



Lynn Grayson leads a discussion at Jenner & Block's year-end luncheon.



Two women graze and gab at GC&D's 15th Annual Women's Cocktail Party.



A Fall '06 event for Schiff Hardin's group at the River East Art Center.

GET CONNECTED

The New Age Of Networking | By Marla Cichowski

Whatever your career, you've probably heard this comment countless times, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." In today's highly competitive job market, networking is one of the most important aspects to career advancement. Increasingly,

more Chicago companies are making it easier for women to get connected by building women's networks within their firms and holding events designed by women, for women. Over the next few months, we'll be exploring various professions that have established networks for their female employees, beginning with law firms.



Women mingle at a recent E.N.G.A.G.E. event.

E.N.G.A.G.E.

Chicago's **Goldberg Kohn** law firm is using a unique approach to inspire more women to network and as a result, grow their business. Their group is called

E.N.G.A.G.E., which stands for women who: Enjoy Networking, Giving And Getting Educated. Founded in 2003 by partner Denise Caplan, the not-for-profit group mixes networking, education and community service. The women's-only invitation list for ENGAGE events has grown from 300 in 2003, to nearly 1,000, primarily current and potential clients. Denise says the group, that hosts one major event a year, appeals to professional women because, "We create an atmosphere that women really enjoy."

Take the group's end of the year event, Relax Rejuvenate and ReENGAGE, held at the Catalyst Ranch. Designed to help women connect by getting away from the daily grind, the event attracted approximately 100 women with interactive demonstrations such as meditation, yoga and massage; part of the proceeds benefited Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Center for Integrative Medicine. "Women love to learn about something new and give back to the community," Denise says. "I think there's definitely a trend developing in women finding new ways to network."

WOMEN'S NETWORKING GROUP

Female attorneys at one of Chicago's oldest law firms, **Schiff Hardin LLP**, have a long history of networking. In the late 1970s one of the firm's then partners started an informal networking group by hosting brunch at her home for the firm's women attorneys. Since then, Schiff Hardin has launched what's now called **Women's Networking Group**, a powerful networking resource for attorneys, clients and friends of the firm. Schiff Hardin partner Janet Johnson says the group hosts two events a year and has two main goals, "Mentoring our female attorneys and networking with our female clients and business acquaintances. The women who attend our events have told us that they make valuable contacts and develop useful business relationships here."

Janet believes that's because women who organize corporate networking groups realize men and women thrive in different social situations. "There's a growing recognition among women in business," Janet explains, "that the traditional means by which their male counterparts have made referrals and grown their own busi-

nesses—on the golf course or at sporting events—doesn't always work well for women."

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

Women's networking at **Gardner Carton & Douglas**, headquartered in Chicago, has been going strong for 15 years thanks to GC&D's **Women's Initiative**. As part of the firm's commitment to diversity, the Women's Initiative helps retain and promote female attorneys at the firm and, as a result, approximately 30 percent of the firm's partners are women! "It's important for a number of reasons—there's the public relations element, a great way to let our clients know we're here and remind them who we are. It's also a big morale booster," says Gardner Carton & Douglas attorney Elizabeth Williams.

Every year, roughly 75 women attorneys at the firm take part in a much-anticipated networking event, the GC&D Women's Cocktail Party. "We want one big event a year solely for women where we can just socialize and have fun," Elizabeth says. It's become a huge success. Nearly 300 women turned out for the 15th annual cocktail party last December at GC&D. "For some it's more of a cocktail party, for some it's more networking...it's sort of serendipity who you'll meet. Everybody gets something different out of it," Elizabeth says. "It's a good training ground for our younger associates...it teaches them that networking doesn't have to be scary, it can be fun."

WOMEN'S FORUM

From Gardner Carton & Douglas, head a few blocks east and north across the Chicago River to find **Jenner & Block** law firm, where women attorneys take full advantage of the firm's **Women's Forum**. Launched in 2003, the program fosters professional, social and personal growth opportunities for 170 female attorneys at the firm.

Take the most recent event last December called, "Opt-Out, Opt-In, and Other Options," which featured a panel of female attorneys discussing how women of different ages view their careers, family life and what success means to them. In addition to providing an outlet for networking, "The Women's Forum is also an important source of professional development and leadership training to assist women attorneys in succeeding at the firm," says the group's Co-Chair and Jenner & Block partner Lynn Grayson.

Lynn admits her networking strategy over the past 10 years has changed for the better. "I now prefer a more personalized approach to networking. In the past, my efforts were more of a 'shotgun' approach where you wanted to meet and be known to as many people as possible. I tend to believe now that the quality of the relationship is more important than the quantity of them."

FINAL NOTE

Recently, Chicago's **Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal** beat out every firm in the country and was deemed the best firm nationwide for female employees. In other words, the place where women feel most comfortable working and moving up in the ranks. That's in large part because female lawyers at the firm formed a **Women's Business Development Group** that stages outings such as trips to the Joffrey Ballet and an afternoon at the Lincoln Park Zoo.

The percentage of female partners in firms' Chicago offices is 19 percent, slightly above the 17 percent national average. Moreover, considering that one third of the state's 80,000 attorneys are female and 6,600 women lawyers belong to the Chicago Bar Association—making up more than a third of its membership—it's no surprise the number of networking opportunities for women in the legal profession is growing faster than ever. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: Engage, www.gkengage.org; Women's Networking Group, www.schiffhardin.com; Women's Initiative, www.gcd.com; Women's Forum, www.jenner.com; Women's Business Development Group, www.sonnenschein.com.

where to go...

for Women's Health and Cervical Cancer

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2006, about 9,710 cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed in the United States and about 3,700 women will die from the disease.

Cervical cancer is a disease that can be very serious. The good news is there are ways to help prevent cervical cancer. First, it's important to ask questions of your health care provider. Learn what you need to know to keep yourself healthy and know your risks. Then, it's important to get a regular Pap test and pelvic exam. When you do, your doctor can treat changing cells before they turn into cancer.

At the University of Illinois Medical Center, there are experts like Dr. Yvonne Collins who are leading the way in breakthrough treatments for cervical and other forms of gynecological cancers.

If you believe you may be at risk, there's no reason to wait and every reason to find out. Now, you know *where to go* for women's healthcare needs and the treatment of Cervical Cancer.



Yvonne Collins, MD
Director, Gynecologic Oncology



University of Illinois Medical Center

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