

## **CREW Network provides value for all CRE professionals at every career level**

### ***Delegates discuss organization's priorities for 2011***

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During the CREW Network delegates' first Leadership Summit & Council Meeting of 2011, recently held in New Orleans, President Collete English Dixon emphasized the unique value of the CREW Network community and outlined the organization's four priorities for the year.

President Dixon described how CREW Network fulfills its mission, to influence the success of the commercial real estate industry by advancing the achievements of women, through several channels including its Leadership Development Series sponsored by Studley, its industry research initiative underwritten by CB Richard Ellis, and its newest program launching this year to help members advance to the C-suite level. Through these and many other programs, CREW Network is committed to serving all commercial real estate professionals at every level of their careers.

Dixon believes that CREW Network is one of the most important organizations in the industry because of the valuable knowledge, connections and support it provides its members. She emphasized to delegates that everyone benefits by making the industry as strong as it can be. To that end, CREW Network is committed to ensuring that all members have the skills and support needed to move themselves and the industry through these critical times and beyond.

### **CREW Network Priorities**

Delegates learned about CREW Network's four areas of focus for 2011 as set by its board of directors. These priorities will guide all CREW Network activities and programs throughout the year.

***Influence and Empowerment of Members:*** *CREW Network is the premier resource and referral network, whose individual members are recognized for their competencies and capabilities that influence the commercial real estate industry.*

In support of this priority, CREW Network delegates voted to approve the affiliation of CREW Treasure Coast. This chapter serves the Northern Palm Beach County and Treasure Coast, Florida areas and increases the Network's reach to 74 markets across North America.

***Value and benefit of membership:*** *Members (individuals and chapters) recognize and articulate proudly and passionately the value of their participation and involvement in CREW Network.*

In order to articulate and elevate the CREW Network brand, it is essential to strive for consistency of the CREW Network experience throughout the federation. Given that, a top priority for CREW Network this year is to work with its chapters to identify and define the "gold standards" of a highly functioning chapter; one that clearly articulates "who" CREW Network is and what it stands for. Delegates engaged in facilitated group discussions immediately following the council meeting, during which they were asked to consider CREW Network's mission statement and discuss what they believe to be the elements of a "gold standard chapter."

During this exercise, several consistent themes emerged from the various work groups. Many believed setting a measurement for membership growth and retention should be within the top five priorities for a gold standard chapter. Other themes included financial stability, quality of programs, stature within the community and diversity of membership both in terms of discipline and career levels. CREW Network will follow through on the input they received from the delegates to articulate the priorities identified.

***Industry Leadership:*** Companies, employers and sponsors value and recognize CREW Network and its members as critical components of their success, and support CREW Network's efforts on behalf of women in the commercial real estate industry.

CREW Network will continue its outreach to secure important industry partners that will help CREW achieve its goals. Companies and firms like Fulbright and Jaworski (technology partner), Studley (Leadership Development partner), CB Richard Ellis (industry research underwriter) and Bank of America (UCREW partner) provide critical support to CREW Network in advancing the industry through program and initiative development. CREW Network is currently working to establish a program to support women who are interested in reaching the C-suite.

***Knowledge Source:*** CREW Network will provide and be recognized as the leader in providing relevant research about women in the commercial real estate industry.

Through the publishing of annual white papers and its comprehensive industry benchmark study every five years, CREW Network is establishing itself as the "go to" organization for information on women in commercial real estate. CREW Network's research initiative has fostered dialogue at the corporate levels to ensure that industry practices are not only meeting the needs of today's workforce, but are advancing the industry as a whole. CREW Network's Industry Research Committee is currently exploring a white paper that addresses the Success and Satisfaction findings from its 2010 benchmark study. Watch for that paper to be released later this year.

New Orleans CREW member Susan Broussard, bank chief counsel for Capital One Bank, provided the luncheon presentation following the council meeting. Susan described for delegates her perspective on climbing the corporate ladder, the leadership traits needed to do so, as well as the difficulties she faced during the climb.

As Bank Chief Counsel, Susan manages all vertical legal support provided to Capital One Bank and its subsidiaries; no small feat. Susan quipped that she attributes much of her career success to heeding the advice her parents gave her, "Common sense masks a multitude of intellectual inadequacies." Her straight-forward, common sense approach to her business led her to realize there are three things important to everyone's climb up the corporate ladder: work hard, work profitably and have clients who like you. Broussard also advised delegates to not "go it alone" and to focus only on those things you can control. Said Broussard, "Everything is always okay in the end and if it's not, then it isn't the end."

Delegates finished out the day with an intensive leadership development session focused on influencing and working with volunteers. The three hour session, delivered by Lee Miller of NegotiationsPlus.com, explored such concepts as the differences between influencing and negotiating, understanding your influencing style and the styles of others, as well as understanding the causes of conflict and how to resolve this conflict. Delegates engaged in several interactive exercises that provided them the opportunity to implement the concepts presented.

Overall, the first Leadership Summit & Council Meeting of the year was a highly collaborative event, which exemplifies what CREW Network is all about: members working together to strengthen their Network and influence the success of the industry by advancing the achievements of women. As CREW Network focuses 2011 on demonstrating the value of the CREW Network community, delegates will continue to play a major role in communicating the needs of their chapters. CREW Network board members are committed to ensuring the strength of every chapter and the success of every member at every stage of their careers.