

# Women's Circle of Excellence

## Become a Positive Force in Your Organization

During times of economic uncertainty, many of us struggle with fear and negative thinking. Will I have a job this time next year? Can I trust what my employer is telling me? How will the current financial crisis affect me?

These types of thoughts can begin a downward spiral that can lead to the very negative outcomes we most fear. We stop going out to lunch with friends, we read every negative article about the economy with ever-growing trepidation, and our creativity at work seems to dry up.

Now, for the good news—each of us can choose a different path, one focused on more positive thoughts, with a proactive approach to making a positive contribution, whether at work or in our personal lives. Here are a few tips to help you move in this direction.

### Top Tips

#### 1. Expand Your Network

Take the time to reconnect with friends, former co-workers, and those with whom you've lost touch. Invite a friend to lunch, send an e-mail to former colleagues, or invite an office mate you don't know well to join you for a cup of coffee. These efforts may seem trivial at first glance, but maintaining and growing your network can dramatically improve your ability to generate new ideas, infuse you with passion to embrace new possibilities, provide important opportunities to brainstorm, and improve your overall outlook.

#### 2. Become a Leader

Difficult economic times can often hijack an employee's focus, creating a narrow, in-the-moment view of the immediate financial situation, rather than looking forward towards innovative solutions to an organization's problems. Strive to be a forward thinker in your organization. Look for ways that your expertise and insights can improve the greater organization, your department, other employees or management. Sharing your insights in a professional manner, with an attitude towards making a positive contribution, demonstrates your leadership qualities and makes you an indispensable member of your organization.

#### 3. Become An Agent for Positive Change

Communication styles are infectious. Develop a personal communication style that focuses on building relationships through encouragement and support. Your co-workers will emulate you. Take advantage of those chance meetings in the staff lounge to demonstrate your positive outlook and encourage others, rather than contributing to office gossip. If you disagree with a co-worker or manager, talk to that person directly. Interoffice conflicts and miscommunications can be resolved quickly through face-to-face interactions conducted with respect and professionalism. Don't let them fester.

Take the time each day to decide what kind of positive contribution you intend to make within your circle of friends, family and colleagues. Envision and celebrate the many possibilities available to you.

### Meet the Guest Author

Lisa Daniels serves as the Director of the Bracken Business Communications Clinic in the College of Business at MSU, where she coordinates a team of 8 coaches who provide one-on-one writing support to students enrolled in business courses. She also coordinates the MSU Management Institute, developed by the College of Business, which offers customized executive education for businesses and organizations throughout Montana. In addition, Lisa co-founded and helps run a successful home remodeling business.

Prior to her current endeavors, Lisa worked in communications in the healthcare industry and specialized in developing communications strategies for hospitals undergoing tremendous organizational change. She also worked as a freelance writer and co-founded a regional, community newsletter focused on opportunities in alternative education. She currently serves as Chairwoman of the Bridger Canyon Rural Fire District Board of Trustees, and sits on the Board of the Big Sky Volleyball Club.



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Circle of Excellence Conference, May 13-14*

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