

ROCKING YOUR ROLE

BY JENNY GARRETT

The "how to" guide to
success for female
breadwinners



Tips on creating great Rocking Your Role groups

You may want to bring the tribe of female breadwinners together. If so, a good way to do this is to create a network either face to face or online.

Because your network will be voluntary, what will make it successful over time will be the ability of the network to generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract and engage members”

The design of your networking events needs to consider what the participants will need and how you will incorporate that. For example a question that could inform your design is: how will you allow time for private one to one interaction as well as general mingling in order to develop relationships?

In *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge* published by Harvard Business School Press in 2002, the authors suggest Seven Key Principles which we believe could help.

1. Design for evolution
2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives
3. Invite different levels of participation
4. Develop both public and private [network] space
5. Focus on value
6. Combine familiarity and excitement
7. Create a rhythm for the [network].

Let's briefly see how each one in turn could relate to your group.

1. Design for evolution

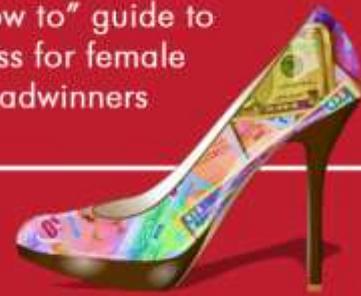
Networks like the one that you are going to create, usually form organically and build on pre-existing personal networks.

Be prepared for the network to evolve and change as members bring new interests, your role will be to facilitate that process and act as a catalyst for that evolution.

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What networks are already in place in your area? Who do you already know who would be interesting in being a part of this network? What are the first small steps that you need to take to catalyse the growth of this network?

2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives

You will have the inside perspective of what is happening in your area and this will place you in a good position in order to lead the discovery of how your network wants to be. However looking externally can generate ideas, new perspectives and a broader view.



Who can you make connections with externally? Perhaps at women's or professional networks?

What connections do you already have in place that you can utilise? How could their knowledge help?

3. Invite different levels of participation

With your obvious enthusiasm, it may be difficult at times to understand why some members of your network will sit on the sidelines or want to dip in and out, while others seem whole heartedly committed and want to contribute. Successful communities "build benches" for those on the sidelines and build a fire at the centre of the network that will draw people to its heat.



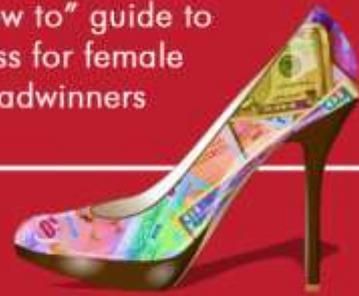
How do you need to be to enable membership participation at different levels?

How do you create space for those who participate on the periphery as well as opportunity for those who want to move from one level of participation to another?

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4. Develop both public and private network space

It is useful to bear in mind that networks are more than just their calendar of events and the space between meetings can be useful to cultivate your network, whether that's phone calls, emails, face to face meetings, these interactions will help strengthen your network.



How do you manage the private network space?

How do you use your time effectively, to make the most impact?

5. Focus on value

The early value of your network is likely to come from focusing on the current challenges or needs of the members, but later it may come from the body of knowledge that you accumulate. The value isn't always clear in quantifiable terms at the start but introducing the concept of "value" or "impact" to members from the beginning enables the dialogue and subsequent recognition when these are realised?



How and when will introduce the concept of "value" to the network members?

How will you capture information on value?

6. Combine familiarity and excitement

Networks combine both familiar and new exciting events. The familiar will provide stability and comfort, while the exciting may challenge the thinking of its members.

In order to create a safe and neutral space, some time setting up the familiar at the beginning is important. This could be the structure of the networking events, consistency of the presence of members, same venue etc.

What's the right balance of familiarity and excitement for your network?

How do you create the familiar?

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7. Create a rhythm for the network

The frequency of which you hold events and the members interact will create a rhythm for your network. There is no correct rhythm and the rhythm may change as the network evolves, but spending some time thinking about the level of interactions whether public or private will aid the development of the network.



How often will you meet? How much interaction between formal events is needed? What will that look like?

Lastly, have fun and enjoy it your passion and enthusiasm will be infectious!

Let me know how you get on jenny@reflexion-uk.co.uk

To find out more about Jenny Garrett and Rocking Your Role, go to rockingyourrole.com, where you can purchase a signed copy.

You can also purchase the book from [amazon](https://www.amazon.com)