four more programs are scheduled for the remainder of the year. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Professional Lecture Series that started earlier this year has been a tremendous success with each program delivered to date having drawn a sellout crowd. Audio recordings of these presentations are available within the Chapter Resources section of the CREW Network Web site. More than 100 member and non-member women professionals in the industry submitted applications for CREW Network’s newest recognition program – 20 Under 40 – developed in celebration of CREW Network’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year to showcase the outstanding younger women who are making their mark on this industry. Winners of this program will be recognized during the 2009 CREW Network Convention in Boston this Fall.

President Smith reminded delegates how the Network provides access to employment opportunities throughout its 67 chapters. The CREW Network Career Center features hundreds of job postings within the industry, all provided at no charge to members. Smith also reminded delegates how members can and are using their Network connections to find new employment. And, for the first time, CREW Network will provide onsite career mentoring services during the 2009 CREW Network Convention & Marketplace in Boston.

And in a final announcement to underscore the strength of this organization and the commitment to CREW Network's mission that continues to be embraced by the industry at large, President Smith announced that CREW Network secured a \$225,000 strategic partnership with Studley to become its Leadership Development Partner. This partnership will open up major opportunities for CREW Network members in the very near future. Details of this strategic alliance will be announced at the 2009 CREW Network Convention & Marketplace.

Following the council meeting, attendees participated in highly rated professional development sessions. Angie Earlywine, senior associate with HOK Advance Strategies, provided delegates and chapter leaders with practical strategies for effectively managing workplace change. With the current industry conditions creating constant change within the workplace, this topic was especially timely. According to Earlywine communication is key to managing change. People fear the unknown and when they don't hear anything, they envision the worst possible scenario. Even if you don't know the final plan, Earlywine recommends letting people know you're working on something but just don't have all the answers right now. Interestingly, Earlywine went on to identify four types of people that make up every workforce (Happy Clams, Squirrels, Turtles and Bears) and provided strategies for interacting with each of these personality types in order to achieve success.

CREW Network also brought in Carson Tate, CPO, President, Working Simply, LLC, a productivity consulting firm, who provided attendees with strategies for organizing their lives in order to work smarter, not harder. According to Tate, workers waste an average of six weeks per year looking for documents. Further, it takes an individual an average of 64 seconds to regain focus after an email interruption, translating into approximately eight and a half hours per week of lost productivity. Tate provided attendees with strategies for email management, boosting per hour results and focusing every day decision making. Tate's number one rule? Start your day on your agenda, not someone else's. Says Tate, "When we let others dictate our agenda, we focus all our efforts executing whatever it is they need while we watch our own 'to do' list just sitting there." Tate also advises not starting your day reading and responding to emails. Instead, she advocates for starting your day by engaging in a revenue generating task – something that's going to put money into your pocket. Sound advice for all of us.

Finally, delegates and chapter leaders participated in roundtable discussions on sponsorship best practices. What made this session so unique is that participants were engaged in working sessions out of which content was developed to be included in CREW Network's next playbook on sponsorship to be delivered later this year. This will be a comprehensive resource that represents the very best practices taking place in CREW Network chapters throughout the Network.

While the industry continues to take its hits, CREW Network remains focused and committed to providing CREW Network members with the tools and resources they need to revive their businesses, transition careers and remain major players at the deal table. The Network is a tightly knit community of support and at no time has this been demonstrated greater than it is today. Every member has a role to play; whether it is membership champion, business connector, career mentor or industry change agent, find your role, embrace that role and do your part to keep CREW Network, your fellow members and the commercial real estate industry strong and viable.