

Delegates Take Step Closer to Defining the Gold Standard Chapter

Chapter leaders assemble in Las Vegas for Spring Leadership Summit & Council Meeting

Denise Kahler
Marketing and Communications Director
CREW Network

What defines a CREW Network Gold Standard Chapter? Delegates attending the recent 2011 Spring Leadership Summit & Council Meeting in Las Vegas came one step closer to answering that question.

Under the leadership of CREW Network President Collete English Dixon, delegates first began discussing the concept of a “gold standard chapter” at the 2011 Winter Meetings in New Orleans. The results of those discussions revealed a strong consensus that a gold standard chapter should meet established criteria for the following four priorities: quality membership, stature/profile/recognition, financial stability and member opportunities.

During the Spring Meeting, delegates took the next step and worked in small groups to define the four priorities, identify what would constitute the gold standard for each and begin developing strategies for chapters to achieve these standards.

“Defining gold standard measures for our chapters is an important step toward ensuring the success, growth and stability of our organization,” said 2011 CREW Network President Collete English Dixon. “All of which will ultimately strengthen the CREW Network brand within the industry – and that benefits every member. I commend our chapters for their foresight and commitment to achieving this goal.”

CREW Network is currently compiling the results of these discussions and will present the results back to delegates for further discussion at the Fall Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Delegates were the first to learn about CREW Network’s recent partnership with Cassidy Turley to develop an executive level mentoring program for members who have both the potential and the desire to reach the C-suite. This nine-month program will provide selected candidates access to executive level mentors and other resources to support their leadership development and career advancement.

CREW Network’s benchmark research has documented a consistent lack of women at the C-suite level and mentoring has been identified as a critical component in helping women prepare for and advance to more senior positions. A 2010 Catalyst study and report on mentoring and career success documented that:

- High potentials, both male and female, with current mentoring relationships received significantly more promotions
- Women with a mentor increased their odds of being placed at mid-manager or above by 56 percent over women without a mentor
- High potentials with an active mentoring relationship were more likely to have received higher salary increases. These results were true for both women and men.

“This program is a direct response to what we have learned,” said CREW Network CEO Gail S. Ayers, PhD. “When we create mentoring relationships within the industry, women will have a clear roadmap to senior level careers, and perhaps more importantly, someone in their corner advocating for their success. That roadmap and advocate does not typically exist for many women because there are so few at the most senior levels in the industry.”

Any member interested in participating in the program and who meets the program's requirements must submit an application by July 15. Applications are available on the CREW Network website, www.crewnetwork.org.

Prior to concluding the meeting, President English Dixon invited delegates to participate in the CREWSpeak exercise and provide a 20 second update on their chapter. The news presented was punctuated with encouragement and reflected the reawakening of the commercial real estate industry. Many chapters are reporting significant membership gains and some have already exceeded sponsorship goals for the year. Others emphasized the need for CREW Network members to complete their CREWbiz profiles so they can refer pending work to the right people.

Following the council meeting, delegates participated in the professional development session "Your Time is Valuable – So is Your Network," led by moderator Lexi Moriarty, Assistant Vice President, AEW Capital Management, L.P. and speakers Lou Ann Dent, Vice President, Wells Fargo Insurance Services; Trudi Lesser, Attorney at Law, Law Offices of Trudi J. Lesser; and Judy Nitsch, PE, LEED AP, Founding Principal, Nitsch Engineering. The three speakers described for delegates how they network and provided tips for effective networking that go beyond the traditional business card handoff.

During the session, delegates practiced giving their elevator speeches to one another. Next they were challenged to make their pitch more meaningful by tailoring their elevator speech to the individual sitting next to them. Finally, delegates practiced "finding the introduction" by engaging one another in conversation to attempt to identify commonalities that provide a lead in to network.

As the Spring Leadership Summit came to a close, chapter leaders were united by their enthusiasm, optimism and commitment to both the CREW Network organization and the industry. This sense of community and commitment to excellence is what fuels the continued progress of this organization and the success of all women in the industry.