

STRATEGY

A W2W Ventures Newsletter

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w2w ventures

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Introducing W2W Ventures

When we first started to talk about the concept of W2W Ventures, we knew we wanted to create a place where the boundaries were broken down – a professional portal that provided access to quality opportunities, education and resources for planning and navigating career absences. We knew that women who were taking care of children or parents were the greatest untapped and most under-appreciated segment in today's labor force. We researched, talked to *a lot* of women, and exchanged ideas with experts in the field. We are learning through trial and error.

We introduce to you W2W Ventures, where we believe in the mantra “nothing ventured, nothing gained.” We will become the company that makes flexible work actually work. Why? Because the women of today and the women of tomorrow need us to. Because people just like you deserve to have more options and because someday, so will my daughter.

Best wishes to you and your family.

Karen Sheehan

Stand Up. Be Counted!

We cannot say it enough – you have to have a strategy during a career absence, even if it changes mid-course. Our strategy includes you! The more we know about you, your friends, sisters and female colleagues, the better we can build a service that truly addresses women's career management needs.

Visit our home page and see what you can do – [register](#), [take our survey](#), [post your résumé](#) and [forward this newsletter](#)!

A Table For One? You're Not Really Alone

Recent research and press reveals that you are not alone in your quest to manage your career and personal life. Interviews with women report common feelings of isolation and desperation approaching, during and after family-career transitions.

Monica McGrath, Marla Driscoll and Mary Gross, under the advisement of the Wharton Center For Leadership and Change and with the support of the Forte Foundation, examined how real women manage their career absences. The results from their practical study, “[Back in the Game. Returning to Business after a Hiatus: Experiences and Recommendations for Women, Employers, and Universities](#),” may not be surprising if you've lived through, or are living through, a career absence, but provide valuable insights to add to the collective wisdom for those facing career transitions. Suggestions from the study include:

1. Stay up-to-date professionally (e.g., maintain professional licenses, take continuing education courses).
2. Keep a hand in the working world while absent from full-time employment (e.g., accept project based assignments).
3. Keep an informal network of business contacts alive for an easier transition back to work.
4. Be unapologetic and honest about time out of the workforce.
5. For the best route back, focus on small companies.

To read the full study visit us at: www.w2wventures.com. There you will also find a flexible job board, flexible work resources and a community to support your efforts.

The Corporate Response

We are eager to see the next round of research from the McGrath, Driscoll, Gross team which looks at the corporate response to women taking time out of their career. What we do know is that most industries are “resource constrained”, in other words, they do not have enough talented, trained people to service their clients. This is good news if you can position yourself as a solution.

Harvard Business Review,
March 2005

“...Given current demographic and labor market trends, it’s imperative that employers learn to reverse this brain drain. Indeed, companies that can develop policies and practices to tap into the female talent pool over the long haul will enjoy a substantial competitive advantage.”

The Economist
July 23, 2005

“...So the first place that companies should look if they want to bring more women to the top is the point of re-entry. They should keep in contact with women who leave for a while, perhaps assigning them part-time projects while they are off the payroll...”

The Wall Street Journal,
November 17, 2005

“Flexible scheduling invariably ranks No. 1 in surveys of workers’ most-wanted supports. Employers have been responding by gradually expanding alternative setups. A 2005 study of 1,092 employers by the Families and Work Institute in New York found employers are significantly more likely to offer compressed workweeks and flextime than they were in 1998.”

Knowledge@Wharton
September 7, 2005

“We need to encourage women to think of their career as a lifetime,” says [Monica] McGrath. “They need to be asked, ‘What’s your game plan?’ Companies are diligent and strategic in planning the path for a talented person’s career. As women, we need to do a better job of that ourselves.”

Coach Cathy’s Corner

Build bridges for re-entry and career success.

At some point you may need to leave your job for an extended period of time. Having a strong network is crucial for reentry. Use this five-step approach as part of your absence strategy.

(1) **Diagnose your network’s health.** Make a list of who is in your network today (inside and outside your company), and rate your network’s overall strengths and weaknesses. *(Coming soon, see the diagnostic at www.w2wventures.com.)*

(2) **Perform a “gap analysis”.** What is missing? Who else should you be cultivating for your network? How do people perceive you? In which organizations, groups, or circles do you have influence?

(3) **From your “gap analysis” set goals.** These include reconnecting with a college alumni group, updating your holiday list, or having lunch meetings with key people in your company, or former company.

(4) **Prepare your message.** Your message should include your contributions to the company, future plans, and how you want them to connect with you.

(5) **Take action.** Schedule networking activities weekly. Making 3 contacts a week will make accessing and engaging your network much easier because it already will be in place. This will allow you to be more comfortable asking for advice, introductions or interviews, and you will be more likely to receive the support.

Cathy Lange is an Executive Coach who focuses on developing executive level leadership skills and career strategies. Contact her at cathy@w2wventures.com.

Fast Facts

- There are approximately 27 million married mothers with children under 18 in the U.S. About one third of these women are stay-at-home mothers. (Catalyst, 2003)
- Census data reveal an up-tick in *stay-at-home* moms who hold graduate or professional degrees – 22% of them are *home* with their kids. A study by Catalyst found that 1 in 3 women with M.B.A.s are not working full-time (it’s 1 in 20 for their male peers).
- According to a 2000 Bureau of Labor Statistics study, by 2010, there could be 10 million more jobs available than there are employees to fill them as a result of expected demographic shifts.